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# To lead, or not to lead: That is the question. An exploration of understandings of leadership in the context of the deputy principal in the Lutheran secondary school

Merryn Jane Ruwoldt

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**TO LEAD, OR NOT TO LEAD: THAT IS THE QUESTION.  
An exploration of understandings of leadership in the context of the  
deputy principal in the Lutheran secondary school.**

Submitted by  
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A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements of the degree of  
Doctor of Education

School of Educational Leadership

Faculty of Education

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Date of submission  
November 2006

## **STATEMENT OF 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 other person's work has been used without due acknowledgement in the main text of the thesis.

This thesis has not been submitted for the award of any degree or diploma in any other tertiary institution.

All research procedures reported in this thesis received the approval of the Human Research Ethics Committee.

Merryn Jane Ruwoldt  
18<sup>th</sup> November 2006

## **ABSTRACT**

Twenty first century Lutheran secondary schools operate in a complex and demanding social, historical and theological environment. Leadership needs to be conceptualized in a manner which is appropriate for a fluid, dynamic learning community. Contemporary thinking about school leadership explores concepts such as teacher leadership, shared and distributed leadership. Successful school leadership is also perceived to impact positively on student educational outcomes.

The leadership of the deputy principal in many school sectors has traditionally been structured on the basis of a bureaucratic, hierarchical model. Such models are increasingly perceived as unhelpful in the school context, yet in response, little has changed for deputy principals.

The purpose of the current study was to consider the situation in Lutheran secondary schools. It explored the understandings about leadership embedded in the current role of the deputy principals. This was achieved by comparison of the participants' perceptions with historical leadership narratives.

The key finding of this research is that in Lutheran schools, the leadership role of the deputy is often not as fully developed as would be appropriate in the existing climate, where schools and principals are expected to provide ever expanding services and fulfil multiple purposes. In many schools, the leadership role of the deputy does not provide sufficient training for succession to the principalship. Deputy principals are seen to focus on activity which supports educational leadership, but leaves them on the fringe of it. Deputies are often not involved in major teaching and learning strategic planning, vision and change management. This hinders their preparation for a future role as principal, but also deprives the school of a potentially significant source of leadership activity.

Deputy principals are seen to model the Christian ethos of the school through the way they interact with staff and students and their involvement in the devotional life of the school. However, in-depth involvement in ongoing dialogue about Lutheran identity and the church in the school is usually dependent on the interest and passion of the individual deputies, not inherently demanded by the role. There is also a limited understanding of servant leadership influencing the practice of deputy principals in the schools.

In order to maximise the effectiveness of the leadership role of the deputy principals in Lutheran secondary schools, it would be timely to draw together key doctrinal statements, leadership theory and Luther's reflections on vocation, into a cohesive and practical understanding of leadership. This could form the basis for further development of distributed leadership in Lutheran secondary schools and help to ensure that they continue to successfully meet the needs of their communities.

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# **CHAPTER ONE**

## **The Research Defined**

### **1.1 Introduction to the Research**

In 2006, the Lutheran school system in Australia comprised 85 schools and nearly 32,000 students. Finding suitable teachers and leaders for these institutions has been problematic since the first school commenced in 1838. Since the 1970s, the Lutheran school system has grown rapidly in relation to church membership, and the issue of staffing schools with suitably qualified and experienced Lutheran leaders has become increasingly significant.

In 2001-2002 the Millennial Principals Project (MPP) was undertaken by Lutheran Education Australia (LEA) in response to a long identified need and increasing concern within the church as to where the next generation of principals would come from. A number of serving deputy principals had indicated their intention to remain deputies for the duration of their careers, and anecdotal evidence suggested that the role was often pivotal in a school's organisational structure, but not considered to be one of leadership. The MPP aimed to identify and develop future principal leaders for Lutheran schools. Participation was not limited to the deputy principal class.

During recent decades, the internal and external context of school leadership has become increasingly complex. Furthermore, the commonly recognised understandings of leadership have grown to encompass more complex models. In this complicated reality, it is no longer effective to position all responsibility for leadership in the principal alone. Given current thinking in the areas of teacher leadership, and shared, devolved, or distributed leadership, it seemed that the role of the deputy principal may contain considerable leadership potential. The present study explored the understandings about leadership embedded in the role of the deputy principal in Lutheran secondary schools today. The deputy principal was defined as the person or persons in charge when the principal is absent. Consideration was given to whether the understandings reflected a concept of leadership relevant to the current complicated reality.

## 1.2 Research Site

The first large group of Lutherans arrived in South Australia in 1838. They emigrated from Prussia, where King Friedrich Wilhelm III had decreed that the Reformed and Lutheran Churches should have a common liturgy. Unable to accept this, approximately 800 Lutherans immigrated to South Australia between 1838 and 1841.

Prussian society had a high regard for education. By the early 1800s there was “an effective scheme of compulsory schooling for the masses...Each parish, however small, was required by law to maintain at least one elementary school...”(Zweck, 1971, p. 135). Within these schools, religious education was part of the curriculum, and was delivered by the pastor. There were Lutheran families who objected to this instruction being provided by a pastor without a Lutheran background. The families who emigrated were determined to provide a religious education for their children in the strict Lutheran tradition. Furthermore, there were no government-operated schools in South Australia at the time, so if communities perceived schooling as important, they needed to act on this belief themselves. Hence, in spite of the significant financial drain schools imposed on struggling rural communities, the immigrants rapidly established them, and attempted to ensure that they were based on Lutheran confessional principles.

Early Lutheran schools in South Australia were designed to impart confessional Lutheran teaching and nurture Lutheran children in the faith. They also had a fundamental role in transplanting and preserving German culture and language. The teacher was responsible for all of this. From the beginning, however, it was difficult to find teachers who were perceived to be theologically sound, fluent in English and German, and prepared to work for the small wages being offered (Bartsch, 2001).

The number of Lutherans who settled in Australia continued to grow throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> and into the 20<sup>th</sup> century. German speaking immigrants settled in western Victoria, southern New South Wales and parts of Queensland (Lutheran Teachers College Curriculum Centre, 1988). Many of

these later immigrants did not come from Prussia, and those who did, had more religious choices in their homeland after the death of King Wilhelm III in 1840. These later immigrants came for economic rather than religious reasons. Support for schools waned and some closed. The later arrivals, especially those in Queensland, were more inclined to use the government schools which existed by then, than share the financial burden of the Lutheran schools (Bartsch, 2001). The problem of attracting quality teachers continued, and by the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century a number of schools had closed.

The outbreak of World War 1 and resultant anti-German feeling also contributed to the decline in the Lutheran School system (Lutheran Teachers College Curriculum Centre, 1988). In November 1916, the South Australian Government passed legislation which closed 48 Lutheran primary schools. In 1924 they were allowed to reopen, but only six had done so by 1930 (Volk, 1962). By this stage the strong early emphasis on maintaining German language and culture through operating schools was both politically undesirable, and less important to second and third generation Australian Lutherans. World War II again saw opposition to Lutheran Schools, although this was not as severe as on the previous occasion (Bartsch, 2001). A growing interest in secondary education led to the opening of three new secondary colleges, one in New South Wales and two in Queensland, within three years of the end of the war. They reflected different local assumptions about the role and purpose of Lutheran schools. Later these differences in the core assumptions underpinning the establishment and operational focus of secondary schools would renew an old discussion about the juxtaposition of excellence in education and confessional Lutheran principles.

Growth in the Lutheran school sector in Australia was slow during the middle years of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. In 1970, there were 24 primary schools with 2,200 students and six secondary schools with 2,225 students. However, in the decades since 1970, there has been significant growth, particularly in Queensland. The impetus for much of this growth was the increasing availability of government funding from 1963 (Hauser, 1990). In 2006 there were 85 Lutheran Schools in Australia, including 54 primary schools, 11

secondary colleges, and 20 combined colleges. Almost 32,000 students were enrolled, and just over 2,500 teachers were employed. The Lutheran system has become a significant non government, non Catholic education provider in Australia. Lutheran schools are, therefore, appropriate research sites.

This research was in the form of a multisite case study. The participants were from three Lutheran schools. In each, the deputy principal and two other key informants were interviewed. The schools were chosen in consultation with an LEA regional director. Consideration was given to selecting a purposeful sample of schools. Together, the chosen schools reflect:

- different regions;
- an urban and rural mix;
- large and small student populations;
- variation in age, and
- participants of both genders.

The research interviews took place on site during a school day. The data therefore, were a snapshot of how participants felt about their work, or the work of their deputies, while immersed in it.

### **1.3 Identification of the Research Problem**

Little formal research has been conducted into Lutheran schools in Australia, although there is work in the area of early church and school history (Hauser, 1990; J. Hayes, 1972; Zweck, 1971). In 1996 Luther Seminary, now Australian Lutheran College (ALC), commenced a Master of Education program. One goal of this program was to create a pool of Lutheran educators able to research the school system. There is evidence now that this is beginning to happen. A number of lecturers and past students are involved in, or have completed, doctoral studies. Much of the emerging research related to aspects of Lutheran school principal leadership (Albinger, 2005; Bartel, 2004; Jericho, 2004). The current study was also related to leadership, but the focus was at the level of the deputy principal.

Growing concern in the LCA about the supply of future principals for its schools led, in 2002, to the establishment of the MPP. This project aimed to develop 40 potential principals available to take up such positions during the subsequent five years.

The MPP was based on a number of assumptions about leadership and the need to intentionally develop leaders for Lutheran schools. The implication that the deputy principal class was not considered a sufficient source of future principals, and was not providing sufficient leadership development for the principal's role, was apparent from the stated desire to increase the pool of available leaders for principal positions. In 2005 the second version of the MPP, known as the Leadership Development Project (LDP), commenced. This time there was explicit realisation that schools had multiple layers of leadership, and "anyone who feels they have an interest in, and the potential for, leadership in a Lutheran school" (Lutheran Education Australia, 2005a, p. 1) was invited to register. This new emphasis was significant, suggesting that there had been change in the way leadership was conceptualised at a system level. The present study explored whether this change in the conception of leadership was also reflected at a school level.

While no studies of the deputy principal in Lutheran Schools in Australia appear to exist, research in non-Lutheran schools (Garrett & McGeachie, 1999; Gillies, 1985; Greenfield, 1985; Helps, 1993; Koru, 1993; Reed & Himmler, 1985) suggested that there were issues to do with the nature of the role which may assist in explaining why the search for new principals intentionally extends beyond the deputy principals. The studies are not numerous, but their findings were relatively consistent. Assistant principals take on too many custodial functions, which do not prepare them adequately for leadership roles of greater responsibility (Greenfield, 1985). Similarly, It was suggested that "secondary assistant principals as school administrators are charged with establishing and maintaining organizational stability" (Reed & Himmler, 1985, p. 82). A later study found much the same, that the work of the assistant principal centred around various caretaker tasks such as routine clerical tasks, custodial duties, checking attendance, disciplining students and

other managerial duties (Koru, 1993). There are, however, some signs of change. Recent Australian studies (Cranston, 2006; Cranston, Tromans, & Reugebrink, 2004), suggested that deputy principals were “struggling with what could be termed a reconceptualisation of their positions” (Cranston, 2006, p. 91). The deputies believed they had the skills to contribute more to the leadership capacity of their schools if their role could be redeveloped.

Other recent studies raised further questions about the adequacy of the traditional role of the deputy principal. The concepts of shared, devolved, or distributed leadership (Fletcher & Kaufer, 2003; A. Harris, Day, Hadfield, Hopkins, & Hargreaves, 2003; Pearce & Conger, 2003) suggested that the deputy principal should be well placed to have a significant leadership role in the school as part of a leadership team. The LDP documents also acknowledged the value of distributed leadership (Lutheran Education Australia, 2005b). Was this understanding reflected in Lutheran school practice? Where the deputy principal was recognised as a leader, what was the nature of this leadership? In a Lutheran school context, was the role primarily organisational, or were other leadership understandings apparent?

It is four years since the MPP enabled the first set of participants to reflect on their leadership journey and demonstrate their potential leadership ability through the use of an assessment instrument developed by the Flagship for Catholic Educational Leadership, Australian Catholic University, now the Flagship of Authentic and Creative Educational Leadership. The Lutheran school system continues to expand, particularly in the provision of secondary education. The LDP has commenced the process of identifying and developing a new set of potential leaders. A number of understandings of leadership are reflected in official LEA and church documents, the most recent emphasising shared, or devolved, leadership (Lutheran Education Australia, 2005c). All of this suggested that it was an appropriate time to explore the understandings about leadership embedded in the role of the deputy principal in Lutheran secondary schools.

In the current study the research question was explored from the perspective of the deputy principals, and also from that of a number of other key staff in the school. These key informants were nominated by the deputies. They were colleagues the deputies believed to be in a position to reflect on their leadership. In this way the voices of the deputies and those of other key members of the school community were heard. The dual perspective was useful for triangulation purposes, but also provided an opportunity to explore similarities and differences between the leadership understandings of the deputy principals, and those of others.

#### **1.4 Purpose of the Research**

The purpose of this study was to explore the understandings about leadership embedded in the current role of the deputy principal in Lutheran secondary schools.

#### **1.5 Evolution of Research Questions**

In order to study leadership understandings in the context of the Lutheran secondary school deputy principal, it was necessary to be aware of the different leadership approaches which have been influential over time. One or more of these understandings may emerge as significant in the present study. In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the concept of leadership is increasingly recognised as complex and relational, where leadership is not seen as a position or a personal trait, but as an organic web of interpersonal relationships (Fletcher & Kaufer, 2003; A. Harris et al., 2003; A. Harris & Lambert, 2003). A number of traditional narratives are being challenged. For example, Starratt (2003) distinguished between administering through control and through commitment. Administration through control is about hierarchy and rationality. Starratt argued that “The flaws in the assumptions about administration by control are numerous” (p. 198). Other scholars supported the view that leadership is not about the personality, behaviours or hierarchical lines of authority but is relational and can be shared. A Harris and her colleagues concluded:

One of the most congruent findings from recent studies of effective leadership is that authority to lead need not be located in the person of

the leader but can be dispersed within the school between and among people. In this sense leadership is separated from person, role and status and is primarily concerned with the relationships and connections among the individuals within a school. (A. Harris et al., 2003, p. 2)

Given this thinking about leadership, and the complex decision making environment in which schools operate today, it appeared that the role of the deputy contained considerable leadership potential, and it seemed increasingly necessary for the deputy's role to involve leadership dimensions and not merely custodial functions. In this study the understandings about leadership embedded in the role of the deputy principal in Lutheran secondary schools today were explored. Which leadership narratives were apparent? Did the deputies and the other key informants understand the deputies' leadership in the same way? If not, how were the understandings different?

The specific research questions, which addressed the issue of which understandings were embedded in the role of the deputy principal in Lutheran secondary schools, generally fell into two categories. Half of the questions related to establishing the understandings, and the other half to categorising them in terms of leadership narratives. If the study was to be useful in identifying an unhelpful disjunction, it was also important to consider whether there were any significant differences in the way the deputies viewed their own leadership role compared with how the key informants viewed them.

Deputy principals were clearly in an excellent position to reflect on their role in leadership. Consequently, the first research question was: **In what ways do the deputy principals perceive that they exercise leadership in their school?**

There was then a need to consider these data in relation to the narratives of leadership which had been identified in the literature. The next research question therefore, was: **How do the deputy principals understand leadership? Which, if any, of the identified leadership narratives do these understandings reflect?**

It was also necessary to hear voices of the school community. This served the dual role of verifying (or failing to verify) data obtained from the deputy principals, and providing information about the communal leadership understandings of the role from a member of the school community. Hence the third research question was: **In what ways do the key informants perceive that the deputy principal exercises leadership in the school?**

The fourth research question followed: **How do the key informants understand leadership? Which, if any, of the identified leadership narratives do these understandings reflect?**

Consideration was given to whether the views of the deputy principals coincided with, or differed from, those of the key informants. The fifth question enabled this to be explored. **What are the similarities and differences in the understanding(s) of the leadership expectations between deputy principals and other key informants?**

In addressing these research questions, the study explored the understandings of the deputy principals' leadership apparent in the current Lutheran secondary school context and whether the understandings indicated movement away from the traditional management function of the deputy principal.

## **1.6 Design of the Research**

This study explored the understandings about leadership embedded in the role of the deputy principal in a Lutheran secondary school. It did not assume a single, objective understanding common to all schools, or that the deputy principals had the same understanding as other key informants. The study did, however, recognise the relevance and importance of the Lutheran cultural context. Consequently it was grounded in a constructionist epistemology.

The research was both qualitative and interpretive. Deputy principals in the school setting were studied in an attempt to make sense of the understandings about leadership they, and others, bring to their role.

This study took a symbolic interactionist perspective. It focused on the meanings and behaviours that the key informants attached to the concept of leadership in the situation of particular deputy principals, and the language they used to describe these meanings and behaviours. The study had a narrow focus on small-group interactions, which is common to studies based on symbolic interactionism (Gingrich, 2000). It was concerned with the conclusions about leadership which the deputy and the other key informants have reached, after interpreting and reflecting upon the physical, cultural, theological and human environment of the Lutheran secondary school.

The chosen methodology was instrumental case study. Stake (1995) defined this as “research on a case to gain understanding of something else” (p. 171). It has also been explained as a “type of case study with the focus of the study on a specific issue rather than on the case itself. The case then becomes a vehicle to better understand the issue” (Creswell, 1998, p. 250). This methodology was appropriate as the study was focused on the specific issue of leadership at the level of deputy principals in Lutheran secondary schools, rather than on the particular case of the role of the deputy principal.

A multisite case study approach was chosen. Cross-case analysis was used to “enhance generalizability, and to deepen understanding and explanation” (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 173). A multi-case study approach allowed an exploration of whether there were common trends among schools, or whether the findings were local and case specific.

This research was a study of peoples’ understanding of the meanings (of leadership) in their lived world. Participants were asked to describe their experiences and elaborate their own perspective. For these reasons semi structured interviews were an appropriate method to use in this study. A thematic analysis of the data followed the interviews. The initial codes reflected the language of major leadership narratives.

## **1.7 Significance of the Research**

The current study attempted to provide insight into school leadership that had the potential to lead to improvement in the educational practice in Lutheran schools as a result of facilitating greater understanding of the leadership role of the deputies. The potentially tenuous link between understanding and improvement is noted. This is common in educational research. “There is an inherent assumption that educational research, by providing a better understanding of the education process, will lead to the improvement of educational practice” (Wiersma & Jurs, 2005, p. 1).

In a general sense, this study aimed to contribute to the growth of a culture of research within the Lutheran school system. More specifically, it might assist LEA to make more informed decisions relating to leadership development and resourcing, particularly in respect to defining the leadership structure in schools, and appointing and developing appropriate deputy principals for eventual principals’ roles. It might also help to provide LEA with insight into the nature of the role of the secondary deputy, and hence assist in future planning for leadership development.

The research seemed to have the potential to influence the collective understanding of Lutheran school leadership. The dialogue about the role and purpose of Lutheran schools, and the place of Lutheran confessional theology at the centre of institutions striving for academic excellence, reached a new level of sophistication in 2001, when LEA published an EdD thesis by ALC Dean of Studies, Malcolm Bartsch (Bartsch, 2001). This study followed the lead of Bartsch by placing the discussion of the leadership of the deputy principal within the context of consideration of the juxtaposition of Lutheran confessional theology with leadership in general and school leadership in particular. The current study might be of significance to the Lutheran church and education system, as it explicitly explored a new area of application of the fundamental principles explored by Bartsch, and therefore contributes to the ongoing dialogue about the role and purpose of Lutheran schools and kindergartens.

## **1.8 Limitations of the Research**

This study was limited to the role of the deputy principal in Lutheran secondary schools. Because of the significance of theology in contributing to the distinctive nature of Lutheran schools and school leadership, it was not intended that the findings be generalised beyond the Lutheran school system. Nor should the findings be generalised to primary schools, as the primary leadership structure is usually significantly different from that in secondary schools. Even generalisation within the Lutheran Secondary school sector is problematic due to the small sample of just three schools. Furthermore, the study represents one interpretation of the stories and reflections of the participants, and the participants themselves did not reflect a cross section of a school community.

It is potentially significant that there were no principals or members of school councils among the participants. They might well have had a different understanding of the leadership of the deputies. The deputies' decisions not to include principals in their nominations for key informants was respected, but this creates a considerable limitation given the potential of the principal to influence and observe the role of the deputy. The insight of the principals would have added a valuable additional perspective to the study.

While the sample met the criteria outlined in Chapter 4, it was one of convenience. In 2005, there were 30 Lutheran schools in Australia offering secondary education, including 11 stand alone secondary schools. They were scattered across the country, and hence the cost involved in reaching them made it impractical to include them all in this study. Time constraints also suggested that the study should be limited to a smaller number of schools in relatively accessible locations.

The small sample size restricts the generalisability of the study, but also limits the trustworthiness of the findings, conclusions and recommendations. These must be viewed with caution, which may diminish the impact of the research. Given the deliberately diverse nature of the schools and the roles of the three deputies, common themes in this data may indicate widespread themes in the

Lutheran secondary school system. Where the data differs however, it is impossible to determine whether the diversity is significant, or simply a reflection of the different schools and roles occupied by the deputy principals. There is no potential in this study to compare the data from deputies in similarly structured schools or with similar core responsibilities. This constitutes a notable limitation in the present study.

### **1.9 Outline of the Thesis**

This thesis comprises six chapters. Chapter 2 provides the historical and theological context of Lutheran schools in Australia. Chapter 3 presents a literature review. This focuses on four areas: key themes in the historical debate about what constitutes leadership, the relevance of these themes for leadership in schools, reflection on schools as organisations, and research about deputy principals. Chapter 4 outlines the design of the research, while Chapter 5 includes the results. Chapter 6 presents the conclusions and recommendations of the study for the Australian Lutheran school system and its deputy principals.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **Research Context**

#### **2.1 Introduction**

Deputy principals in Lutheran secondary schools do not operate in a vacuum. They work in a context which shares theoretical and practical characteristics with other school sectors and organisations, but which is also unique. Two aspects of the Lutheran school context were of particular relevance to this study: the increasingly complex internal and external environment of all schools, and the fact that the participant schools were Lutheran.

It is widely accepted that schools have undergone a “raft of reforms and changes across the past decade” (Cranston et al., 2004, p. 1) and that “educational leaders must guide their schools through the challenges posed by an increasingly complex environment” (Leithwood & Riehl, 2003, p. 1). In this chapter the nature of this changing environment is explored briefly and the implications for deputy principals considered. The major part of the chapter however, contains reflections on the Lutheran nature of the context, as this is not well known outside the Lutheran school system.

The early history of the LCA and its schools is increasingly becoming accessible in English through theses and other literature (Hauser, 1990, 1999; J. Hayes, 1972; Zweck, 1971). Three themes were particularly relevant to this research, and consistently emerged from these texts. They were core issues that can be identified at multiple points in the 170 year history of Lutheran schooling in Australia. The themes were:

1. the difficulty of finding suitable teachers and leaders for the schools;
2. the confessional emphasis of the church and
3. dialogue, grounded in the confessional theology of the church, about the role, function and practice of schools, and the role of the church in the schools.

In this chapter each of these themes is considered, along with official church and system policy documents relating to schools, in order to provide a context for the study.

## **2.2 Definition**

Although it was common in the 1970s, many Lutheran secondary schools today do not use the title 'deputy principal' in their leadership structure. 'Assistant to the Principal' and 'Head of School' are two of the alternative labels. While this change may be indicative of a change in the role, the term 'deputy principal' was used throughout this study to denote the 'second in charge'. Where the title was no longer used, data about the role of a person who was deemed to be in charge when the principal was absent were gathered, irrespective of his or her actual title.

The term 'deputy principal' was not ideal, as not everyone invited to participate in the study had the type of role traditionally associated with a deputy. However, none of the other terms in use in the school system necessarily implied that the respondent was the second in charge. This class of leaders was the intended focus of the study, and the term "2IC" was carefully considered, but ultimately rejected because it was not used in schools. The only term used in schools that was consistently associated with being second in charge was 'deputy principal'. For this reason it was chosen in spite of the problems associated with its usage.

## **2.3 The Impact of an Increasingly Complex Context**

While research suggested that the role of the deputy principal has remained stable since the 1970s (Harvey, 1997; Koru, 1993; Reed & Himmler, 1985), the school environment has not. During the last three decades the context of schools has become more complex (Leithwood & Riehl, 2003), and a great deal of change has occurred which impacts on the expectations on schools.

Schools are increasingly expected to compensate for the shifts in society and family that affect children: changes in family structure, rapidly shifting trends in television and popular culture, commercialism without end, poverty (and the inadequate nutrition and health care that go with it), violence, child abuse, teenage pregnancy, substance abuse and incessant social upheaval. (Senge, 2000, p. 10)

Added to the changes noted by Senge, must be the impact of changing environmental factors such as technology, globalisation, work, demographic swings, and political, economic and social movements. Schools operate in a

complex world. They have complex, often competing, goals. They are exposed to “rapid and major change” (Dettman, 2000, p. 1). Issues arising from increased accountabilities, operating schools in a market environment, and the emergence of a national agenda in what was once the province of state governments are also apparent in 21<sup>st</sup> century Australian schools.

Harvey argued that “the change in schools has made the position of the deputy principal an increasingly problematic role” (1997, p. 122), but he saw little development in the role. “In Australia the onset of the era of profound educational change has produced little constructive or creative thinking about the deputy principalship” (Harvey, 1997, p. 111). Nearly a decade later progress towards Harvey’s idea of a reconceptualisation of the role as one embracing leadership and management is perceived to be slow (Cranston, 2006). The present study focused on this area of school leadership which appeared to have resisted, avoided or been overlooked when schools and school leadership have been reconceptualised, in spite of changes occurring around it.

The study involved three schools which commenced operation in three distinctly different educational eras. Did they represent different models of thinking about the leadership role of the deputy principalship? Was there any sense of constructive or creative thinking about the role, or in the role? Was there any sense that the leadership role has developed in response to the changing environment of these three schools? This study considered these questions.

## **2.4 The Early History of Australian Lutheran Schools: Growth, Decline and Teacher Shortage.**

### ***2.4.1 The Nature of the First Australian Lutherans***

The first large group of Lutheran immigrants to Australia were uncompromising in their religious beliefs. They had come to Australia from Prussia when King Friedrich Wilhelm III insisted that the Reformed and Lutheran Churches use a common liturgy. Reformed pastors were to lead Lutheran worship and teach religious education in Lutheran schools. While

most Lutherans accepted this new state of affairs, there were a small number who felt that it compromised their beliefs to the point where they left their homes in order to travel to Australia. Here they would be free to follow their own religious practices, in focused adherence to the Lutheran traditions. But the same lack of compromise which bound the early Lutheran community together, would also bring about schism and conflict. This would lead to 120 years of a divided church in Australia, and the development of distinctly different strands of Lutheran schools. (Bartel, 2004)

The first organised boat load of German speaking immigrants arrived in Australia in 1838. By 1846 there was major division amongst the early settlers. Later there were also arguments with newer German immigrants. After the initial boatloads, Germans generally came to Australia in order to improve their personal circumstances, not because of their religious convictions. Many did not originate from Prussia. Some were not Lutheran, and those who were, frequently had more liberal religious ideas than the earlier settlers. Arguments in the congregations often spilled over into the schools.

#### ***2.4.2 The Beginning of the Australian Lutheran Schooling Movement***

Lutheran schools appeared almost immediately after the first group of Lutherans settled in South Australia in 1838. The families who emigrated were committed to schooling for their children, and were determined to provide a religious education in the strict Lutheran tradition. There was no government school system in South Australia until the 1870s, although after 1851 a central Board of Education supervised education and helped establish community schools. There were, however, four Lutheran schools in South Australia by 1844, and

the majority of Lutheran children between the ages of six and fourteen were receiving some schooling. In the remainder of the community, by comparison, there were less than 20 schools, catering for barely one-tenth of all children of school age. (Zweck, 1971, p. 139)

Lutheran families in Australia were generally farmers and labourers. Their emphasis on schooling required considerable financial sacrifice. Children

were in school rather than contributing to the family income. Furthermore, a school building was required, and a salary for the teacher. Teachers, however, were hard to find. Alongside religious education, the primary objective of the early schools was to transplant and preserve German culture and language. While the settlers recognised a need for their children to learn English, German was the language of their worship, their liturgy, their hymns, and their religious and community character. Teachers who were fluent in both English and German, and deemed theologically sound by the community, were scarce. It was not uncommon for a school to close for want of a teacher (Hauser, 1999), or for the pastor to be the main teacher in addition to his other duties, because no one else was available. This inevitably led to a particular theological emphasis in the schools.

#### ***2.4.3 Lutherans Schools and the Search for Principals Today***

Lutheran schools which survived the internal squabbles of the 1800s, were forced to close during WWI by legislation in South Australia, where most were located. The majority did not reopen after the war. However, with the boom in school and student numbers that began in the 1970s (prompted by the increasing amounts of public money available to build and operate private schools), finding appropriate teachers and leaders once again emerged as a significant issue. Today, new schools must be approved by the central Lutheran system authority. In part, this was an attempt to ensure that the number of schools did not outgrow the system's ability to provide them with leaders. Programs such as pre-service and inservice theological training for teachers, leadership academies and the MMP or LDP are the modern equivalent of the tiny teacher training colleges that began in the pastor's houses in the mid 1800s. Now, as then, the numbers of teachers and leaders 'graduating' from training programs, struggles to match demand.

Most Lutheran schools today have long outgrown the early 'one teacher' model. Lutheran schools, particularly secondary schools, have multiple layers of positions of responsibility. Even so, the church has difficulty filling principal vacancies with suitable Lutheran candidates. The requirement for fluency in

German has long since disappeared. Wages are now comparable with other school sectors, although it is acknowledged that the demands on the principal are causing candidates in all sectors to think twice about such roles (Neidhart & Carlin, 2003; Whitaker, 2002). The issue of suitable theological training has been addressed variously, and no lack of opportunity exists for interested candidates to become involved in theological training suitable for various stages of a personal spiritual journey. In spite of this, the situation is presently so critical that in February 2005 the Board for Lutheran Education Australia (BLEA) resolved that “no new Lutheran schools would open in 2007 and 2008” (Board for Lutheran Education Australia, 2005). BLEA made the decision to enable the Board to fulfill its leadership responsibilities to existing schools. The Board was concerned about “several leadership vacancies that will soon need to be filled” (p. 1).

The results of the MPP project in 2002 provided mixed messages for system authorities. The MPP was based on a number of assumptions about leadership development in the Lutheran system. These included:

- A need to act systemically to develop and grow leadership for Lutheran Schools;
- An urgent need to intentionally increase the pool of leaders available for Lutheran Schools;
- The view that leadership development is a joint responsibility of the individual, the school, regional (Lutheran education) systems and the Lutheran Church of Australia (LCA), and
- The view that, as a group, the LCA schools need to set aside significant resources for leadership development. (Lutheran Education Australia, 2002)

Some potential leaders were identified, but there were other cases of candidates who perceived themselves as leaders, where this was not validated by the MPP instrument. In 2005, there were different opinions about the success of the MPP. Some argued that a more local approach to leadership development was desirable (Council for Lutheran Education South Eastern Region, 2005).

In 2005 BLEA resolved to repeat a leadership development program similar to the MPP. This version was known as the Leadership Development Project

(LDP). The change in name signalled a change in emphasis for the project. Once again, an aim was to develop people to take up the principalship, but the LDP also recognised a more distributed form of leadership with a clear statement that the LDP is involved with developing men and women for the principalship and other formal leadership positions (Lutheran Education Australia, 2005a). It was outside the scope of this research to ponder the relative merits of a national or local approach to leadership development. What was significant, was the recognised need for such development. The ongoing shortage of suitable leaders in Lutheran schools suggested that the LCA had not been able to adequately address this issue at any time in its history, including now, when secondary schools are generally large enough to sustain multiple positions of responsibility. The Lutheran system reflects other systems (Neidhart & Carlin, 2003) in that it is not an automatic assumption that deputy principals, whatever title they hold in a particular school, are in training to be principals and are likely to ultimately move into such a position. Did this have anything to do with the nature of the role or the type of experience obtained by the incumbents?

This research considered this issue by exploring the understandings about leadership embedded in the role of the deputy principal in Lutheran secondary schools. If the leadership understandings are not adequate for the current complex leadership context, explored in Chapter 3, then perhaps this helps explain the current lack of candidates for the principalship.

## **2.5 Deputy Principals**

The deputy principals in Lutheran secondary schools today have various titles and roles. The church expects that they are Lutheran, but not all of them are. Not all of the deputies are expected to attend council meetings. Some of the roles are traditional, and the deputy is clearly second in the management hierarchy. In other schools the position of deputy is shared between two or more people and roles, and the leadership structure is flatter. In many schools the deputy is not largely responsible for student discipline. Positions held by deputies in the Lutheran secondary system include staff welfare roles, heads

of sub school, curriculum roles, administration and daily organisation roles. Both males and females are deputy principals in the schools.

In many schools there is a group of senior administrators who are identified as the leadership team. This team is structured differently in each school, but inevitably includes the principal and the deputy principal. In two of the sample schools, the composition of the team had changed within the previous five years to accommodate a new or altered distribution of responsibilities. These new arrangements had affected the role of the deputy.

## **2.6 The Confessional Basis of the Church**

Lutheranism is defined by its confessional writings, which focus on the central truths of scripture and the way they relate to the whole of Christian dogma (Bartsch, 2001). Lutheran schools look to their underpinning confessional basis to analyse, interpret and respond to issues which arise, and leaders will necessarily reflect on their professional practice in the light of their faith and Lutheran understanding (Hull, 1977). The relevant key theological principles of the church explored in detail below, informed both the context of this study, and the leadership practice which it examined.

## **2.7 The Role and Function of Lutheran schools**

The LCA expects that its institutions, educational or otherwise, will operate in a manner which is directed by, and consistent with, Lutheran theological principles. This has prompted many debates in the past, as school leaders sought to interpret Lutheran theology in the school context. It has been suggested that some of this debate may demonstrate forms of Lutheran ignorance and narrow-mindedness rather than a clash of Lutheran theological principles (Rev M Greenthaner, Board for Lutheran Education, personal communication, May 23, 2006), nevertheless involvement in such discussion has occupied school leaders since the early years. A fictional work based on factual accounts provided an example from 1857 of differing opinions about the way Lutheran confessional theology would be incorporated into schools.

From the very beginning I was uncomfortable in the school, because of the extremely conservative elements in the Hahndorf congregation. For

instance, it was regarded by some to be an impediment that I had wider interests in philosophy, science and the arts...I was told at one time that there should be no other books in the school besides the Bible and Luther's catechism, and that I should not even be teaching secular subjects like Geography. (Hauser, 1999, p. 5)

Many of the early conflicts between teachers and congregations arose over whether some action of the teacher undermined the confessional basis of the church. The same teacher, this time in 1869, needed to justify an interest in science to the congregation.

Strenz, the principal of the congregational school, and I allowed our students to take part in a ceremony celebrating the life of Humboldt, the great German scientist. This was condemned by many in the congregation. It was alleged that we were promoting scientific atheism. (Hauser, 1999, p. 5)

But while some congregations were involved in confessional disputes with their teacher(s), some were arguing with other Lutheran congregations. The first major split in the Lutheran Church of Australia occurred in 1846. The various groups then aligned and realigned themselves, but there were basically two Lutheran synods operating in Australia until their union in 1966. With this reunion, came the need to once again discuss the role and functions of schools. Both groups owned and operated schools, but the underlying expectations and nature of the schools had developed differently due to their different connections with Lutheran synods overseas. These differences can be summarised:

The Evangelical Lutheran Church of Australia became heavily involved with and influenced by the Missouri Synod in the USA, which saw the essential linking of secular and religious education... They taught the state curriculum, but believed that the church had the duty to intertwine this with the more hidden curriculum of religious beliefs and values. In essence it was a nurture model of education very much concerned with imparting the essential elements of the Lutheran and Christian faith.

On the other hand the United Evangelical Lutheran Church of Australia maintained a closer link with the German Church that did not have as a high priority the establishment of religious schools. They saw that education was more the responsibility of the government and where congregations established schools, they had to clearly understand that they were operating outside of the church domain. Thus where Lutheran schools were set up, they were secular with the addition of some religious teaching. The setting up of Lutheran schools in Australia for this synod then came about in many ways for the teaching of languages to

prepare suitable candidates for the seminary. The role of the Lutheran school in Christian nurture was not strong, this being more the responsibility of the parents and pastor in the home and congregational activity. (Bartel, 2004, p. 23)

The unified church found itself responsible for two sets of schools founded on distinctly different assumptions. Dialogue about the role and purpose of Lutheran schools, and the place of Lutheran confessional theology at the centre of institutions striving for academic excellence began again in earnest. Several significant texts emerged during the 1970s and 80s (Janetzki, 1985; Kleinig, 1975, 1977). Bartsch (2001) continued the exploration of the dialogue between Lutheran schools and their core theology. The school system has matured to the point where there is fundamental recognition that schools must simultaneously be true to Lutheran confessional theology operating in practice, and be places of educational excellence. Bartel (2004) contributed to the dialogue with a discussion on the relationship between school pastors and principals. He found “The purpose of the school, appeared, on the surface, to be well articulated by both principals and school pastors” (p. 109). However, he also discovered that there were differences in how this common understanding translated into school practice, and reflected that:

The issue of the purpose of the Lutheran school seemed to revolve not simply around an appreciation of the ‘essence’ or church doctrine surrounding the Lutheran school, but more around the process of how to bring this essence into meaningful dialogue and interaction within the school community. (p. 121)

Part of the role of the leader in a Lutheran school is to be involved in the process of interpreting key doctrine and turning it into leadership practice which at very least operates comfortably in tandem with an emphasis on excellent education. Part of the current study was to explore how involved deputy principals were in this process. It was therefore necessary to discuss the implications of Lutheran confessional theology on the principles and practice of leadership in Lutheran schools.

## **2.8 Significant Theological Areas**

Lutheranism is a confessional movement based on the Book of Concord of 1580. This contains the Apostles’, Nicene and Athanasian Creeds, the

unaltered Augsburg Confession; the Apology (defense) of the Augsburg Confession; the Smalcald Articles, Luther's Small and Large Catechisms and the Formula of Concord (Kolb & Wengert, 2000). However, the confessional writings do not take priority over scripture. The confessional documents themselves make it clear that they are subject to the scriptures. They state that:

We believe, teach and confess that the only rule and guiding principle according to which all teachings and teachers are to be evaluated and judged are the prophetic and apostolic writings of the Old and of the New Testament alone...Other writings of ancient or contemporary teachers, whatever their names may be, shall not be regarded as equal to the Holy Scripture, but all of them together be subjected to it...(Kolb & Wengert, 2000, p. 486)

The Lutheran confessions are subject to the Scriptures, but nevertheless, they play an important role in illuminating theological understandings which are significant for leaders in Lutheran schools. There are a number of key doctrines which appear to impact most significantly on school practice, and hence which are considered in more detail. They are:

1. The Doctrine of the Two Kingdoms;
2. Justification By Grace, Through Faith, By Christ Alone;
3. The Christocentric Principle, and
4. Law and Gospel.

Each of these doctrines is considered in order that their potential impact on Lutheran school leadership may be appreciated.

### ***2.8.1 The Doctrine of the Two Kingdoms***

It is the Doctrine of the Two Kingdoms which enables Lutheran schools to operate within the environment of secondary education. During the nineteenth century, Lutheranism developed a "rigid dualism of two separate spheres, one (Kingdom of the left) having to do with this earthly life, politics and all, the other (Kingdom of the right) with eternal life, everything pertaining to salvation" (Braaten, 1983, p. 124). The gospel did not have anything to do with outward existence, but only with eternal life. Historically, such thinking has resulted in the Lutheran church remaining silent at times when it should have spoken out as a result of Christ's command to love (Luke 10: 30-37), but, it is not, in fact,

a fitting response to the organisation's actual theological position (Braaten, 1983).

The Lutheran Church has struggled to find appropriate language with which to express its view of the relationship between the structures of the world and the church. Luther did not write a systematic treatise on the Doctrine of the Two Kingdoms, although the elements of a complex and highly differentiated doctrine can be found in his sermons and other writings (Braaten, 1983), including his writings on vocation. Braaten reports that Luther spoke of the 'two hands of God'. The 'left hand of God' is a formula meaning that God is universally at work in human life through structure and principles commonly operative in political, economic, and cultural institutions that affect the life of all. However, no matter how much good is experienced in these common structures of life, they do not lead people to know Christ. This is the function of the gospel of God in Jesus Christ, the work of the 'right hand of God'. The Lutheran perspective is that the Two Kingdoms are not two spheres that can be separated, but dimensions that should be distinguished. They illustrate the dual involvement of God in the world. "On the one hand he works creatively to promote what is good for human life in all its personal and social dimensions, and, on the other hand, he works redemptively to bring the world to...Christ" (p. 134).

In Australia, the Lutheran Church is a significant provider of schools. Stolz (2001) wrote:

In this country the Kingdom of the left has chosen to allow the Church to function in the Kingdom of the left. To this end it provides funds for the Church to engage in Christian Education...That means that the Church as Church will seize this opportunity to do the very best in the arena of the left and in the arena of the right. So our schools...will take great pride in fulfilling all the requirements of the Kingdom of the left – best practice, best curriculum, etc. At the same time, the Church will be Church. It will use/seize the opportunity to fulfil the mission of God. (p. 1)

Within the institutions, discussion takes place about the internal implications of the fact that it is recognised that "The Lutheran School is ...linked to the Church, on the one side, and to parents and the State on the other. In theological terms, it straddles the two kingdoms" (Janetzki, 1985, p. 110). Just

as the school straddles both dimensions, so must school leadership. Janetzki perceived being linked to both kingdoms as placing the Lutheran school in a “unique yet precarious position, one that requires great care in determining matters such as aims and purposes of the school and the means and processes by which these aims and purposes are sought” (p. 111). Given the emphasis on purposing (Vaill, 1984), visioning (Bennis & Nanus, 1985) and change management (Fullan, 2001), in leadership literature, it is also apparent that Lutheran school leadership must operate with an active awareness of standing in both dimensions, for they are actively involved in setting and maintaining the very aims, purposes and processes which must straddle both kingdoms in Lutheran schools. Stolz (2001) acknowledged that “by the grace of God most of our schools are now functioning very well in the Kingdom of the left” (p. 2). He challenged the leadership of Lutheran schools with strong words:

The Church as Church has no right to be functioning in the Kingdom of the left unless it unashamedly functions as Church. If we cannot be Church in the arena of the left then we should leave that work to the Kingdom of the left so that they may do what they are called to do. (p. 2)

Principals and deputy principals in Lutheran schools are required to be members of the Lutheran Church of Australia. In conjunction with the school pastor, they are charged with the responsibility of ensuring that the church can function, and is functioning, as church in the school (Lutheran Church of Australia, 2001). Clearly, the LCA understanding of the Doctrine of the Two Kingdoms impacts on the understandings about the leadership approach in Lutheran schools, and has therefore been considered in this study.

### **2.8.1.1 Vocation**

Understanding vocation was also relevant here. Vocation is a concept of the kingdom of the left and not part of God’s saving work. Martin Luther considered that:

The hand, the body, and their vocation belong to earth. There is no redemption in that, but that is not the idea. The purpose is that one’s neighbour be served. Conscience rests in faith in God; and does nothing that contributes to salvation; but hands serve in the vocation, which is God’s downward-reaching work, for the well-being of men. (Wingren, 1957, p.11)

Luther argued that people simultaneously held multiple offices in life; mother, daughter, employee, friend. Each office is a vocation to which one is called by God, and in which one operates in relation to others, and out of love.

Devotion to office is devotion to love, because it is God's own ordering that the work of the office is always dedicated to the well being of one's neighbour. Care for one's office is, in its very frame of reference on earth, participation in God's own care for human beings. (Wingren, 1957, p. 7)

Leaders in Lutheran schools are required to live out their vocation as leaders. This vocation is relational, and based on care for one's neighbour, in this case the students, staff, families and other members of the school community. Lutheran school leaders are involved in the task of identifying and practising what it means to care for a school community because, along with teachers and others, they are God's hands in the school. This impacts on their leadership.

### ***2.8.2 Justification By Grace, Through Faith, By Christ Alone***

The Lutheran teaching of justification by grace, through faith, on account of Christ, emphasises the work of salvation through Jesus Christ. A number of key implications for Lutheran schools arise from the crucial concept of salvation as a gift from God, which no one is worthy to receive by virtue of their own works. These include the concepts of service, of Christ-centredness and of the correct functioning of law and gospel.

### ***2.8.3 Service***

Lutheran confessional theology maintains a focus on the saving work of Christ. The theology of the cross assists in this as a theological lens through which other theological statements are considered. It is also a paradoxical concept whereby God reveals his glory through his suffering. This glory is seen only by faith, and that faith confesses Jesus is Lord. The argument continues:

Because Jesus is Lord, Lutheran theology stresses that his disciples are called to live in service to him through service to others. Each disciple is challenged with living for others (*theologia crucis*) rather than for self (*theologia gloriae*). (Bartsch, 2001, p. 47)

This perspective needs careful unpacking and interpretation in both the church and the school context. This has been, and continues to be, a difficult exercise. Historically it meant that school leaders worked many hours, doing everything from mowing the school oval to lay preaching on Sunday, for school leaders were expected to be congregational leaders as well. Today, school leaders are also expected to be more active in their individual families than perhaps was the case a generation ago. The growing number of female leaders in schools has also brought about change in how service can be defined. Even so, it is too easy to conclude that being of service to others means doing anything and everything that needs doing in a school to the detriment of health, family and responsibility to self. It is the responsibility of current school and system leaders to redefine the concept of service in a way that is both achievable, and true to a Lutheran understanding of the theology of the cross, as well as the concept of vocation. The caution is timely that

the whole life of Christ from incarnation through resurrection must be taken into account. The mathematical point of the cross cannot bear the whole brunt of salvation even though the atonement centres in the cross of Jesus. (Braaten, 1983, p. 74)

When the whole life of Christ is considered, a fuller understanding of service is apparent. It is one which involves all the elements of servant leadership noted in Chapter Three (Section 3.5.4); distributed leadership, followership, substantive leadership, moral leadership and developing other leaders.

This study explored whether the concept of service was embedded in the leadership role of the deputy principal, and what the emphases of this service were.

#### ***2.8.4 The Christocentric Principle***

Lutheran schools claim to be Christ-centred schools. The official Church statement on schools defined a Christ-centred education as one where “the gospel of Jesus Christ informs all learning and teaching, all human relationships, and all activities in the school” (Lutheran Church of Australia, 2001, p. 1). Bartsch (2001) explored the concept further, and rejected a number of limited definitions. These included; viewing Jesus Christ as simply an example by which to live, whereby students receive an ethical framework

and standard of behaviour, but no message about saving grace; viewing Christ-centred as learning about Christ and about the message of the gospel as an academic exercise, without the gospel being seen as a call into a relationship with Christ; and viewing being Christ-centred as maintaining 'gospel values' where the gospel comes to be seen in terms of the law.

On the positive side, Bartsch suggested that Lutheran schools

seek to give expression to the gospel particularly through the development of an environment of forgiveness and acceptance which grows out of the gospel. Through the creation of a fellowship within the school motivated by the gospel, Lutheran schools attempt to demonstrate what living in community in relationship with Jesus Christ means. (Bartsch, 2001, p.80)

Again, Lutheran school leaders must be part of this attempt to demonstrate Lutheran theology in action. The gospel approach calls on Lutheran school leaders to act out of the attitude, "Because I love you, therefore I accept you-whether your performance level is satisfactory or not" (Hebart, 2000, p. 57). Defining what it means to live out such an attitude in the day to day life of a Lutheran school community is a complex task. From the parent who argues that to punish a child for a misdemeanor shows lack of forgiveness, to a student who repeatedly demonstrates that they are unable or unwilling to live within the rules of the community, Lutheran school leaders are continually challenged to define, articulate and demonstrate the practical implications of being a Christ-centred school. This study examined whether the deputy principals perceive a role for themselves in this. It also considered whether the key informants perceived the deputies' role in living out the Lutheran understanding of the implications of living in community in relationship with Christ.

### ***2.8.5 Law and Gospel***

The Lutheran confessions view the Christian person as both sinner and saint "the justified and reborn are, and remain, sinners to the grave" (Kolb & Wengert, 2000, p. 565). The Lutheran school leader needs to understand the implications of the fact that both leaders and followers are simultaneously sinful and perfect in the eyes of God. This is why God's revelation addressed

the individual as both law and gospel. God uses the law for the preservation and maintenance of his creation, and to expose sin as harmful to people, separating them from the will of God. Yet, at the same time, God also operates in the world with the gospel. It is here that God reveals his salvation and the forgiveness of sins (Bartel, 2004).

There is a danger when the law and gospel are confused, that the work of Christ is underestimated and undermined. Hebart (2000) suggested that “Secretly we like laws. Don’t we secretly think that a person who manages to keep five of the ten commandments is better in God’s eyes than the person who keeps none?” (p. 74). Immediately such thinking undermines the reality that “There is no difference, all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God” Romans 3:23 (New International Version). It questions the fundamental understanding that salvation is God’s work, God’s gift. But this does not mean that the law has no place in Lutheran schools. Three uses of the law are recognised and applicable to schools. The law is used to maintain order and justice in society, to lead people to a knowledge of their sin, and as a daily guide to Christian living. Law and gospel are closely related and one cannot operate effectively without the other. Understanding and maintaining the correct balance of law and gospel are part of the leadership function in a Lutheran school. These impact on leadership behaviour, worldview and decision making. The balance of law and gospel is a complex theological issue. In Lutheran secondary schools the deputy principal has traditionally had a role in dealing with discipline issues. It would seem logical then, that leaders dealing with discipline issues demonstrate a relatively complex understanding of Lutheran theology in this area. Consequently, this study explored whether there was a perception that the deputy principal required a complex theological understanding in the area of law and gospel.

### ***2.8.6 Summary of Theological Implications***

The Lutheran church is a confessional movement which requires that its school leaders

focus on living a Lutheran understanding of God’s mission for the world with the intention of influencing and enriching the lives of students, staff

and other members of the school community. This dimension of leadership provides educational opportunities for members of the school community to encounter a Lutheran worldview, to experience its gift and to enhance life decisions in response to it. Guided by such a mission, leaders develop a community of life and worship. (Lutheran Education Australia, 2005c, p.5)

Lutheran theology impacts on the way leaders relate to members of the community, their focus, and what they identify and communicate as significant. Several doctrines are instrumental in guiding these practices. They are:

1. The Two Kingdoms;
2. Justification by grace, through faith, by Christ alone;
3. The Christocentric principal, and
4. Law and Gospel.

This study explored whether the deputies were recognised as involved in areas which required them to understand and incorporate the implications of these theological principles into their practice, and whether this was perceived as leadership.

## **2.9 Church Documents**

Official church and Lutheran Education Australia statements have historically made little reference to school leadership outside of the office of the principal. Earlier statements referring to the principal were reviewed during the 1990s (Lutheran Education Australia, 1993), before a major rewrite in 2001 (Lutheran Education Australia, 2001). There was also significant work on principal leadership completed during the late 1990s in conjunction the development of principal appraisal mechanisms (Lutheran Education Australia, 1999). The impetus for the 2001, and later 2005, rewrites arose from developing the MPP and then the LDP. The documents 'Authentic Leadership for Lutheran Schools' (Lutheran Education Australia, 2001a) and 'The Leadership Framework for Lutheran Schools' (Lutheran Education Australia, 2005c) were developed in conjunction with those programs. As part of the current study an attempt was made to summarise what can be concluded about school leadership from the official church documents. Where

appropriate, links were made to general leadership theories, discussed in more detail in Chapter 3.

### ***2.9.1 The Lutheran Church of Australia and its Schools***

The document 'The Lutheran Church of Australia and its Schools' was adopted by the General Church Council in 1999, and revised in 2001. Its purpose was to define the role and nature of Lutheran schools within the context of the church. It made just two direct references to school leadership. The first was in relation to the principal functioning as the educational leader in the school. This reflected the ideas of instructional leadership (Hallinger & Murphy, 1985). The second was that the school pastor serves as worship leader (delegating this responsibility to teachers when appropriate). There was no direct reference to the deputy principal.

Indirectly, the document did appear to recognise the concepts of purposing (Vaill, 1984), and symbolic leadership (Sergiovanni, 1995), when it referred in two places to teachers who can "model the Christian lifestyle" (Sections 3 and 5). It also acknowledged that "Christian principals, teachers and other staff are key persons in ministry and mission to the world of the school" (Section 3). Some concepts of leadership were implied, but not explored to any extent.

### ***2.9.2 Authentic Leadership for Lutheran Schools***

The statement 'Authentic Leadership for Lutheran Schools' was one of a number developed in 2001 by Lutheran Education Australia as part of the MPP. It was significant in its attempt to define a leadership model for Lutheran schools and began by identifying elements of authentic leadership.

"Authenticity in leadership derives its legitimacy from personal integrity, credibility and a commitment to ethical and moral conduct in leadership practice" (Lutheran Education Australia, 2001a, p. 1). It rapidly became apparent however, that the concept of transformational leadership (Burns, 1978), also underpins the document. "Authentic leaders evaluate their actions and relationships above mere pragmatics and expediency and, thereby, raise themselves and others to higher levels of motivation, morality and spiritual awareness" (p. 1).

It was interesting to note in the context of this study that, while the document commenced in general terms with reference to leaders and leadership, it quickly moved on to refer specifically to principals. In spite of this, the statement was still useful for what it revealed about the way leadership was conceptualised by system authorities.

The document had four sections:

1. The Ministry and Mission of the LCA;
2. Core Qualities;
3. Key Competencies, and
4. Dimensions of Educational Leadership (to which core qualities and key competencies were applied).

The first section clearly stated that the focus of the principal is on the mission and ministry of the LCA. The principal will “promote, enhance and extend the ministry of the LCA” (p. 2). This was seen to require an active participation in a Lutheran congregation and a modelling of a personal Christian faith. This expectation of modelling suggested a link to leadership theories including purposing (Vaill, 1984), visioning (Bennis & Nanus, 1985) symbolic (Sergiovanni, 1995) or substantive leadership (Starratt, 1993), all of which related in some way to communicating the sense of meaning, mission and identity.

The core qualities related to personal disposition, moral disposition and relational disposition. At various points in history leadership has been conceptualised as being about personal disposition (Jennings, 1960), moral disposition (Hodgkinson, 1991) or relational disposition (Homans, 1951; House, 1971; Stogdill, 1959). However, the statement ‘Authentic Leadership for Lutheran Schools’ was indicative of more recent thinking (Gronn, 2000) which recognised that leadership was not adequately explained by any of these factors individually, but was a more complex phenomenon.

The MPP key competencies are defined as a set of attributes or generic professional skills, which demonstrate that the person has the knowledge and skills to do the job. They are:

- Decision making and problem solving;
- Analysis and planning;
- Communication and human interaction;
- Change management, and
- Teamwork and networking.

These competencies also reflected some more general thinking in the area of leadership. For example, they were all elements of one or more of the first three of Sergiovanni's (1995) leadership forces; the technical, human or educational force.

Finally, these core competencies were applied in the areas defined as educational leadership dimensions. These were:

- Promoting teaching and learning;
- Building school culture;
- Nurturing school community;
- Managing school resources, and
- Managing legal issues and industrial issues.

Again, there was evidence of Sergiovanni's leadership forces, but this time the symbolic and the cultural forces were represented also.

### ***2.9.3 Leadership Framework for Lutheran Schools***

The Leadership Framework For Lutheran Schools (Lutheran Education Australia, 2005c) was developed in conjunction with the LDP and was the most recent Lutheran system statement relating to leadership. The concept of authentic leadership was still very strong in the document, which attempted to unpack in even more detail what authentic leadership looked like. The idea of transformational leadership was again apparent. "Authentic leaders raise themselves and others to higher levels of motivation, ethical conduct and spiritual awareness" (p. 1). It also included a reference to vocation (p. 2), which was clearly based on Luther's understanding of the concept.

The leadership framework moved away from the concept and language of leadership competencies and developed the idea of 'capabilities'. These

capabilities appeared to be defined more holistically than the leadership competencies of the MPP. The six capabilities were:

- Theological;
- Personal;
- Relational;
- Professional;
- Managerial, and
- Strategic.

These capabilities were perceived to be an “all round human quality, an integration of knowledge, skills, personal qualities and understanding” (p. 2). Within the definitions and indicators of the capabilities various leadership understandings emerged. Authentic leadership, systems of relationships, instructional and visionary leadership were all present.

The leadership capabilities were exercised in the leadership dimensions. The same language was used in the MPP, but the dimensions have been redefined. Of interest for the purpose of this study was the continuing recognition of the culture building nature of leadership, the substantive nature of leadership and the explicit Lutheran identity – in the sense of living Lutheran theology and demonstrating a Lutheran theological worldview - expected in a Lutheran school leader.

It was interesting to note that the leadership framework document made no reference to principals. It spoke only of ‘leadership’ and hence was consistent with the more inclusive nature of the LDP. The LDP supporting documentation made reference to the leadership framework in a manner which suggested an awareness of recent trends in leadership theory, including distributed leadership, teacher leadership and collaborative leadership. It suggests that:

Lutheran schools are increasingly seeing the value of distributing leadership throughout the school...range of middle and senior management positions...In addition, it is important that the classroom teacher can also influence the school in the achievement of its mission. A good leader sees an important component of their task as bringing out the leadership potential in others... Shared leadership, and positive and empowering relationships with staff are highlighted. The model of

leadership in that document is collaborative and inclusive. (Lutheran Education Australia, 2005b, p.1)

The inclusion of the relatively recent concept of shared (Pearce & Conger, 2003), distributed or devolved leadership (A. Harris et al., 2003), was noted, but it appeared that the concept was more explicit in the LDP supporting documents than it actually was in the leadership framework itself. The supporting documents stated that “Lutheran schools are increasingly seeing the value of distributing leadership” (Lutheran Education Australia, 2005b) but, while the framework document does not preclude distributed or collaborative leadership, and perhaps implies it variously, it lacked a direct, explicit statement about shared leadership and what this means in a Lutheran school.

#### ***2.9.4 Other Lutheran Education Australia Documents***

Reference was made to Lutheran school leadership in a number of other documents.

##### ***2.9.4.1 The Policy Relating to Staffing in Lutheran Schools***

The Policy Relating to Staffing in Lutheran Schools (Lutheran Education Australia, 2000c) referred to the educational requirements for those who aspire to lead a school.

##### ***2.9.4.2 Statement on Good Practice for P-12 Colleges***

The statement on good practice for P-12 colleges was significant in that it was the only document that made a specific reference to leadership teams.

The teamwork and cooperation and common commitment of the P-12 leadership team of principal and leaders of various sections is crucial. They must set the tone for cooperation. Chinks in the leadership team will soon be exploited by those more comfortable with the old paradigms. (Lutheran Education Australia, 1996, p. 3)

The document did not flesh out the nature of the leadership team in terms of whether it was intended to be a genuine example of shared or devolved leadership, or just a collection of people in management positions who meet together on a more or less ad hoc basis, so it was of limited value for this study.

#### **2.9.4.3 Church Membership and Lutheran School Leadership**

The core of the policy on 'Church Membership and Lutheran School Leadership' was that principals of Lutheran schools shall be Lutheran.

The model constitution requires that the Lutheran School operates according to the Confessions of the LCA. This means that those who lead them need to have both knowledge and an acceptance of them....The principal is required to provide spiritual and theological leadership to the school. Only Lutherans can be expected to fulfil these expectations. (Lutheran Education Australia, 2001b, p. 1)

This policy was of significance because it was the only one that made a specific reference to the deputy principal.

Because of their significant role in shaping the nature of the Lutheran school and having at times to represent the school, this policy also applies to the positions of deputy principal and head of sub-schools (p. 2).

There was a suggestion therefore, that deputy principals had a role in the type of substantive leadership involved in identifying and communicating what is important and valued in a school.

#### **2.9.4.4 Support for Principals, Contract Renewal, Performance Appraisal for Development**

The documents 'Support for Principals', 'Contract Renewal' and 'Performance Appraisal for Development' related primarily to principals. In the contract renewal document the term 'leadership' was used without being defined, either explicitly or implicitly (Lutheran Education Australia, 2000a). The support for principals document recognised the principal as an educational leader who was responsible to the governing council for the total program of the school (Lutheran Education Australia, 2000d). The appraisal document made reference to the increasing complexity of the principal's role in schools, the accountability of the role, and the importance of a "reflective leadership culture" (Dempster & Lindsay, 1999, p. 2). Taken together, these three documents indicated some thinking about the principal's leadership around the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, but nothing is suggested about leadership at any other level.

#### **2.9.4.5 Women in Leadership**

While the discussion document on women in leadership pre-dated the major statements on leadership in Lutheran schools and did not have the same status, it did contain a specific reference to shared leadership.

Leadership belongs to the school or organisation and does not reside in the position of the principal. The principal is one manifestation of leadership in the school. How can we promote and support shared leadership and more inclusive models of leadership? (Lutheran Education Australia, 2000e, p. 15)

The question posed here was still relevant. This study provided some indication of whether a shared leadership model was perceived to exist in schools in 2005. It was notable, if somewhat stereotypical, that the first significant reference to shared leadership in publicly available LEA documentation, was in a document which explored issues to do with gender imbalance and the experiences of women in leadership positions in LCA schools.

#### **2.9.4.6 Core Propositions of Highly Effective Teachers**

There was no direct reference to teacher leadership in the five core propositions describing highly effective teachers in Lutheran schools (Lutheran Education Australia, 2000b). However, as the propositions were teased out, there were expressions of leadership in the explanations. To the extent that concepts of servanthood, vocation, living out a Lutheran worldview, collaborative membership in a learning community, reflective practice and empowering of others are parts of leadership, they were present in this document.

#### **2.9.5 Summary of Documents**

It was evident that the focus on developing leaders, which led first to the MPP and then the LDP, has also had the effect of channeling effort into the writing of official documents, which attempted to explore what leadership meant in a Lutheran school context. Prior to the two major leadership statements in 2001 and 2005, the concept of leadership as represented in the official church documents was underdeveloped. Leadership outside the office of the principal (except, perhaps, the pastor) was rarely explicitly recognised. There was no

attempt until 2001 to define a particular leadership model for Lutheran schools, in spite of various expressions of the perceived distinctiveness of Lutheran schools, which might have suggested a need for one. The earlier documents did, however, indicate some awareness of the developments in conceptualising leadership taking place outside the Lutheran school community, without exploring them in any detail.

The most extensive official LCA statements on school leadership 'Authentic Leadership for Lutheran Schools' (Lutheran Education Australia, 2001a) and 'The Leadership Framework for Lutheran Schools' (Lutheran Education Australia, 2005c), used much more of the language of recent conceptions of leadership. The two documents supported the many church documents which referred to the commitment of the principal to the mission and ministry of the church through the school. The extent to which this leadership function was interpreted in schools to extend beyond the office of the principal was explored in some depth in the current study. The documents did reflect an emerging, but underdeveloped understanding of the implications and practice of shared or devolved leadership in Lutheran schools. This study may have provided some insight as to how this conception of leadership was developing in practice in schools.

## **2.10 Summary**

It is widely acknowledged that schools operate in an increasingly complex environment, and are evermore elaborate institutions. The Lutheran context added to, and was also informed by, this general school environment. Lutheran school leadership occurs in an intricate theological and social environment. The work of the leader in defining, articulating, communicating and demonstrating the living implications of the underpinning theology, becomes more involved as the social environment becomes further complicated. This study explored the leadership of the deputy within this context. In order to do this, it was first necessary to consider the scholarly literature associated with organisational leadership, educational leadership (including various ideas of multiple sources leadership within schools) and the role of the deputy principal. This provided the framework for exploring the

understandings about leadership embedded in the current role of the deputy principal in Lutheran secondary schools.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **Review of the Literature**

#### **3.1 Introduction**

Twenty first century schools are increasingly complex places operating in complicated environments (Senge, 2000). Concurrently, contemporary leadership theorists are espousing sophisticated, relational models of leadership, and school leadership is being explicitly differentiated from leadership in other types of organisations in ways that make effective school leadership a difficult exercise (Pearce & Conger, 2003; Sergiovanni, 2001). Leadership in schools, therefore, is recognised as a complex phenomenon occurring in a complicated environment. The pool of principal candidates is shrinking in many sectors, and research suggests that numbers of suitably qualified and experienced educators are choosing not to take up principal positions (Neidhart & Carlin, 2003). The demands on school principals are considerable. It has become apparent that they cannot effectively lead schools which are devoid of other sources of leadership. One conclusion is that “distributed leadership is an idea whose time has come” (Gronn, 2000, p. 333).

In these circumstances alert schools and school systems are involved in the process of identifying, developing and resourcing leadership beyond the office of the principal. It seemed reasonable to expect that this process would have a focus on the deputy principal. Surprisingly, much of the research on deputy principals suggested otherwise (Harvey, 1997; Koru, 1993). Evidence indicated that in many schools the role of the deputy has not been intentionally developed in leadership terms, in spite of the changing nature of schools and the changing beliefs about what constitutes school leadership.

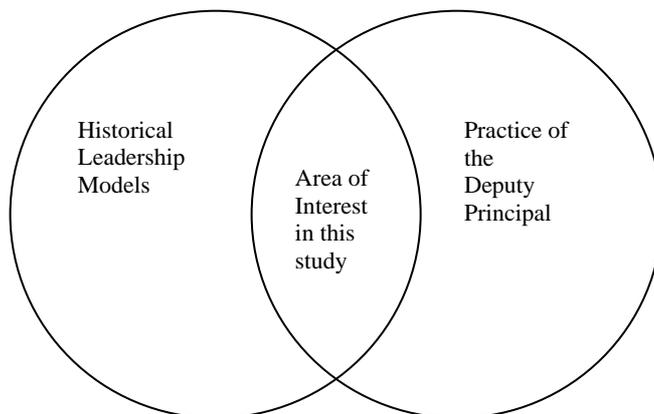
A survey of the literature indicated four areas of special importance for this research: key themes in the historical debate about what constitutes leadership, reflection on schools as organisations and the relevance of organisational leadership theories, reconceptualising educational leadership, and research about deputy principals. The fundamental collection of scholarly

literature which underpinned this study came from these areas. They were significant because a major aim of this study was to examine the leadership understandings embedded in the role of the Lutheran school deputy principal in order to recognise how they reflected the understandings of leadership in scholarly literature. It was necessary to consider the historical conceptualisations of school leadership in order to explore how the deputy principals' leadership was perceived to overlap this theory.

This chapter presents a critical synthesis of the scholarly literature related to leadership in schools. There was an assumption that the actual practice of leadership in schools would reflect one or more general theoretical models. This assumption guided the review of the literature and was reflected in the conceptual framework. Attempts were made to explore critically what was perceived as leadership in various models, and how well these models were seen to extrapolate into the school situation.

### **3.2 Conceptual Framework**

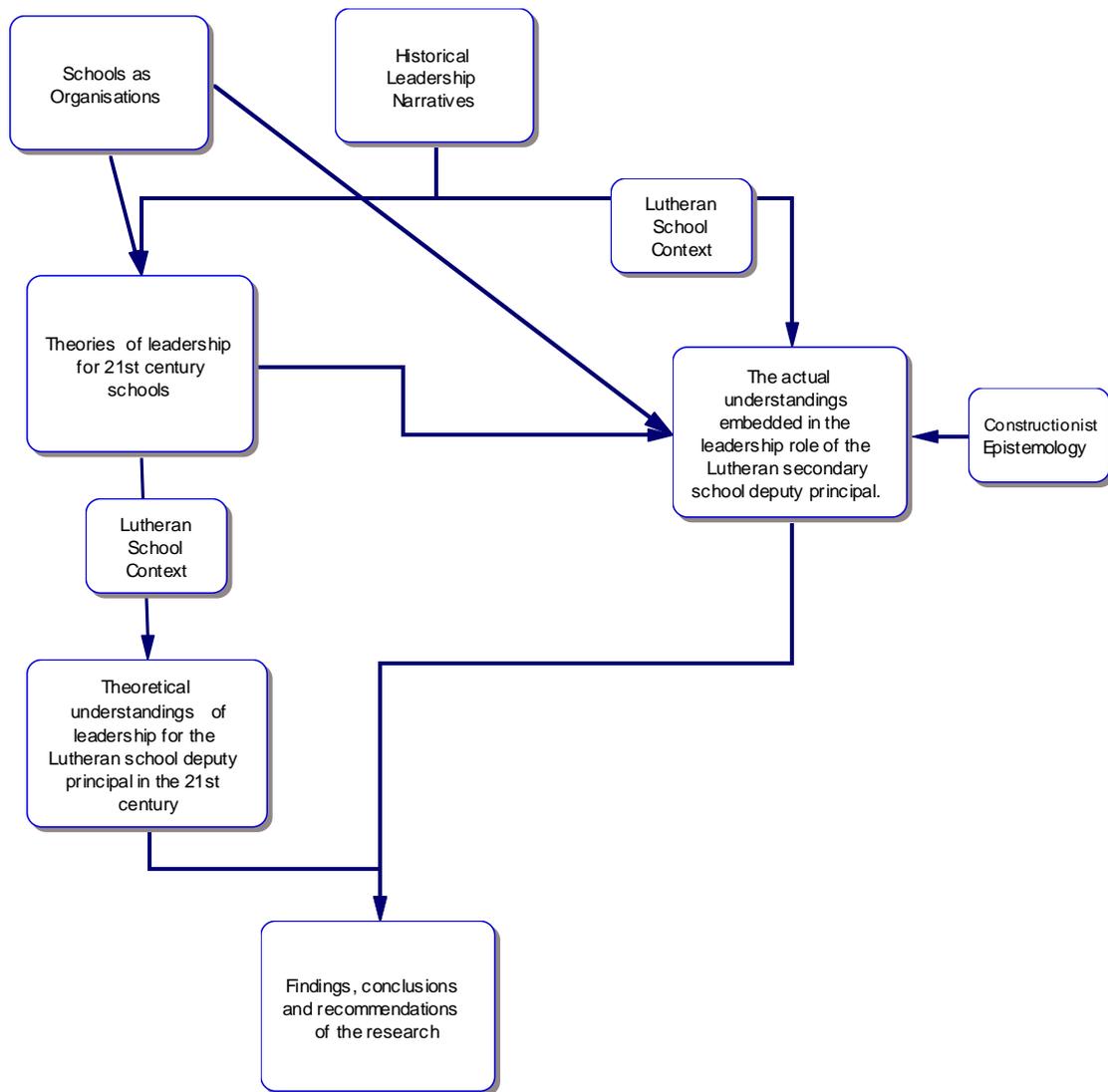
For the purpose of this study, it was important that the literature was reviewed broadly and older leadership theories were considered. This was necessary since critical exploration of the complex phenomenon of leadership, and the equally complex debate about the nature of schools and school leadership, must acknowledge that leadership practice may not change as rapidly as theoretical developments. This potential gap between leadership theory and practice was of interest to the study. On one level the conceptual framework was straightforward. What explanations of leadership have been suggested by theorists? What were deputy principals doing in practice? Where do these overlap? This simple understanding of the whole study is illustrated in Figure 3.1.



**Figure 3.1 The broad location of the study**

In this review it was also recognised that there were conceptual ambiguities surrounding the phenomenon of leadership. The lack of a broadly shared understanding of what leadership means has been variously acknowledged (Leithwood & Duke, 1999; Richmon & Allison, 2003; Stogdill, 1974). Thus, school based discussion of leadership in terms of the deputy principal might come from various ideological frames of reference that constituted different and sometimes opposing beliefs and priorities about what was necessary for leadership. It therefore became essential to note that this research was underpinned by a constructionist approach. Leadership was what theorists and participants constructed it to be. This research explored where these constructed understandings overlapped.

Figure 3.2 illustrates the areas covered in the literature review and how these contributed to the outcomes of the study. The review identified and conceptualised the potential leadership of the deputy principal. The literature determined and clarified what might be necessary for professional leadership in schools. The review critically considered literature associated with historical leadership models, the relevance of these models for leadership in schools, the nature of schools as institutions requiring leadership and the role of the deputy principal in schools.



**Figure 3.2 Conceptual Framework**

To identify and conceptualise what the leadership of the deputy principal could be, as well as reflect on what it is actually perceived to be, a number of areas were considered. General leadership theory and discussion about the nature of school organisations provided the basis for consideration of understandings of leadership for 21<sup>st</sup> century schools. These, in turn, had implications for the leadership role of the deputy principal in Lutheran schools. The emphasis of the literature review was on how the leadership of the deputy has been conceptualised in the past, and what is being suggested for the future.

The Lutheran context also impacted on the meanings associated with leadership at the level of the deputy. This material was explored in Chapter 2

and was shown in the above diagram as influencing both the theory and practice of the leadership of the deputy in the Lutheran school.

### **3.3 Leadership Theory**

#### **3.3.1 Historical Overview: What Constitutes Leadership?**

The study of leadership lacks shared understanding about its nature and central concepts (Richmon & Allison, 2003). This has not prevented numerous attempts to define and research it. A proliferation of studies exists based on different understandings and assumptions about leadership. Various attempts have been made to provide a conceptual framework for categorising the studies (Bass, 1981; House & Baetz, 1979; Jago, 1982; Richmon & Allison, 2003; Sashkin, 2004; Stogdill, 1974). In spite of this, there is debate about whether progress has been made in understanding the nature of leadership. It has been argued that any narrative which suggested the study of leadership had moved through progressive stages was misleading.

There are more scholars and practitioners who think of leadership as group facilitation in the 1980s than there were in the 1930s. Using traits as an explanation of leadership in the 1980s is as popular as it was in the 1950s. And the great man/woman theory of leadership is as strong in 1990 as it was in 1890. (Rost, 1993, p.19)

Whether this situation has persisted during the last decade is immaterial for the current study, although Sashkin (2004) perceived development in that “various new approaches have incorporated more than just one of the classic triad of trait, behaviour, and situational variables” (p. 172). For the purposes of this study it was not crucial to establish a chronological progression of leadership ideas, although comment was made on whether the leadership understandings revealed in the study reflect current emphases. It was, however, necessary to be aware of the major themes and language of leadership, in order to identify if the phenomenon existed within the context of the position of deputy principal. Rost also suggested caution here. He argued that narratives which suggested that the different theories of leadership were separate and distinct movements, were also untrue.

The reality is that the movements and the models they produced were not distinct from one another. The theories are a mish-mash of the structural-functionalist framework of groups and organizations. The models feed on one another and are so intertwined that they are

indistinguishable except to intellectuals who study leadership as a profession. (Rost, 1993, p. 23)

If it was accepted that the historical conceptualisation of leadership was not linear, and that the leadership theories were not discrete, it followed that a particular historical understanding, or a number of them, may have been guiding practice in schools today. The present study explored the understandings about leadership embedded in the role of the deputy principal, and sought to link these with one or more leadership theories. This was done by comparing the components and description of leadership identified by the key informants with various historical understandings of leadership.

### **3.3.2 Defining Key Terms**

A number of key words, or concepts, associated with leadership have emerged in the literature since Burns' (1978) seminal work on transformational leadership. Terminology including participative and collaborative (D. Hayes, 1995); visionary (Bass, 1985; Bennis & Nanus, 1985; Conger & Kanungo, 1998; Kouzes & Posner, 1995); instructional (Hallinger, 1992); purposive (Vaill, 1984); a range of 'moral' theories (Fullan, 2001; Grace, 1995; Hodgkinson, 1991; Sergiovanni, 1992; Starratt, 1993); further work on transformational (Bass, 1985); emotional intelligence (Goleman, 1995) and shared (Pearce & Conger, 2003) have become part of the lexicon of leadership. The terminology encompassed different understandings and conceptualisations of leadership.

These different understandings were also reflected in the discussion of the difference between leadership and management. The arguments can be summarised as follows:

Nobody has proposed that managing and leading are equivalent, but the degree of overlap is the point of difference. Some writers contend that the two are qualitatively different, even mutually exclusive. The essence of this argument seems to be that managers are oriented towards stability and leaders are oriented towards innovation; managers get people to do things more efficiently, whereas leaders get people to agree about what things should be done.... A contrary view is taken by other writers ...From their perspective, it is desirable to view leading and managing as distinct processes, but not to view leaders and managers as different types of people. (Yukl, 1994, p. 4)

So it could be concluded that “the use of simplistic stereotypes to label people as either managers or leaders does little to advance our understanding of leadership” (p. 4). For the purpose of this study, where the emphasis was on how the participants understood leadership, there was limited reflection on whether their understandings could be seen as leadership or management using various definitions of the term, but this was considered to be of secondary importance. The key focus was on what the participants understood as leadership, although comments on the adequacy of this understanding in the current context of Lutheran schools are made as necessary to support the recommendations of the study.

While acknowledging that leadership is a contested concept where the development of ideas may not be linear or distinct, it was still necessary to briefly outline a number of leadership concepts so that the language of leadership becomes familiar. Short descriptions of key terms are located in the Glossary. The definitions for the Great Man, Leadership Styles, Path-Goal, Transformational, Instructional, Participative and Moral Leadership were those used by Richmon and Allison (2003). Other definitions were variously sourced. All of the terms were used in the discussion. Definitions were provided in the interests of a common understanding for the present study.

### ***3.3.3 Developments During the Last Decade***

Significant work in the area of leadership theory was done during the last decade. One position was that there was no natural entity or essence that could be labeled leadership and research had yielded a mass of largely inconclusive results which only demonstrated that leadership means different things to different people in different contexts (Lakomski, 1999). But was this lack of conclusiveness a reason to abandon the concept of leadership? An alternative stance was that a fundamental reconceptualisation of the nature of leadership within organisations was necessary. It has been suggested that “distributed leadership is an idea whose time has come”, and is already in existence, although “mostly only...as a euphemism for collaboration and spreading the burden of decision making” (Gronn, 2000, p. 333).

Others (A. Harris et al., 2003) also explored the view that leadership was not about the personality or behaviours of individuals. New exemplars have been developed. These new models of leadership

recognize that effectiveness in living systems of relationships does not depend on individual, heroic leaders but rather on leadership practices embedded in a system of interdependencies at different levels within the organisation...New models conceptualize leadership as a more relational process, a shared or distributed phenomenon occurring at different levels and dependent on social interactions and networks of influence. (Fletcher & Kaufer, 2003, p. 21)

Concurrent with this increased emphasis on relational networks and distributed leadership, various moral leadership theories were being developed. Donaldson (2001) used a model based on three streams: building relationships, mutual moral purpose and shared belief in action which improves student learning. Starratt (2004) explored ethical leadership in detail. This required the leader to be authentic, which, he suggested, was defined in terms of oneself, one's relationships and one's freedoms. Therefore:

The virtue of authenticity is that it obliges us to be true to ourselves and to our relationships at the same time that it obliges us to honor and preserve the rights of others to be true to themselves and their relationships. The virtue of authenticity therefore has simultaneously a personal and a social moral dynamic. (p. 80)

In spite of the confusion surrounding the study of leadership, it appeared that many recent developments reflected increasingly complex relational and personal characteristics. More detail about these developments, and their relevance for schools, is considered below.

### **3.3.4 Summary**

The history of leadership theory is characterised by conceptual uncertainty and lack of agreement about what leadership is. As a result, multiple overlapping and intertwined theories leading to a number of non distinct leadership models have emerged. There is no agreed response to the question of what constitutes leadership.

This research explored what was understood about deputy principals in terms of leadership in Lutheran secondary schools. It was recognised that there may

be overlap between leadership theory and the practice of deputies, but the research did not depend on a single definition of leadership. The study focused on what understandings of leadership were apparent, and which concepts of leadership emerged in practice. The underpinning constructionist basis was consistent with the assumption that people in different contexts attach different meanings to the concept of the deputy principal's leadership.

The literature review aimed to be broad enough to accommodate a wide range of possibilities, and encompass material which might otherwise be considered dated. It was also necessary to locate thinking about leadership theory more precisely in the general context of schools.

### **3.4 Leadership Theory and Changing Perceptions of Schools as Organisations.**

#### ***3.4.1 The Bureaucratic Model of Leadership***

Educational administration has a history of following in the footsteps of general trends in organisational development. The dominant, if unacknowledged, picture of schooling since the industrial revolution has been that of an assembly line.

Like any assembly line, the system was organized in discrete stages. Called grades, they segregated children by age. Everyone was supposed to move from stage to stage together. Each stage had local supervisors – the teachers responsible for it...The whole school was designed to run at uniform speed, complete with bells and rigid daily time schedules. (Senge, 2000, p. 30)

Given such thinking, it seemed logical to conclude that successful school leadership mirrors successful management of an assembly line. It was about “rationality and control, not creativity and innovation” (Crawford, 2003, p. 64). The classical bureaucratic leadership model, emphasising such rationality and control, influenced school leadership in four ways:

1. Formal authority must be vested in specific roles to assure school-wide safety, orderliness, and productivity;
2. The people in these roles must be able to organize a rational institutional process so that the school's core work with students is uniform and meets state standards;

3. Leaders must be well informed, have access to governing and funding bodies, and be able to control personnel, and
4. Leaders must be able to shape the school to meet emerging needs in its environment and among its students. (Donaldson, 2001, p. 4)

The traditional role of the deputy principal reflected these criteria in numerous ways. Examples include the work of the deputy as the daily organiser, the timetabler, the chief disciplinarian, the writer of procedural documents, and as an ex officio member of the governing body. The connection between the deputy and bureaucratic organisations has also been explored by others (Hartzell, 1993b). The conclusion was that “the deputy principalship is intimately linked with the bureaucratic model of school organisation, emphasising a line of authority, close supervision of staff and standardised procedures” (Harvey, 1997, p. 111).

### ***3.4.2 Schools as Organisations***

The difficulty with the connection between the deputy and the bureaucratic model of school organisation is the suggestion that modern schools cannot be classified as bureaucratic organisations (Sergiovanni, 1996). A bureaucratic model assumed that schools were predictable places, which had common problems, and common transferable solutions. There is growing consensus that this is not the reality of schools today. Schools today are not predictable. “Patterns of school practice are actually characterized by a great deal of uncertainty, instability, complexity, and variety” (Sergiovanni, 1995, p. 31).

School problems are not easily solved. “The reality is that we do not know how to solve the educational and social problems we face. Success is not a matter of simply implementing someone’s nostrum. The problems are deep-seated and multi-faceted” (Levin, 2001, p. 198).

It was demonstrated that schools were fundamentally different from other types of organisations (Sergiovanni, 1996), and were not bureaucratic structures in the way Weber (translated by Andreski, 1983) defined them. Hence, Weber’s notion of ‘legitimate power’ (cited in Crowther, Hann, & Andrews, 2002, p. 10) on which conceptions of authority long found in schools

are based, was not, in fact, very useful. Therefore traditional management theories may not fit well with the practice of schools. Such theories were best suited to situations, which were linear, tightly structured and required routine levels of competence and performance. Schools, on the other hand, are characterised by nonlinear human interactions, that is, the results of the interactions cannot be predicted; loose structuring, which means that where aspects of schools are connected, the connections are often blurred by other connections, and are rarely characterised by strong and direct influence; and extraordinary performance requirements, which occur when people are transformed from subordinates to followers, who respond to ideas, values, beliefs and purposes (Sergiovanni, 1995).

A similar argument was used as the driving force behind a notion of educational leadership as a moral art.

A crucial difference between educational and other subsets of administration such as hospital, police, industry and commerce is lack of goal specificity. All of the latter know with some clarity what determines an effective organization, and the evaluation criteria are built in through rational measures...In education, the educational enterprise does not always know where it is going, or what it is actually accomplishing, or even how to do what is supposed to be its primary role – the teaching and learning process. (Hodgkinson, 1991, p. 62)

Others (Hanna, 1997; Scott, 1992) characterised schools as open systems that must interact with the environment to preserve their inherent organizational structure. This structure defined the relationship among the multiple constituents in the school.

Now if schools were not, in fact, bureaucratic organisations, then it followed that bureaucratic leadership models were likely to be inappropriate. New thinking about school leadership was required. The next part of this chapter explored some of these newer insights. It remained to be seen however, how much of this thinking was actually reflected in current school practice.

### **3.4.3 Summary**

Historically, schools have been perceived as bureaucratic organizations with common goals, common problems and common solutions. School leadership

models have reflected this, with hierarchical structures emphasising positional authority.

Alternatively, it has been suggested (Senge, 2000; Sergiovanni, 1995; 1996; Starratt, 2003) that the theory of school management had moved beyond this rational, bureaucratic approach. Schools were increasingly perceived as fluid places with blurred connections and loose structures. Within this context, traditional leadership structures might no longer be best practice. The adequacy of traditional leadership approaches was questioned:

Much of what has been considered mainstream educational literature makes unsupportable assumptions that (a) truly professional administrators make rational decisions based on facts derived from scientific research; (b) educational administrators work within (or can create) rational organisational systems; and (c) they can control the school as an organisation (and, indeed, have the responsibility and right to do so) by applying scientifically grounded knowledge to make the school work according to rationally derived goals. (Starratt, 2003, p. ix)

The increasing awareness that these assumptions were unsupportable did not automatically imply that schools had changed their leadership practice. The present study explored the role of the deputy principal and considered whether the bureaucratic leadership model still dominated the understandings of leadership apparent in this role.

### **3.5 Reconceptualisation of Educational Leadership Theory**

Along with the evolution in school organisational models, some thinking about leadership has challenged traditional understandings of school leadership. There is a growing emphasis on the relationship between leadership and school improvement, and especially improved student outcomes (A. Harris, 2004). Developments in the reconceptualisation of educational leadership were summarised in three steps as follows:

1. Serious critique of positional or authority-based leadership has generated a range of inclusive concepts. Notions such as 'distributed leadership', 'leadership as an organisation-wide quality', 'leadership of the many', 'community of leaders', 'role based leadership', and 'co-leadership' now occupy a prominent place in the educational administration literature;

2. Emphasis on the relationship between educational leadership and enhanced school outcomes. A growing body of research points to the importance of leadership through processes of professional learning in sustained school environment, and
3. The leadership roles and functions of classroom teachers in case studies of successful school reform have been elucidated. (Crowther, Hann, & McMaster, 2001, p. 12)

The focus on teaching and learning in reconceptualising educational leadership was reflected elsewhere (Bennett, Crawford, & Cartwright, 2003; Donaldson, 2001; Senge, 2000; Sergiovanni, 2001). School leaders are increasingly “being held accountable for how well teachers teach and how much students learn” (Leithwood & Riehl, 2003, p. 1). This required leaders to focus on setting direction for the school, developing people and developing the organisation. Some key aspects of these foci included:

1. Effective educational leaders help their schools develop visions that embody the best thinking about teaching and learning. They help create shared meanings and understandings to support the school’s vision. They set an example to follow that is consistent with the school’s values and goals;
2. Effective leaders encourage reflection and challenge their staff to examine assumptions about their work. They enable teachers and others to understand and gain mastery over the complexities of necessary changes;
3. Effective leaders enable the school to function as a professional learning community to support and sustain the performance of all key workers, including teachers as well as students. They do this through strengthening school culture, modifying organizational structure, building collaborative processes and managing the environment, and
4. Leaders in highly diverse contexts help identify and implement forms of teaching and learning that are appropriate and effective for the populations they serve. (Leithwood & Riehl, 2003, pp. 3-6)

In the Leithwood and Riehl scenario, leadership was a function more than a role. School leaders were those who provided direction and exerted influence in order to achieve the school’s goals. Leadership, according to this model, could be distributed across many roles and functions in the school. In addition to administrators, teachers, parents and students were all potential sources of leadership.

The following sections explored a number of reconceptualisations of educational leadership in more detail. Instructional, distributed, servant and substantive leadership, authentic and teacher leaders, as well as the connections with followership and visioning are considered. Instructional, distributed and teacher leadership appear to follow from the three steps of reconceptualisation noted above (Crowther et al, 2001). The connections to servant leadership are explored. Substantive and authentic leadership are considered in terms of an additional step expressed as moral leadership.

### ***3.5.1 Instructional Leadership***

The concept of instructional leadership (Hallinger & Murphy, 1985) was developed in the context of school leadership. In its original form, it referred to the work of principals, who were considered the primary source of insight into the school's whole educational program. The aim of this kind of leadership was to promote effective instruction in schools. LCA documents recognised the principal as an instructional leader (Lutheran Church of Australia, 2001, Section 2.2), while there was no mention of the deputy principal.

During the early 1990s concern was expressed over the compatibility of the principal's role as an instructional leader with emerging conceptions of teacher leadership and professionalism (cited in Hallinger, 1992, p. 35). Hallinger (1992) expected the future would "find continued dissemination of the 1980s instructional leadership model with limited adaptations for shared decision making" (p. 46). This suggested a potential role for the deputy principal as an instructional leader in a shared decision making leadership model.

The potential for the deputy principal to be directly involved in the core business of the school as an instructional leader was a significant change of direction. In order to explore this further, it seemed necessary to consider distributed leadership in more detail.

### ***3.5.2 Distributed Leadership***

Understandings of shared, devolved, or distributed leadership (Fletcher & Kaufer, 2003; A. Harris et al., 2003; Pearce & Conger, 2003) raised further

questions about the adequacy of the traditional role of the deputy principal. “Understanding distributed leadership this way inevitably challenges assumptions about the nature and scope of leadership activity as it reconceptualizes leadership in terms of the many rather than the few” (A. Harris, 2004, p. 13). This suggested that the deputy principal was well placed to have a significant leadership role in the school as part of a distributed leadership model. The definition of distributed leadership varied. A review of the literature indicated there was “little agreement as to the meaning of the term” (Bennett, Harvey, Wise, & Woods, 2003, p. 2) and that it was useful to think about distributed leadership not as another technique or practice but as “a way of thinking about leadership” (p. 2)

Distributed leadership has also been discussed in the school context. It can be defined as

a form of leadership premised upon the leadership capability of the many rather than the few, and centrally concerned with building the capacity for organisational growth and change... (it suggests) leadership that is distributed, instructionally focused and ultimately teacher owned. (A. Harris et al., 2003, p. 2)

The focus on instruction was not the same as the positional instructional leadership model defined by Hallinger and Murphy (1985), although there were overlapping elements of the type anticipated by Hallinger (1992). In a distributed leadership model, where leadership is instructional, it was dispersed to those who had the most influence over teaching and learning. The principal was not the delegated instructional leader just because he or she was the principal. “Distributed leadership concentrates on engaging expertise wherever it exists within the organization rather than seeking this only through formal position or role” (A. Harris, 2004, p. 13). It is recognised as more than collaboration between teachers.

The important delineation between forms of team-working, collegiality, collaboration and distributed leadership is the fact that distributed leadership results from the activity... it is a product of a conjoint activity such as network learning communities, study groups, inquiry partnerships, and not simply another label for that activity. (p. 15)

It seems that there is a synergy about distributed leadership. A. Harris perceived it as a product of conjoint activity, not a label for it. A product has a

distinctive nature which is somehow different from the materials used to create it. Distributed leadership is a distinct outcome of united activity which is unobtainable without that activity, but is more than just the activity. The sum of distributed leadership is greater than the parts, hence distributed leadership involves more than a group of individuals striving to perform distinct roles. Schools are an environment where nothing is discrete (Senge, 2000). Distributed leadership involves a synergy that is not necessarily apparent when it is just “a euphemism for collaboration and spreading the burden of decision making” (Gronn, 2000, p. 333). This is not to argue that distributed leadership does not involve collaboration, participation and shared decision making, but it is construed in such a way that the whole leadership character in the school is greater than the sum of the leadership parts.

There was also discussion about where the impetus for distributed leadership is generated in schools. A variety of influences are apparent in the studies, including the principal (Bennett, Harvey et al., 2003). Formal leaders in schools need to orchestrate and nurture the space for distributed leadership to occur (Hopkins & Jackson, 2002). The influence of the department head on instructional and school improvement was also well established (A. Harris et al., 2003). This group of middle managers constituted one important focus for distributed leadership. Another was classroom teachers (refer Section 3.5.3). The question may well be asked, where does the deputy principal fit? This study explored whether there was any understanding, or practice, of distributed leadership embedded in the role of the deputy principal or resulting from the team-working, collegiality or collaboration, where the deputy has an official formal role.

### ***3.5.3 Teacher Leadership***

In the school context, distributed leadership is intimately connected to teacher leadership. There was discussion in the literature about the difference, if indeed there was one, between a teacher and a leader (Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2001). Various definitions have been developed. Crowther and his colleagues (Crowther, Kaagan, Ferguson, & Hann, 2002) offered the following:

Teacher leadership is behaviour that facilitates principled pedagogical action toward whole-school success. It derives from the distinctive power of teaching to share meaning for children, youth and adults. It contributes to enhance quality of community life in the long term. (p. 11)

A review of the literature on teacher leadership concluded that:

The important point emanating from the literature is that teacher leaders are, in the first place, expert teachers who spend the majority of their time in the classroom, but take on different roles at different times...The literature also asserts that the principal reason for teacher leadership is to transform schools into professional learning communities and empower teachers to become more involved more closely in decision-making within the school. (Muijs & Harris, 2003, p. 439)

There was overlap between these findings on teacher leadership, distributed leadership and instructional leadership. As a result

Whatever specific definition of teacher leadership one chooses to adopt, it is clear that its emphasis on collective action, empowerment and shared agency are reflected in distributed leadership theory. Teacher leadership is centrally and exclusively concerned with the idea that all organisational members can lead and that leadership is a form of agency that can be distributed or shared. (Muijs & Harris, 2003, p. 440)

Although few secondary deputy principals would spend the majority of their time in the classroom, teacher leadership was relevant to this study to the extent that deputy principals are classroom teachers, and involved in collaborative processes aimed at improving student learning outcomes. There appears to be a distinction between classroom teacher leadership and educational administration leadership, which is likely to be significant for the deputy principal, who is usually both. Consider the following definitions:

Educational administration, however intense its focus on teaching and learning is nevertheless different from classroom teaching. Whereas teachers focus on specific students and specific areas of subject matter, administrators must think of the education of the whole community of youngsters in the school. This requires them to think of the scope and sequence of all the learning activities occurring in the school, not simply as a collection of activities, but as activities that comprise a unity. (Starratt, 2003, p. 13)

These two emphases suggested a duality of leadership roles for the deputy principal, who is a teacher and an administrator. The emergence of recognised teacher leadership and the increasing understanding that it was one of the factors affecting successful school reform (Little, 2000) was also of interest if, in fact, the deputy is not seen to be a part of this movement. Was it

possible that distributed and teacher leadership were growing around the deputy principals but not involving them, due perhaps to a significant managerial role that shifts their focus away from the classroom? This possibility needed to be explored.

### **3.5.4 Servant Leadership**

Greenleaf's (1977) model of servant leadership is dated but still powerful as the concept of distributed leadership is further developed and understood. The servant leadership model was both a product of its times and prophetic in nature. Leadership was still presented in trait or behavioral terms (albeit different traits and behaviours from those often associated with leadership). The work, however, was also prophetic in the sense that it preempted later emphases on visioning, purposing, empowering, shared and moral forms of leadership.

Leadership ... will be a different thing from what we customarily assume. There will still be a titular leader, but such a person will not be seen as 'chief'. Rather it will be a role from which oversight is given to a much more fluid arrangement in which leaders and followers change places as many-faceted missions are undertaken and move into phases that call for different deployment of talent. (Greenleaf, 1977, p. 244)

Nearly 30 years later these ideas were echoed in the words of Alma Harris (Section 3.5.2), as she reflected on distributed leadership. Earlier Sergiovanni (1995), linked servant leadership, school leadership and moral leadership. His particular interest was in the principalship, but there did not appear to be anything in the description which prevented applicability to the deputy. Sergiovanni emphasised the key elements of servant leadership as service, encouraging others to be leaders, protecting school values, moral leadership and followership.

Servant leadership describes well what it means to be a principal. Principals are responsible for 'ministering' to the needs of the schools they serve. The needs are defined by the shared values and purposes of the school's covenant. They minister by furnishing help and being of service to parents, teachers and students. They minister by providing leadership in a way that encourages others to be leaders in their own right. They minister by highlighting and protecting the values of the school. The principal as minister is one who is devoted to a cause, mission or set of ideas and accepts the duty and obligation to serve this cause. Ultimately her or his success is known by the quality of the followership that emerges. Quality of the followership is the barometer

that indicates the extent to which moral authority has replaced bureaucratic and psychological authority. When moral authority drives leadership practice, the principal is at the same time a leader of leaders, followers of ideas, minister of values, and servant to the followership. (Sergiovanni, 1995, p. 321)

Like Greenleaf (1977; 1996), Sergiovanni understood servant leadership as a complex relational concept involving service, leader building, values identification and modelling, moral authority and followership.

The idea of servant leadership is also used in a Christian context. Here it is based on Jesus' words.

You know that the rulers of the gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them. Not so with you. Instead, 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...Matthew 20:25-28

But while the call to service is clear, it has been argued that "Few aspects of Christianity are more subject to misgivings and misunderstanding than the call to servanthood...(they are)...all traceable to a basic confusion of servanthood with servitude" (Haugk, 1984, p. 71). This confusion is seen to result from a misreading of certain passages of scripture. Whatever the cause, the confusion of servant leadership with servitude is unsatisfactory both for the server, and for the one served. It overemphasises the aspect of serving the needs of the community, while underemphasising the aspects of encouraging others to be leaders and protecting the values of the school. It can also "depersonalise the care receiver, robbing him or her of individuality, responsibility and motivation" (Haugk, 1984, p. 72). Disempowering followers in this way does not appear to be helpful, but it is an outcome of confusing servanthood and servitude.

### **3.5.5 Followership**

The significance of good followers in successful leadership is sometimes neglected. "Our emphasis on hierarchic leaders causes us... to understate and miscast the interactive aspects of our leader-follower relations" (Nicoll, 1986, p. 31). Terminology has been developed to express this relationship, including 'shared trusteeship' Burns (1978) and 'action dialogue' (Nicoll, 1986)

The central idea in both cases is that “leaders must think of themselves, not as a solo act, but as part of a mutual, interactive process of creation” (Nicoll, 1986, p. 32). In the real world leaders and followers create meaning by doing things together. Followers are not passive or reactive.

They are, instead, the creators of energy. They are the architects of the open moments into which some people must take the first step. As followers, they are the agents who show their leaders where to walk. They are the ones who validate their leaders stepping out in a direction that has meaning for all. (Nicoll, 1986, p. 34)

Power-influence research also refers to followership. Some of this research perceived influence as a “reciprocal process between leaders and followers” (Yukl, 1994, p. 13). This being the case, “power resides in followers, as well as in the leader, and leadership effectiveness cannot be understood without examining how leaders and followers influence each other over time” (p. 13).

Distributed leadership suggested the need to revisit the concept of followership. It also required followership to be more than a passive, reactive role. Fluid, distributed leadership required proactive, engaged and contributing followers, and blurred or ever changing distinctions between leaders and followers.

### **3.5.6 Summary**

Distributed, instructional, teacher leadership and servant leadership are connected. They related to leadership in the core business of the school: teaching and learning. Instructional leadership involved a focus on improving teaching and learning. Teachers were well placed to gain expert knowledge in the areas of teaching and learning. They became instructional leaders who understood and used appropriate pedagogy to achieve the goals of the school. The emerging school leadership emphasis on school improvement (Leithwood & Jantzi, 2000), suggested that the traditional role of the deputy may need to be redefined if the deputy is to be recognised as a leader. A key question was whether the deputy principal was expected to have a leadership role in teaching and learning. This has not necessarily been the case in the past or at present, but it clearly emerged as an integral part of the role of

effective school leaders in the future. If student outcomes are paramount, and these would appear to be the core business of schools, then responsibility and authority for the guidance and direction of instruction needs to be allocated to those who have the most influence over teaching and learning. Distributed leadership and the need to redefine followership are implied. Servant leadership is a complex integration of a number of elements of distributed, moral and substantive leadership. Both moral and substantive leadership are discussed further in the next section. A key to both servant leadership and distributed leadership is the ability of the leader to foster and develop leadership in others.

### **3.5.7 Substantive Leadership**

Three aspects of the more recent reconceptualisation of educational leadership (Crowther et al., 2001) were considered earlier in Section 3.5. These were: critique of positional authority, emphasis on the relationship between leadership and school outcomes, and the leadership functions of classroom teachers. During the early years of the 21<sup>st</sup> century substantial work has also been published in the area of moral or ethical leadership in schools (Donaldson, 2001; Sergiovanni, 2001; Starratt, 2003, 2004). This suggested a fourth area might need to be added to Crowther's list. Moral or ethical leadership was connected to the conclusion that schools are managerially loose and culturally tight. Leadership, then, was related to maintaining, or changing, a tight culture. This can be understood as a deeply moral undertaking (Sergiovanni, 2001; Starratt, 2004).

Recent consideration of moral leadership builds on previous work of Starratt (1993) and others (Greenleaf, 1977; Hodgkinson, 1991; Rost, 1993), who explored the idea of substantive leadership. This was based on Weber's early idea of a substantive rationality (translated variously, including Andreski, 1983). Substantive leadership works with the larger sense of meaning, mission and identity which motivates and guides the members of the organisation. Starratt viewed these, and developments like them, as probing the substance or "stuff" of leadership (1993, p. 4).

The idea of identity has also been developed elsewhere (Hodgkinson, 1991). The purpose of education had three strands, one of which was ideological, that is, its purpose was to transmit the culture of the society in which it occurs. This included a moral purpose.

There is a universal concern with moral education...even in the most thoroughly secularized societies ...the moral dimension of ideological purpose persists. This fact carries over to the perceived status of administrators and leaders. It does not necessarily invest them with moral stature but imposes upon them a subtle kind of onus that has a distinctive moral charge. (Hodgkinson, 1991, p.25)

Hodgkinson saw leadership as moral and ethical decision making. It was based on the value system of the leader and the organisation. For Hodgkinson, leadership was about “ethical action in political context, or purposeful human conduct, or behaviour, informed and guided by purposes, intentions, motives, morals, emotions and values, as well as the facts or ‘science’ of the case” (p. 43).

In first generation Australian Lutheran schools there was a clear understanding that the schools existed in order to preserve the German language and culture, as well as the church’s confessional theology. Today the desired culture is less easy to define, but church documents make it clear that Hodgkinson’s idea of “behaviour informed and guided by purpose” (p. 43) is highly relevant.

The church...owns and operates kindergartens, primary schools, and secondary schools. It does this in order to make available to its members and to others in the community a formal education in which the gospel of Jesus Christ informs all learning and teaching, all human relationships, and all activities in the school. (Lutheran Church of Australia, 2001, Section 1.2)

The distinctive nature of Lutheran schools arises from the moral concepts of meaning, mission and identity. Many, if not all, of the key doctrines outlined in Chapter 2 required school leaders to be involved in their communities in a moral way. It is a moral act to define, articulate and demonstrate the practical implications of being a Christ-centred school. Comments about how the essence of Lutheran doctrine is brought into meaningful dialogue and interaction with the school community (Bartel, 2004) have already been noted

(Section 2.6). These need to be considered in conjunction with a perception of leadership as moral and ethical decision making. Understanding and acting on the implications of the fact that both leaders and followers are simultaneously sinful and perfect in the eyes of God required moral decision making. The MPP also recognised the moral nature of leadership in its core qualities, which include ideas of moral disposition.

It has been contended that education informed by the Lutheran tradition ought to be built around five general themes (Christenson, 2004). These themes are another way of considering substantive elements. They are:

- Giftedness - the gifts of the discipline to be studied, of the teachers and of the students);
- Freedom -because we are freed from the necessity to work out our own salvation, Lutheran education can be “surprisingly bold, open, multidimensional, challenging, experimental, diverse and engaging; never frightened, closed, authoritarian, sanitized and defensive” (p. 139);
- Faithful criticism – recognizing idols and challenging human claims to ultimacy;
- Service/vocation – realizing our own gifts and using them in service, connecting theory to practice, classroom work is connected to real problems of real people in a real place;
- Paideia – the kind of education that takes the connection between knowing, teaching, and human becoming seriously. (Christenson, 2004)

To build a school around such themes in the 21<sup>st</sup> century is simultaneously counter-cultural (consider the idols of materialism and economic ‘progress’, or the ‘league tables’, which suggest that secondary education is about Year 12 results) and necessary for the development of the whole person. The manifestation of these themes in practice is clearly a task for school leaders. They will be engaged in matching the themes to the particular environment of the school, and determining an appropriate expression of them. In this manner they are intimately involved in substantive leadership.

### **3.5.8 Ethical Leadership – Authentic Leaders**

The early work on authentic leadership was largely completed by Greenleaf (1977; 1988; 1996). Ethical leadership was considered by Starratt (2004). This

required the leader to be authentic. An authentic educational leader was one who “cultivates and sustains an environment that promotes the work of authentic teaching and learning” (p. 81). Again, a connection between leadership and effective teaching and learning was established. An alternative definition of authentic leadership has a reflective element in addition to the moral focus.

Authentic leadership may be thought of as a metaphor for professionally effective, ethically sound, and consciously reflective practices in educational administration. This is leadership that is knowledge-based, values informed, and skillfully executed. (Begley, 2004, p. 4)

The LDP (Lutheran Education Australia, 2005c) recognised reflection as a part of authentic leadership. It also draws on Burns (1978) in commenting on authentic leaders. “Authentic leaders evaluate their actions and relationships above mere pragmatics and expediency and, thereby, raise themselves and others to higher levels of motivation, morality and spiritual awareness” (p. 1).

One key part of authentic leadership in a Lutheran school context was the spiritual aspect. Similar to the concept of paideia above, spirit and reason work together. Therefore,

Authentic leaders use their hearts and souls (spirits) as well as their heads in influencing and transforming people and situations. Through their search for personal purpose and relational meaning in life and work, they tap deeply into the hearts, spirits and minds of those in relationship with them. (Duignan, 2003, p. 3)

This integrated perspective of mind, heart and soul is central to the LDP understanding of leadership in a Lutheran school. It was necessary for a leader focused on the school's mission to provide a “formal education in which the gospel of Jesus Christ informs all teaching and learning, all human relationships, and all activities” (Lutheran Education Australia, 2005c, p. 1). Leaders acted from a position of wholeness in order to be effective. This wholeness was reflected in the leader's personal capability, which “integrates faith commitment, honesty, integrity, ethical reflection and self critique” and “which results in a sense of self-efficacy and personal identity” (p. 2).

The valuation processes which underpin authentic leadership need to be considered. It is important to understand the relationship between personal, professional, organisational and social values. However,

the bulk of the literature of leadership and management has not been helpful in this regard, as it reflects a predominantly organizational perspective, to the extent that individual and professional values are often ignored, assumed to be the same as, or fully subordinated to an organizational imperative. (Begley, 2004, p. 6)

Authentic leaders will be able to identify their personal value system, and “distinguish among the multiple arenas of personal, professional, organisational, and social values in their work environments” (p. 6). They will also be able to identify and articulate the values of the workplace or school.

There are connections between ethical, authentic and substantive leadership. Substantive leadership involves concepts of meaning, mission and identity, but these ideas are part of ethical or authentic leadership as well. “Authentic leadership is centrally concerned with ethics and morality and with deciding what is significant, what is right and what is worthwhile” (Lutheran Education Australia, 2005c, p. 1). In other words, leadership was about defining what a school values, and determining the core identity of a school. Effective school leaders were actively involved in this process.

### ***3.5.9 The Work of Sergiovanni***

Due to its seminal nature, the work of Sergiovanni (1992; 1995; 1996; 2001) was seen to deserve separate attention. He also understood the connection between effective school leadership, responsiveness to problems, enhanced teaching and learning and the need for leaders to create and define meaning. As a result, he argued that leadership in schools should reflect six principles:

1. The principle of cooperation;
2. The principle of empowerment;
3. The principle of responsibility;
4. The principle of accountability;
5. The principle of meaningfulness, and
6. The principle of ability-authority (Sergiovanni, 1995, p. 57).

Sergiovanni added that, as these principles were manifested in the ways in which schools were organised, schools increased their capacity to respond to their problems, principals were able to lead more effectively, teaching was

enhanced, and learning increased. Some familiar themes are apparent in Sergiovanni's list. Cooperation and empowerment were central concepts in a shared view of leadership. Responsibility and accountability were part of a model of authentic leadership identified in the MPP framework.

Meaningfulness, mission and identity were elements of substantive leadership and connected to ethical leadership. From these principles Sergiovanni developed his idea of leadership forces.

The Sergiovanni (1995) model suggested that leadership can be viewed metaphorically as comprising a set of forces:

1. The technical force;
2. The human force;
3. The educational force;
4. The symbolic force;
5. The cultural force. (p. 84)

The first three forces reflected the three major movements in educational administration; the bureaucratic movement, the human relations movement and the instructional movement. Taken together, they encompassed those elements which ensured that a school is sufficiently well run to be basically competent. Stolz (2001) suggested that these forces are generally well managed in Lutheran schools. The traditional role of the deputy principal encompassed the technical force. Deputies were intimately involved in the day to day running of the school. The instructional or educational force is of renewed interest given the developments noted earlier. This left the final two forces, the symbolic and the cultural. These were of special interest, as it is here that the school finds particular expression of its Lutheran nature. Lutheran school leaders, including the deputy principal, must demonstrate and articulate their understanding of what it means to be a Lutheran school.

### **3.5.9.1 The Symbolic Force**

The symbolic force was the "power of leadership derived from focusing the attention of others on matters of importance to the school" (Sergiovanni, 1995, p. 87). This was done by emphasizing selective attention or the modelling of important goals and behaviours, and by signalling to others what was important and valuable in the school (Sergiovanni, 2001). The leader

modelled important goals and behaviours, and signaled by his or her actions and words what was valued. Symbolic leadership existed whether or not the leader was aware of it, or found it desirable. Information about priorities was communicated by a leader's words and actions, whether intended or not.

What the leader stood for was apparent to the school community. The LCA implicitly recognised this in its statement on schools:

The church expects the governing councils and principals of its schools to staff its schools with skilled and registered educators who are able to uphold the teachings of the church and model the Christian lifestyle. In the first instance it seeks to use the services of active members of the church. Beyond that, the church seeks to staff its schools with active Christians from other denominations who are willing to uphold Lutheran teachings. (Lutheran Church of Australia, 2001, p. 2)

Lutheran schools claim to be Christ-centred schools. As noted earlier (Section 2.4.3), Bartsch suggested that this means

Lutheran schools seek to give expression to the gospel particularly through the development of an environment of forgiveness and acceptance which grows out of the gospel. Through the creation of a fellowship within the school motivated by the gospel, Lutheran schools attempt to demonstrate what living in community in relationship with Jesus Christ means. (Bartsch, 2001, p.80)

This was compatible with Sergiovanni's understanding of symbolic leadership. Lutheran school leaders were called to identify, define and communicate a shared understanding of being a Christ-centred school, including what being part of a Christ-centred community meant for each student and staff member. The deputy principal would communicate what the Christ-centred nature of the school meant to him or her. Such understanding would arise both from listening to the community and from the leader's religious faith and personal spirituality. This is consistent with Vaill's (1984) concept of purposing. The current study explored whether symbolic leadership was present in the understandings of leadership inherent in the role of the deputy principal. Were the deputy principals recognised as being actively involved in communicating the messages of Christ-centredness that the church expected of its leaders? Or were the symbolic messages suggesting something different? Were they, in fact, meaningless symbols? The concern is that:

Symbolic leadership can be perverse when its symbols are empty. Empty symbols lack the substance to communicate the purposes, values and ideas that build capacity and commitment among teachers, parents

and students and help schools to improve. When leadership symbols are full, by contrast, there is a set of ideas communicated or reinforced that serves as a source of authority for deciding what would be done in the school and how it should be done. (Sergiovanni, 2001, p. 28)

What understanding was there that the deputies would be involved in meaningful symbolic leadership? The current study explored this.

### **3.5.9.2 The Cultural Force**

The last of Sergiovanni's leadership forces was the cultural force. This was the power of leadership derived from building a unique school culture (Sergiovanni, 1995, p. 88). The culture of an organisation is a "construct made up of a range of expectations about what are proper and appropriate actions. Such expectations are both external to the organisation and internal to its members, who 'transact' them into the culture" (Bennett, 2003, p. 51). In order to be successful, schools require cultures that promote and sustain their definition of success. Culture is

the pattern of rules and norms that derive from the basic understanding of the work that is done, and which shapes the actions of those in the organisation. As structures are enacted and create formal and publicly accepted rules, so cultures are also enacted and create informal and often unstated rules. (p. 53)

The leader helps create and maintain these cultural rules by seeking to define, strengthen and articulate the enduring values and beliefs that make the school unique. This can be considered as the lifeworld of a school. The idea of lifeworld was developed variously (Habermas, 1970; Sergiovanni, 2000; Starratt, 1993). The lifeworld was a school's local values, traditions, meanings and purposes. In the best of circumstances the lifeworld determined what local strategies and initiatives were used by schools to achieve their own destinies. The lifeworld included the traditions, rituals, and norms that defined the school's cultures. Lifeworlds differ from school to school and these differences lay the groundwork for developing a school's unique character (Sergiovanni, 2000).

Leaders both define and articulate the lifeworld. There are three aspects to this. Leaders

assist the school community to articulate purposes that staff and constituents view as morally good. This is fundamentally a process of articulating mission and core values and helping members attend to them in their individual roles and work. Second, leaders are constantly at work mingling the practical, daily work of staff, students, and parents with the ideals of the school's purposes. They help their colleagues and constituents to understand more deeply how their efforts contribute-or do not contribute- to the school's mission...Third, leaders seek out challenges by questioning incongruities in their work and asking, 'what can we do about this?' ...leaders invite tough questions and test the appropriateness of current practice against the school's ideals. (Donaldson, 2001, p. 50)

The cultural aspects of schools were not divorced from the technical, human or educational forces. In fact, they influenced how much of this work is completed. The educational force, for example, was intimately related. "Schools develop academic capital by becoming focused communities that cultivate a deep culture of teaching and learning. The rituals, norms, commitments and traditions of this culture become the framework that motivates and supports student learning and development" (Sergiovanni, 2001, p. 78).

It was also necessary and desirable for Lutheran schools to maintain various cultural elements reflecting their nature as a Christian community. However, Bartsch (2001) warned against confusing

the message of the gospel with its cultural packaging...For the Lutheran School it is crucial that (students) have an opportunity to respond to the challenge of the call to faith in Jesus Christ and are not simply involved in some form of Christian cultural conditioning. Lutheran schools will need to examine their rites and rituals to ensure that they communicate as clearly as possible to students and are not retained simply in order to preserve a tradition of the school. (p. 80)

Leaders in Lutheran schools had a role in purposing the enduring values of the school, particularly those relating to its core being as a Christian educational institution. A key question was how and to what extent these understandings were built into the role of the deputy principal.

### **3.5.10 Visioning**

There are references to the leader's visionary role in numerous theories of leadership. In his work reviewing transformational leadership approaches, Sashkin (2004) analysed eight approaches and identified six which "identified a personal leadership factor associated with or identical to the leader's ability to construct a vision of what the organisation might be" (p. 193). This was referred to variously and included: vision articulation (Conger & Kanungo, 1998), inspirational motivation (Bass, 1985), envisioning the future (Kouzes & Posner, 1995) and vision (Kotter & Heskett, 1992; Sashkin & Sashkin, 2003). The vision refers to the organisation's future. Vision is not an aspect of charisma or inspiration or a trait, but the "ability to construct the future first mentally and then behaviourally" (Sashkin, 2004, p.186). This involves incorporating the needs and ideas of followers as well as modelling behaviours that are consistent with their vision.

The studies noted above also made reference to communicating vision. Again, various terminology was used, including communicating a vision (Kotter & Heskett, 1992) and enlisting others (Kouzes & Posner, 1995). Seven of the eight approaches reviewed by Sashkin (2004) made a link between leadership and communicating vision. He concluded "almost every...approach (reviewed) incorporates the concept of 'vision'...and...for behavioural variables, there is greatest agreement on the importance of behaviour that expresses the leader's vision" (Sashkin, 2004, p. 194).

### **3.5.11 Summary**

There was a sense in which substantive and ethical leadership approached the inner core of the relationship between a school and its leaders. They were value laden concepts which raised issues of connectedness, construction of meaning, wholeness, integration, direction and reason for being. Sergiovanni's work on leadership forces (1995) touches on many of these ideas in the symbolic and cultural forces. His understanding of the lifeworld of schools was also useful (2000).

The traditional role of deputy principals involved them in tangible, daily organisational tasks. Complex leadership theory implied that school leaders were involved in the abstract world of a school in significant ways. Leaders had a voice in defining and articulating the core values and unwritten rules of the school. They signalled by their words and actions what was important and necessary. This required congruence between the heart, mind and soul of the leader. Leaders must operate from a position of internal consistency.

In the current study consideration was given to the question of whether the deputy principals were understood to be involved in defining, articulating, demonstrating and, where necessary, changing the lifeworld of the school. Were they understood to be involved in visioning? Did the understandings touch on the complex abstract world of schools, or were they merely confined to the concrete action, organisation and results which defined the traditional role?

### **3.6 Research on Deputy Principals**

#### ***3.6.1 Research Focus on the Principal***

Relatively few studies of the second in charge exist in the organizational development literature. The education sector was no different. Much of the existing research in the area of school leadership within or beyond the Australian Lutheran system, has focused on the principalship (Albinger, 2005; Bartel, 2004; Day & Bakioglu, 1996; Fennell, 1999; Hustler, Brighthouse, & Rudduck, 1995; Jericho, 2004a; Ribbins & Sherratt, 1999). Writing in the context of the United Kingdom, Ribbins reviewed the research and concluded that “the literature on deputies and deputy headship is far more modest than that available on heads and headship...Headteachers are interesting: deputy headteachers, it seems, are not” (Ribbins, 1997, p. 295). Studies of the principalship, while contributing valuable insight, were not designed to reflect on leadership that occurs beyond the office of the principal. Increasingly however, multiple layers of leadership are being recognised in schools (A. Harris & Lambert, 2003; Leithwood, Jantzi, & Steinbach, 1999). There has been growing interest in teachers as leaders (Crowther, Kaagan et al., 2002).

This study, however, focused on the leadership of the second in charge, traditionally referred to as the deputy head or deputy principal.

### ***3.6.2 The Historical Role of the Deputy Principal***

Some Australian and overseas studies have centred on deputy principals (Cranston, 2006; Cranston et al., 2004; Garrett & McGeachie, 1999; Greenfield, 1985; Hartzell, 1993a; Harvey, 1991, 1997; Weller & Weller, 2002). They have been relatively consistent in their findings, indicating that the role was not historically perceived in leadership terms. Already in the early 1970s Ogilvie (1972) and Winston (1972) had doubts about the ongoing suitability of the traditional role of the deputy principal.

The roles of our...Deputies...were basically defined many years ago. They were defined for different schools, in a different society where custom, tradition and habit guided decision making in a reasonably satisfactory manner, given the values of that society. (Ogilvie, cited in Gillies, 1985, p. 14)

Studies from the late 1970s suggested that the deputy principal's role was not perceived as professional leadership, even though it was highly significant in the organisational structure of most schools. The focus was on daily operations (Badcock, 1977; Maddock & Hyams, 1979).

This emphasis on management tasks continued into the 1980s and 1990s. "Secondary assistant principals as school administrators are charged with establishing and maintaining organizational stability" (Reed & Himmler, 1985, p. 82). The work of the assistant principal centred around various caretaker tasks such as routine clerical tasks, custodial duties, checking attendance, disciplining students and other managerial duties (Koru, 1993). During the same period, however, it was argued that the role of the deputy principal was underdeveloped (Hartzell, 1993a).

### ***3.6.3 Australian Studies on the Deputy Principal***

A more recent Australian study of government school deputies by Cranston, Tromans and Reugebrink (2004) identified a number of broad themes in the previous research about deputy principals. The tendency to describe the role

in administrative, managerial and custodial terms was one of these themes. The limited ability for such a role to adequately prepare deputies for the principal's role, which included visioning, knowledge of curriculum and moving others towards innovative solutions, was another. A third theme identified was the lack of a clear conceptual basis for the role, and the fourth was the relationship between the principal and the deputy. Finally, the Cranston et al review identified an acknowledged gap between what the deputies actually did and what they believed they should be doing. Similar findings were obtained from a study in the non-government sector (Cranston, 2006).

A number of findings from these studies were of particular interest to the current research: how well the notion of team among school administration team members was developed; the time dedicated to educational/curriculum and strategic leadership in a typical week; and the degree of role alignment between what the deputies saw as their real and ideal week in terms of what they did (Cranston, 2006; Cranston et al., 2004).

In regards to the notion of teams, Cranston and his colleagues (2004) concluded that "The general situation would seem to be that the notion of team is well developed (or developing) in most secondary schools. The attitudes, skills and competencies of the team members (principal and deputies) are key contributors in this" (p. 234). Distributed leadership was one of the areas considered in the current study. Did the deputies in Lutheran schools perceive that they were part of an effective leadership team? Did they perceive themselves to be part of a distributed leadership model? Did the other key informants perceive them as such? These were questions of considerable importance if the references to distributed leadership appearing in recent LEA documentation (see Section 2.8.3) are to be seen as indicating more than wishful thinking on the part of the system authorities.

The deputies in the Cranston studies nominated educational/curriculum and strategic leadership as areas where they would ideally spend more time. A typical 'real' week was reported to be dominated by student and staffing issues, operational, management and administration matters. As can be seen in Table 3.1, the deputies would prefer their time to be spent in activities

relating to strategic and educational/curriculum leadership. The deputies reported that their real role focused on operational matters, whilst their preferred role focused on leadership. All of the deputies in the survey wanted to be able to spend at least some time in a week on strategic leadership, while 99 percent wanted to spend time in an average week on educational/curriculum leadership. In contrast, only 59 percent reported that they actually spent time on strategic leadership and 74 percent on educational/curriculum leadership. A similar set of findings emerged in later study of the deputies from the non-government sector. These percentages are indicated in parentheses in Table 3.1.

**Table 3.1 Role of the Deputies in Government and Non-Government schools**

In a 'real' week, time dedicated to these activities	Great deal of time (%)	Some time (%)	Total (%)	In an 'ideal' week, time dedicated to these activities	Great deal of time (%)	Some time (%)	Total (%)
Strategic Leadership	14 (15)	44 (47)	59 (62)	Strategic Leadership	58 (59)	42 (32)	100 (91)
Educational Curriculum Leadership	21 (27)	53 (36)	74 (63)	Educational Curriculum Leadership	69 (56)	30 (35)	99 (91)

The non-government sector is indicated in parentheses.  
(Cranston, 2006, p. 97; Cranston et al., 2004, p. 50)

The current study explored the understandings of leadership inherent in the role of the deputy principal in the Lutheran secondary school context. Were these understandings about strategic and/or educational or curriculum leadership? Did the deputies perceive themselves as leaders in these areas? Did others? What other leadership emerged, or were deputy principals in the Lutheran secondary system just good managers, who focused on operational matters in a similar manner to the Queensland state system deputies surveyed by Cranston and his colleagues?

A second Australian study of interest was conducted by Michael Harvey in 1994, following up earlier work in 1991. He surveyed primary deputy principals in Western Australia in order to assess the way in which they were responding to the change forces affecting schools. These forces included: macro and micro economic reform agendas, a national agenda for education, workplace

reforms, devolution of large government education systems, increased access to information technology, and schools being viewed as a commodity which benefited consumers rather than a public service contributing to the common good (Harvey, 1997).

Harvey concluded that the change forces “have a massive potential to influence the patterns of administration, work organisation, curricula and pedagogy of Australian schools” (p. 114). He considered the lifeworld, which he defined as the “network of face to face relationships which are characterised by human will, intentionality, commitment and expressions of personal values” (p. 114) and the artificial world (of mass production and administration) of schools and reflected “creative energies of school staff reside in the life-world of the school. Leadership that enhances professionalism is required to ensure that the professional energies of staff are focused on a reworking of the educational program of the school” (p. 114). But Harvey viewed the position of the deputy principal as sustained by bureaucratic notions of organisation, and hence concluded its future was uncertain. He recognised an organisational move away from ‘system based’ career ladder positions to ‘school based’ positions based on special cross faculty responsibilities, and argued that

the emergence of the school based specialist teacher positions means deputy principals may have to make some difficult choices if they are to continue to have a significant presence as educational leaders. They cannot allow their work to become entirely focused on the traditional responsibilities of administrative routines and student discipline. Although these aspects of school administration are critical to the operation of the school, practitioners must find ‘spaces’ in their professional effort to participate in more proactive pursuits. (p. 121)

Table 3.2 illustrates the difference between traditional and emerging roles for deputy principals. Harvey argued that deputies “must be proactive and recognise the opportunities which exist for the transformation of their role” (p. 122), which will otherwise become increasingly irrelevant.

**Table 3.2 Traditional and emergent facets of responsibility of the deputy principal.**

<b>Traditional</b> (Bureaucratic Model)	<b>Emergent</b> (Corporate Managerialist Model)	<b>Professional</b> (Learning Community Model)
<b>Purpose</b> –maintenance of organizational stability (organizational effectiveness)	<b>Purpose</b> -educational leadership for improvement of student learning outcomes (productivity, value adding)	<b>Purpose</b> -educative leadership which sustains a learning community (moral and relational)
<b>Emphasis</b> -support of principal, teachers, control of student behaviour	<b>Emphasis</b> -planning, strategic thinking, market share, managing change	<b>Emphasis</b> -articulation of share perspectives to promote collaborative learning, culture building
-	<b>Planning, policy making, financial management</b> Emphasis-identifying school/department purposes, establishing priorities, budget	<b>Planning, policy making, financial management</b> Emphasis-critical scrutiny of policy practice with respect to student needs
<b>Staff management</b> Emphasis-supervision, support	<b>Staff management</b> Emphasis-human resource development, enhancing professionalism	<b>Staff management</b> Emphasis-teachers as learners, workplace learning
<b>Curriculum management</b> Emphasis-implementation of curriculum authority syllabus	<b>Curriculum management</b> Emphasis-unit planning, implementation, review. Monitoring the quality of the teaching-learning process	<b>Curriculum management</b> Emphasis-development of learning programs to meet the needs of all categories of students
<b>Classroom Teaching</b> Emphasis-transmission of knowledge	<b>Classroom Teaching</b> Emphasis-learning experiences tailored to student outcome statements	<b>Classroom Teaching</b> Emphasis-pedagogical mentor
-	<b>External Relationships</b> Emphasis-Accountability for results, school and subject field image, market penetration	<b>External Relationships</b> Emphasis-dialogue with parents, parents and teachers as learners
<b>Students</b> Emphasis-discipline, welfare	-	-
<b>Administrative Routines</b> Emphasis-control of resources, timetable and other schedules to coordinate developmental activities.	-	-

(Harvey, 1997, p. 123)

Table 3.2 provided an interesting summary of possibilities for categorising the deputy principals in the current study. Did the deputies perceive that they were leading in the sense of Harvey’s emergent or professional model? Was their role being eroded by specialist school-based positions which meant other staff were performing duties previously done by deputies? To what extent was the role of the deputy principal in Lutheran secondary school in danger of becoming irrelevant because it was still largely located in the traditional

bureaucratic model defined by Harvey? These questions were considered in the current study.

### **3.6.4 Summary**

Studies of the role of the deputy principal were not numerous. The role has been described as one of the least researched and discussed topics in professional journals (Weller & Weller, 2002), and there was a general view that the role often contains a very narrow range of managerial responsibilities. (Bloom & Krovetz, 2001; Cranston et al., 2004; Koru, 1993)

In the current study, focused on deputy principals in Australian Lutheran secondary schools, was there any evidence to suggest that the leadership role of the deputy had developed differently in Lutheran schools than in other systems? Did the findings in this study reflect the earlier Australian studies of Cranston et al (2004) and Harvey (1997)? Were the leadership understandings identified really about leadership, or were they in fact about management? Did the deputies reflect the emergent responsibilities that Harvey included (Table 3.2)? The current study attempted to illuminate this area of school practice.

### **3.7 Conclusion**

This review of relevant scholarly literature has identified and conceptualised what the leadership of the deputy principal could be. The literature was considered in terms of clarifying and determining what may be necessary for professional leadership in schools. This review critically considered literature associated with historical leadership models, the nature of schools as institutions requiring leadership, the reconceptualisation of school leadership, and the role and leadership of the deputy principal in schools.

Amongst the uncertainty and debate which characterised the study of leadership in schools, it was possible to infer current perceptions of relevant leadership approaches for 21<sup>st</sup> century schools. The themes were broad, and encompassed the notion that effective schools have leaders who occupy many and varied positions. The principal today is not perceived to be the sole

source of leadership in the school. Positively impacting on teaching and learning, and distributed instructional leadership, were emerging as key indicators of leadership in schools. Models which recognised that schools were highly complex, organic, relational systems and not bureaucratic hierarchical organisations, were becoming popular. Personal leadership qualities were being defined in terms of authenticity and ethical decision making.

Current understandings of leadership were inclusive. They suggested everyone in schools had the potential be leaders within their circle of relationships. Positional authority, on which the leadership role of the deputy was once based, was no longer common in the scholarly literature, although it may still be apparent within schools.

A number of leadership theories or narratives which emerged from the scholarly literature and hence were considered in the preceding discussion emerged again during the analysis phase of this study. Those which required further discussion in considering the findings and conclusions of the study included bureaucratic leadership models, distributed, collaborative instructional, teacher, substantive, authentic, servant, and moral or ethical leadership. Concepts of visioning, change management, 'great man', trait theories, emotional intelligence and transformational leadership were also discussed as a result of the findings of the study. The most significant of these narratives to the final conclusions of the study have been considered at length in the preceding sections. The glossary was used to provide necessary definitions of particular narratives which emerged less strongly in the final analysis.

This study explored the understandings about leadership embedded in the current role of Lutheran secondary school deputy principals. The leadership narratives emerging from this literature review were instrumental in exploring whether these understandings were conceived in abstract, relational terms, which indicated understanding of current trends in the theoretical conceptualisation of leadership.

In order to explore these understandings, a multisite case study was undertaken. The details of the structure of the study are explained in the next chapter. Chapters 5 and 6 then provide the findings, conclusions and recommendations.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **Design of Research**

#### **4.1 Introduction**

This chapter explains the way in which the current study was structured and undertaken. It includes justification of the epistemological and theoretical bases of the study, as well as the methodology and methods used. There is also discussion on issues of reliability, validity, and data analysis.

The purpose of this study was to explore the understandings about leadership embedded in the role of the deputy principal in Lutheran secondary schools. A multisite case study was chosen as an appropriate methodology, and in-depth interviews with three key figures were conducted at each site. A symbolic interactionist view of the interviews was taken, each being viewed as a social event. The data generated gave authentic insight into people's experiences (Punch, 1998).

The core purpose of the study-to explore the understandings people have of leadership in a particular context-was based on a constructionist epistemology. It has been suggested that;

All members of an organisation continually construct knowledge of themselves and the world around them. In constructing views of the world, people working together in an organisation need to develop socially understood interpretations, so that they can be effective in a group. This is the foundation from which people interpret, anticipate, and plan. By the nature of this definition, leadership requires participation from everyone so that all members are engaged in creating meaning and acting on that meaning. (Drath, Palus et al, cited in Horner, 2003, p. 35)

The view that members of the school community are engaged in creating and acting on leadership meaning was critical to the current study, and was implicit in the research questions. As a result of these constructionist assumptions, it was necessary to hear stories about the creation of the meaning of leadership and then acting on this. To achieve this goal, multiple interviews at multiple sites were used.

## **4.2 Theoretical Framework**

### **4.2.1 Reconciling Theological Truth and Research Truth**

A particular set of theological principles was integral to this study. It was necessary to make a distinction between God as 'truth' in a theological sense, and constructed 'truth' in a research sense. Historically, ideas of knowing and faith have been perceived to be in opposition, as an absolute either/or. One was an alternative to the other (Christenson, 2004). However, this is a particularly limiting view in the context of Lutheran schools, where deep conversation between church and education is crucial. A different view of the relationship between faith and knowing underpins Lutheran schools, and different questions arise.

We have learned from the history of human ideas that knowing and faith (of some kind, in some thing) are inextricably connected even where we have been most confident that they were not. So the question that needs to be asked is not whether faith and knowing are related, but how? What kind of faith does an explicit dialogue with knowing create? What kind of knowing is created in dialogue with faith? How does this dialogue shape those who engage in it and are engaged by it? (Christenson, 2004, p. 3)

Lutherans believe that God exists as ultimate truth, but we are prevented by sin from fully accessing that truth.

For we know in part and we prophesy in part...Now we see but a poor reflection as in a mirror, then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known. 1 Corinthians 13:9,12 (*NIV study bible*)

By implication, if people see no more than a poor reflection of reality, the potential exists for each to construct a different reality from the clues in the reflection. This is true of what is concluded about God, but also what is concluded about the world. As a result, there are potentially multiple constructed realities in the lived experience. These realities are relative, local and specific. It is not a contradiction then, to argue that constructionism was the appropriate epistemology for this study, while maintaining a personal belief in an ultimate theological truth. Table 4.1 illustrates the unfolding theoretical path of this study, beginning with constructionism as the underpinning epistemology.

**Table 4.1 The theoretical path of this study**

<b>Epistemology ⇒</b>	<b>Theoretical ⇒ Perspective</b>	<b>Methodology ⇒</b>	<b>Methods</b>
Constructionism	Symbolic Interactionism	Instrumental case study	Interviews

#### **4.2.2 Constructionism**

This study explored the understandings about leadership embedded in the role of the deputy principal in a Lutheran secondary school. It did not assume that there was a single, objective understanding common to all schools, or even that the deputy principals had the same understanding as other key informants. However, the study recognised the relevance and importance of the Lutheran cultural and theological context in shaping the leadership role of the deputy principals. Consequently it was grounded in a constructionist epistemology. The study explored the meanings which have been assigned to leadership in the context of the deputy principal in Lutheran secondary schools. Constructionism can be compared to constructivism.

Constructivism describes the individual human subject engaging with objects in the world and making sense of them. Constructionism, to the contrary, denies that this is what actually happens, at least in the first instance. Instead, each of us is introduced directly to a whole world of meaning. The mélange of cultures and subcultures into which we are born provides us with meanings. These meanings we are taught and we learn in a complex and subtle process of enculturation. They establish a tight grip on us and, by and large, shape our thinking and behaviours throughout our lives. (Crotty, 1998, p. 79)

In this way Crotty argued that culture dictates meaning through enculturation. However, it has also been suggested that culture merely provides a context which influences interpretation.

Human beings do not find or discover knowledge so much as we construct or make it. We invent concepts, models, and schemes to make sense of experience, and we continually test and modify these constructions in the light of new experience. Furthermore, there is an inevitable historical and sociocultural dimension to the construction. We do not construct our interpretations in isolation but against a backdrop of shared understandings, practices, language and so forth. (Schwandt, 2000, p. 179)

Whichever position is taken, the idea is justified that in a Lutheran school the concept of leadership was intertwined with, and influenced by, the cultural,

historical and theological aspects of the school. These aspects can therefore be taken into account.

What humans believe, expect, value and do in human groups is not a product of only 'nature' and an objective environment but also an historical legacy. Our ideas, our institutions and our lifestyles are constructions reflecting the values and dispositions of our forebears. (Wiseman, 1993, p. 116)

For this reason a chapter of the current study was devoted to the historical and theological context of Australian Lutheran secondary schools.

### **4.2.3 Interpretive and Qualitative Research**

This study was also qualitative and interpretive. Conole (1993) explained that the interpretive approach

places a priority on searching for and interpreting what is happening and being done according to the interpretations of the participants in the social activities being studied...In general, the intentions of interpretive social researchers include:

- Identifying subjective meanings (definitions, feelings, interpretations, judgements);
- Providing descriptions and analyses of these, perhaps including explanations of them (why is it that the participants are using these subjective meanings of what is happening);
- Making these descriptions and analyses intelligible to people through the preparation of interpretive accounts, and
- Perhaps reflecting and acting on the results with the participants in the social activities being investigated. (p. 105)

In seeking to explore the understandings about leadership embedded in the role of the deputy principal in Lutheran secondary schools, the current research aimed to identify the subjective meanings assigned to leadership in that context. It described and analysed these, and attempted to make them intelligible through interpretive accounts. There was, however, no intention of reflecting, or acting, on the results with the participants, although it is hoped that others in the LCA school system will reflect on the findings and possibly act on them. Thus the study was conducted from an interpretive perspective.

Central to many interpretive approaches is qualitative research, which is

a situated activity that locates the observer in the world. It consists of a set of interpretive, material practices that make the world visible...This

means that qualitative situated researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or to interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them. (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000, p. 3)

The participants in this study were interviewed in the school setting, and about the school setting, in an attempt to make sense of the understandings about leadership in the role of the deputy principal. This fitted Denzin and Lincoln's definition of qualitative study.

#### ***4.2.4 Theoretical Perspective: Symbolic Interactionism***

For the purposes of this study, symbolic interactionism appeared to be a useful "general conception...of the nature of the explanation of social activity" (Halfpenny, as cited in Tesch, 1990, p. 58). It rests on three primary premises:

First, that human beings act towards things on the basis of the meanings those things have for them, second, that such meanings arise out of the interaction of the individual with others, and third, that an interpretive process is used by the person in each instance in which he (sic) must deal with things in his environment. (C. Harris, 1996, p. 1)

These core principles can also be summarised as meaning, language and thought. Meaning is central to human behaviour because human action follows from the meanings which are assigned to things. Language gives humans a means by which to negotiate meaning through symbols, and thought, or internal dialogue. This enables one to "select, check, suspend, regroup and transform meanings in the light of the situation in which he (sic) is placed and the direction of his (sic) action" (p. 2).

This study focused on the meanings and behaviours that the participants attached to the concept of leadership in the role of the deputy principal. What meanings and (hence) behaviours have they assigned to leadership, and what language do participants use to describe them? The study had a narrow focus on small-group interactions, common to studies based on symbolic interactionism (Gingrich, 2000). It was concerned with the conclusions about leadership which the deputy and the other key informants had reached, after interpreting and reflecting upon the physical, cultural, theological and human environment of the Lutheran secondary school.

From the perspective of symbolic interactionism, the meaning of leadership is constructed and reaffirmed in social interaction; it is shaped by the actual and anticipated responses of others. The research purpose related to the leadership understandings embedded in the role of the deputy principal. This conveys the symbolic interactionist assumption that the understandings and interaction of a range of people become entrenched in the meanings associated with the role.

Symbolic interactionism also acknowledges that created meanings always have the potential to change, as social processes cause them to be adjusted. This study was a snap shot of the way leadership was interpreted in a number of schools, in a particular context, at a particular time. As a potential tool for reflection, it might contribute to changing the meaning of leadership which the participants are able to articulate, or possibly the way in which schools define the role, in order to encourage emerging concepts of leadership. This was consistent with its symbolic interactionist perspective.

#### **4.3 Orchestrating Perspective**

It was suggested that “the epistemology of qualitative research provides the underpinnings for how qualitative research is conducted - how the data are collected and analysed and how conclusions are reached” (Wiersma & Jurs, 2005, p. 202). Since qualitative research mainly takes place in natural settings and the researcher does not intervene, the “research design requires some flexibility and a tolerance for adjustment as the research progresses” (p. 203). Case study methodology appeared to allow for this. Yin (2003) discussed the flexibility of case studies. He argued that ‘very few case studies will end up exactly as planned’ (p. 60) but cautioned that the same flexibility which enabled the researcher to pursue an unexpected lead or even identify a new case for study could lead to the situation where “investigators change direction without knowing that their original research design was inadequate for the revised investigation, thereby leaving unknown gaps and biases” (p 61). A change in direction is possible, but must be accompanied by appropriate rigour. Proceeding with this caution in mind, a case study was given further consideration as appropriate methodology for this study.

Several attempts have been made to define a case study and categorise the various types. Yin (2003) provided one of the more comprehensive definitions.

A case study is an empirical inquiry that

- Investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, especially when
- The boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident

(And) because phenomenon and context are not always distinguishable in real-life situations, a whole set of other technical characteristics, including data collection and data analysis strategies, now become the second part of the technical definition

The case study inquiry

- Copes with the technically distinctive situation in which there will be many more variables of interest than data points, and as one result;
- Relies on multiple sources of evidence, with data needing to converge in a triangulating fashion, and as another result;
- Benefits from the prior development of theoretical propositions to guide data collection and analysis. (p. 13-14)

This definition appeared to be consistent with the purpose of the current study, as did the further categorisation of this particular study as an instrumental case study. Drawing on Stake (1995), Creswell defined an instrumental case study as a “type of case study with the focus of the study on a specific issue rather than on the case itself. The case then becomes a vehicle to better understand the issue” (Creswell, 1998, p. 250). This methodology was seen to be appropriate, as the study was focused on the specific issue of the way in which leadership is perceived at the level of the deputy principal in Lutheran secondary schools, rather than on the particular case of the role of the deputy principal. The findings were about how leadership was understood in the context of the deputy principal, and deputy principals were the vehicle which enabled discussion of the ways in which leadership was perceived by various members of the school community. An instrumental case study was therefore chosen as an appropriate methodology for the current study.

#### **4.4 Research Methods**

In this study data were collected through in-depth interviews. This method was chosen because it enabled participants to discuss in some detail the

meanings they had attached to the leadership role of the deputy. It was also practical and manageable for the researcher.

A survey would have had the capacity to include all the deputy principals in the system and this would have addressed generalisability issues, but it would not have had the same potential for participants to explore their understanding of leadership in a rich way.

The study aimed to explore the understandings about leadership in the context of the deputy principals in Lutheran secondary schools. Two broad sources of these leadership understandings were identified: the way others understood the deputy principals' leadership, and the understandings deputies had of their own leadership. In order, therefore, to explore this, two sets of voices needed to be heard: those of the deputy principals, and those of the school community. There were a number of means by which these voices could be heard.

If the research topic concerns more implicit meanings and tacit understandings, like taken for granted assumptions of a group or a culture, then participant observation and field studies of actual behaviour supplemented by informal interviews may give more valid information (than formal interviews). (Kvale, 1996, p.104).

While this study attempted, in part, to explore knowledge of the type Kvale refers to, and the potential usefulness of participant observation is acknowledged, it was not practical in this study. The researcher's own school, which may have been a potential location for a study involving participant observation, was excluded as a possible research site for ethical and other reasons. However, it was used for a small informal pilot test for the data collection strategies.

In depth interviews were used as a workable compromise between appropriate method and pragmatic considerations involved in the research. "Interviews are particularly suited for studying people's understanding of the meanings in their lived world, describing their experiences and self-understanding, and clarifying and elaborating their own perspective on their lived world" (Kvale, 1996, p. 105).

This research was a study of people's understandings of the meanings (of leadership) in their lived world. Participants were asked to describe their experiences and elaborate their own perspectives. For these reasons semi structured interviews were deemed to be an appropriate method. A thematic analysis of the data followed the interviews.

A small pilot study was conducted in the researcher's own school. Many of the initial questions were then discarded. They proved to be too complex and to contain too much leadership jargon, making some of the participants feel uncomfortable. They were also too structured, and did not naturally encourage the respondents to reveal their own understandings of the deputies' leadership. The approach of asking respondents to describe examples of leadership in key areas *before* they tried to define leadership, emerged as an alternative when the weaknesses of the pilot interviews and data analysis were considered.

#### **4.5 Research Participants**

As is often the case in qualitative case studies (Merriam, 1998), two levels of sampling (or units of study) were necessary. First, the case, or school, was selected, and then the participants within each school. Where the school had more than one deputy, a particular one had to be chosen. When this was done, selection of the other informants followed. Different methods of selection were used at each level. These are now described.

The meaning and appropriateness of the term 'sampling' in qualitative research has generated discussion amongst researchers. Concerns refer to the different relationships between the unit studied and the whole population in different types of research. In some quantitative research, for example most survey research, the emphasis is on selecting a sample with the same characteristics as the population, so that statistical generalisation can occur. Yin (2003) expressed concern about using this sampling logic in case study methodology. He argued that 'replication logic', where a case study is selected so that it either "predicts similar results (a literal replication) or predicts contrasting results but for predictable reasons (a theoretical

replication)” (p. 47) is more appropriate in case study research, where the aim is usually analytical generalisation. Here, results are generalised to a broad theory, so units for study will be chosen to maximise what is learned. The word ‘sampling’ tends to have connotations of statistical generalisation, and hence alternative terminology which better reflects the main considerations in selecting the unit(s) for study is preferred by some qualitative researchers. Merriam (1998) used purposeful sampling, which is “based on the assumption that the investigator wants to discover, understand, and gain insight, and therefore must select a sample from which the most can be learned” (p. 61). But selecting information-rich cases requires the development of criteria for determining which cases are likely to allow the researcher to learn the most. For this reason LeCrompte, Preissle and Tesch (1993) prefer the term criterion-based selection, where one creates “a list of attributes essential” to the study and then proceeds “to find or locate a unit matching the list” (p. 70).

Three schools were chosen to participate in the study using criterion-based selection. It is acknowledged that three schools was a very small sample. The limitations created by this needed to be balanced against the time and funds available. Permission to conduct the study was granted by the National Board for Lutheran Schools (see Appendix B), who effectively left the local director in the researcher’s home region to facilitate the selection of schools and initiate discussion with the principals of those schools. While principals were not specifically excluded from the study, none took any further part in the research after providing permission for the researcher to approach their deputies.

The selection criteria for the schools were developed by the researcher and local director. There are three regions in the Australian Lutheran school system. One includes schools in South Australia, Western Australia and the Northern Territory, the South Eastern Region includes Victoria, NSW and Tasmania, and the other is Queensland. It was considered important that one school from each region was involved in the study, since one intended audience for the study findings were the Master of Education students at Australian Lutheran College, who come from all regions. The interest in the

project at the national level also encouraged the inclusion of a geographically broad group of participant schools.

Other criteria were developed with a view to including variation in age, rural/metro location, size of school, gender, and leadership structure. The Lutheran secondary school system is very diverse. It contains every possibility from small primary schools with a 'top end' to Year 10, through to 'stand alone' secondary schools of 1,000 or more students. There is no 'typical' Lutheran secondary school. (A different conclusion may be reached about the primary sector, where, superficially at least, many of the schools are more homogenous.) The criteria were developed in an attempt to include a breadth of schools, rather than a typical school. Not all the schools which were approached were ultimately involved in the research as, for various reasons, some deputies chose not to take part. However, the final group of schools successfully met the criteria. All three regions were included. Rural and urban schools were involved, as were new and old, big and small, secondary and P-12 schools, traditional and less traditional leadership structures, as well as male and female deputy principals. This is illustrated in Table 4.2. All the schools had undergone some restructuring of senior and/or middle management positions of responsibility within the previous five years. Due to the small number of secondary schools in the Australian Lutheran system, it would be inappropriate to describe the schools in more detail, or connect schools with particular features to deputies, or key informants, with certain characteristics. This would pose an unacceptable risk of identification.

**Table 4.2 Characteristics of the Study Participants**

Characteristics of schools	Rural	Urban	>600 secondary students	<400 secondary students	Secondary only	P-12	<10 years old	>20 years old
No. schools	1	2	1	2	2	1	1	1

Characteristics of deputies	Title 'Deputy Principal' used	Role predominantly administration	Role predominantly curriculum	Responsible for at least two teaching classes	Gender	Lutheran	Non Lutheran
No. Deputy Principals	2	2	1	3	1F/2M	1	2

Characteristics of key informants	Middle Manager	Senior Manager	Gender	Lutheran	Non Lutheran
No. key informants	5	1	4F/2M	1	5

In most cases the local director, acting on behalf of the national board, made the first approach to the principal of the selected schools. Once the verbal permission of the principals had been obtained, the researcher approached the deputy principals. In two of the three schools one person held the title of deputy principal. In the third school, the responsibility was shared amongst three people with different titles and responsibilities. In this case the female deputy was invited to be involved in order to provide gender balance in the sample.

Once the deputy principals had agreed to participate, they, in turn, nominated three other potential participants. Merriam (1998) reflected on what it required to be a good respondent.

Anthropologists and sociologists speak of a good respondent as an 'informant'-one who understands the culture but is also able to reflect on it and articulate for the researcher what is going on...Good respondents are those who can express thoughts, feelings, opinions – that is offer a perspective-on the topic being studied. (p. 85)

In order to facilitate the inclusion of 'good respondents' in the study, the criteria provided to the deputy principals for nominating the key informants were:

- Being in a position from which they can effectively observe the deputy principal, and

- Being able to critically evaluate and comment on the deputy's role in the leadership of the school.

The addition of the key informants helped to ensure the validity of the data, and acknowledged that leadership and followership are interdependent.

It was recognised that the process of the deputies choosing the other key informants had the potential to distort the followership voice, as deputies would possibly nominate people who were generally supportive of them. Also, as noted above, none chose to include their principal, so the community voice was generally less informed about the workings of the school than the deputies themselves. It is to be expected that insights were lost due to the failure of the sample to include principals. These limitations were balanced by the belief that the deputies were more likely to agree to participate in the research if they had some control over who was talking about them. It was also felt that the deputies were in the best position to know which other staff knew their work well enough to discuss it in an informed manner. So the deputies were invited to forward three names, two of whom were chosen at random by the researcher's principal supervisor. The random selection, albeit from a limited pool, was seen to go some small way towards addressing the issue of bias in the sample.

In the end, all the key informants chosen by the deputies had other senior or middle management roles in the schools. This seemed appropriate, as these roles brought them into contact with the deputies more often than was likely to be the case for a teacher predominantly in the classroom. The requirement that participants be able to speak in an informed manner about the deputies had the effect of limiting the 'community voice' to a particular subsection of the school. This was noted, but in the interests of convenience and manageability of the research, it was not addressed further at the data gathering level.

## **4.6 Validity and Reliability Issues**

### **4.6.1 Validity**

In general, for something to be valid, it needs to be "based on fact or evidence, that is, capable of being justified" (Wiersma & Jurs, 2005, p. 5). In

the traditional sense, validity involves two concepts, internal validity and external validity. Internal validity is the extent to which results can be interpreted accurately, and external validity is the extent to which results can be generalised to populations. There is much debate about the way to interpret these concepts meaningfully in qualitative research (Lincoln & Guba, 2000). The debate relates to the basic assumptions about knowledge and reality that underpin qualitative research, and the conclusions about the trustworthiness of the data that logically arise from these assumptions. Lincoln and Guba discuss several conceptualisations of validity: validity as authenticity, validity as resistance, validity as poststructural transgression and validity as an ethical relationship. They also reflect on the ideas of voice and reflexivity (pp. 180-183). For the purposes of this study however, it is more manageable to view validity in more traditional, if perhaps less sophisticated, terms.

#### **4.6.1.1 Internal Validity**

It has been suggested that the internal “validity of qualitative research is for the most part established on a logical basis, and providing an argument for validity requires well documented research and a comprehensive description” (Wiersma & Jurs, 2005, p. 216). Techniques of triangulation are usually integral to creating this logical basis. “Triangulation is comparison of information to determine whether or not there is corroboration. It is a search for convergence of information on a common finding or concept” (p. 256). In the current study there were two parts to the triangulation. The first was the use of more than one case, and the second was the use of the other key informants to provide information, which may, or may not, corroborate the reflections of the deputy principals.

Six strategies enhance internal validity:

1. Triangulation;
2. Member checks;
3. Long term observation;
4. Peer examination;
5. Participatory or collaborative modes of research, and
6. Researcher’s biases (Merriam, 1998, p. 204)

In addition to limited triangulation, the current study made use of member checks. This required taking data and tentative interpretations back to the participants for comment on plausibility, and peer examination, whereby colleagues and mentors were asked to comment on the findings as they emerged. The researcher's biases were also addressed to the extent that the assumptions, worldview and theoretical orientation of the study were clarified through the discussion with the researcher's supervisors and peer mentors and the process of designing the research.

In discussion of the internal validity of the current study Yin's (2003) opinion is worth noting. He argues that internal validity is only of concern for causal or explanatory case studies. The logic of internal validity is inapplicable to descriptive or exploratory studies, which are not attempting to establish a causal relationship. While the current study was more exploratory than causal, there was, nevertheless, a significant degree of interpretation inherent in attempting to ascertain what elements of leadership participants were acknowledging. For this reason, Yin's thinking about internal validity issues relating to inferences is relevant. Inferences are made by the researcher when an event cannot be directly observed. "The investigator will 'infer' that a particular event resulted from some earlier occurrence, based on interview and documentary evidence collected as part of the case" (p. 36). An example from the current study is the fact that a participant quoted an event as an example of when they showed leadership, hence this says something about the leadership in their role. This type of inference is used frequently in the current study. Consideration was given to whether the inference is logically correct and whether rival explanations and possibilities have been considered, in order to ensure internal validity

#### **4.6.1.2 External Validity**

With regard to generalisability in case studies, it is argued that it "centres on whether it is possible to generalise from a single case, or from qualitative inquiry in general, and if so, in what way?" (Merriam, 1998, p. 208) Two positions arise from a traditional sampling perspective. One is to assume that it is not possible to generalise from a single case unless it has been chosen

by standard sampling methods as representative of the population. The other is to use multiple cases to help ensure a valid sample. Using the same argument as noted previously, Yin (2003) challenges the core assumption that statistical generalisation is appropriate logic for case studies. These, he argued, rely on analytical generalisation, where results are generalised to broad theory. For this, replication logic is more suited.

In the present study multiple cases were used in an attempt to identify where there was replication of the results, in order to enable commonality to be the basis for conclusions. However, a second conceptualisation of generalisability also seems to make sense in the context of this study. This conceptualisation makes the reader the focus. "For some qualitative research studies the issue of external validity may be left to those who read the report of the study. In essence, it is someone else's task to fit the results into whatever is being considered" (Wiersma & Jurs, 2005, p. 216). Stake (1978; 1995) refers to this reader-based generalisation as naturalistic generalization. Drawing on tacit knowledge, intuition, and personal experience, people look for patterns that explain their own experience as well as events in the world around them. "Full and thorough knowledge of the particular" allows one to see similarities "in new and foreign contexts" (1978, p. 6) Given the anticipated readership of this study, it is inevitable that this kind of generalisation will occur. Hence it is deemed to be necessary to "provide enough detailed description of the study's context to enable the readers to compare the 'fit' with their situations" (Merriam, 1998, p. 211). This detail is provided in three ways:

1. Rich, thick description - providing enough description so that readers will be able to determine how closely their situations match the research situation, and hence, whether findings can be transferred;
2. Typicality or modal category - describing how typical the understandings of leadership in the context of the deputy are compared with others in the same class, so that users can make comparisons with their own situations, and
3. Multi-site designs - using several cases that maximize diversity in the phenomenon of interest; in this case the leadership of the deputy principal. This will allow the results to be applied by readers to a greater range of other situations. This variation can be achieved through purposeful or random sampling. (Merriam, 1998, pp. 211-212)

In this study, the key criterion of diversity in specific areas was used to select the participating schools. So elements enabling both naturalistic generalisation and analytic generalisation have been included in the current study. The study is not concerned with issues relating to statistical generalisation.

#### **4.6.2 Reliability**

Reliability refers to the consistency of the research and the extent to which it can be replicated. Replicated in this sense refers to doing the same case over again and getting the same result, not replicating the results of one case by doing another, as was the meaning used in the term 'replication logic' (Yin, 2003). Again, there are two elements to the concept of reliability; internal and external reliability. Internal reliability refers to the extent that data collection, analysis and interpretations are consistent, given the same conditions. External reliability deals with the issue of whether or not independent researchers can replicate the studies in the same or similar settings (Wiersma & Jurs, 2005). The goal of reliability is to minimise the errors and biases in the study. Once more there is debate about how reliability should be conceptualised in a qualitative study. One position is, that in the traditional sense, neither internal nor external reliability are achievable for a qualitative study.

Because what is being studied in education is assumed to be in flux, multifaceted, and highly contextual, because information gathered is a function of who gives it and how skilled the researcher is at getting it, and because the emergent design of a qualitative case study precludes a priori controls, achieving reliability in the traditional sense is not only fanciful but impossible. Furthermore, for the reasons discussed, replication of a qualitative study will not yield the same results. (Merriam, 1998, p. 206)

Various scholars have suggested alternatives to reliability which they perceive as more appropriate (Flick, 1998; Janesick, 1994; Wolcott, 1995). Lincoln & Guba (1985) suggested thinking about the 'dependability' or 'consistency' of the results obtained from the data (p. 288). This means that outsiders agree that, given the data that were collected, the results are consistent and dependable, they make sense. "The question then is not whether the findings will be found again, but whether the results are consistent with the data

collected” (Merriam, 1998, p. 206). The goal of minimising errors and biases in the study is likely to have been satisfactorily achieved if outsiders see the results as consistent and dependable.

Merriam (1998, p. 206) lists several techniques that help ensure qualitative research results are dependable.

1. The Investigator’s Position. The investigator should explain the assumptions and theory behind the study, his or her position vis-a vis the group being studied, the basis for selecting informants and a description of them, and the social context from which data were collected.

In the current study there is an attempt to do this, especially in the current chapter and Chapter 2, which describes the church and theological context of Lutheran secondary schools.)

2. Triangulation. Especially in terms of using multiple methods of data collection and analysis, triangulation strengthens reliability as well as internal validity.

There is some triangulation in the current study.

3. Audit Trail. The findings of a study can be authenticated by following the trail of the researcher. “If we cannot expect others to replicate our account, the best we can do is explain how we arrived at our results” (Dey (1993) quoted in Merriam, 1998, p. 207) In order for an audit to take place, the investigator must describe in detail how data were collected, how categories were derived and how decisions were made throughout the inquiry.

This has been done in the current study.

Yin (2003) put this similarly. “The general way of approaching the reliability problem is to make as many steps as operational as possible and to conduct the research as if someone were always looking over your shoulder” (p. 38).

In this study such steps were taken.

#### **4.7 Interviews**

The deputy principals and the key informants were interviewed by the researcher in their individual schools. In all cases the deputy was interviewed first and the interviews ranged in length from 30 to 50 minutes. The interviews were semi structured. A small number of core questions (Appendix G) provided the scaffolding and helped ensure that the research questions were addressed. Both the deputies and the key informants were asked the same

core questions, which not made available to the participants prior to the interviews.

Initially, participants were asked to identify what was important to their schools. The answers to this question defined the areas where participants were asked to provide examples of the deputy's leadership. Other questions asked in all interviews included how the participants defined leadership, and whether they thought that deputy principals in Lutheran schools needed to be Lutheran.

Interviews were audio recorded in all except one case (where permission to record was not given), and the recordings were then transcribed by the researcher. The transcripts were provided to the interviewees for validation and checking purposes. No changes to the transcripts were requested. One participant desired alterations be made to some quotations used in Chapter 5, and this was able to be accommodated.

#### **4.8 Data Analysis**

It is recommended that data collection and analysis be a simultaneous activity in qualitative research (Miles & Huberman, 1994; 2002). This enables the researchers to “cycle back and forth between thinking about the existing data and generating strategies for collecting new, often better, data” (1994, p. 50). The first interviews in this study occurred during the pilot tests. The fundamental questions and the initial thoughts about data categorisation were refined thereafter. The analysis process was a data reduction, data display and conclusion drawing/verification model or, as it can be summarised, “a process of categorisation, description, and synthesis” (Wiersma & Jurs, 2005, p. 207).

Data were collected from several sites. In a multiple case study there are two stages of analysis. The cases must be analysed within themselves, and then against each other. A qualitative, inductive, multisite case study seeks to build abstractions across cases. The researcher attempts “to build a general

explanation that fits each of the individual cases, even though the cases will vary in their details” (Yin, 1994, p. 112 quoted in Merriam, 1998, p. 194). Qualitative researchers aim to develop a theory from their observations and intuitive understandings. This is an inductive approach, and contrasts with deductive research, which starts with a theory and hopes that the data will match the hypothesis. In interview based qualitative research, data consists of “direct quotations from people about their experiences, opinions, feelings and knowledge” (Merriam, 1998, p. 69). In order to develop a theory from the data, the quotations must be categorised in some way. This is an aspect of the data reduction process and is necessarily selective. Miles and Huberman (1994) cautioned,

the challenge is to be explicitly mindful of the purposes of your study and of the conceptual lenses you are training on it - while allowing yourself to be open and...reeducated by things you didn't know or didn't expect to find. (p. 56)

Various tables, charts and matrices were used in this study to display the data in helpful ways. Some were included in the thesis (see for example, Sections 5.5.9, 5.9). These displays were used as part of the iterative process of developing satisfactory categories for the data.

Conclusion drawing and verification occurred as the categories were defined and redefined. This study was based on the assumption that the leadership understandings embedded in the role of the deputy principal in Lutheran secondary schools would reflect, or partially reflect, one or more of the historical leadership narratives. The need for an analysis, which compared the emerging themes with preset categories, was included in the research questions. Thus there were two types of conclusions: those which explored how the participants understood leadership in the context of the deputy principal's role, and those which considered these in the light of pre-existing theories of leadership.

#### ***4.8.1 Devising Categories and Coding Data***

Using appropriate categories or themes that assisted in capturing the patterns present in the data was essential to effective data analysis. Categories can

come from at least three sources, the researcher, the participants and the literature. Most often they are grounded in the data and constructed through the constant comparative method of data analysis (Section 4.8.2). In the present study categories which were grounded in the data represented the first stage of the required analysis. This was aimed at drawing conclusions about what the participants understood as leadership in the context of the role of the deputy. The transcripts were considered line by line. All references to leadership in the transcripts were highlighted and then pasted into another document. Each reference was treated as a unit of data, defined as any meaningful (or potentially meaningful) segment of data. A unit needed to meet two criteria.

First, it should be heuristic - that is, the unit should reveal information relevant to the study and stimulate the reader to think beyond the particular bit of information. Second, the unit should be the smallest bit of information about something that can stand by itself - that is, it must be interpretable in the absence of any additional information other than a broad understanding of the context in which the inquiry is carried out. (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 345)

As the themes emerged from the data initial categories were devised and the data were coded. The categories were revised as the coded data was transferred back to the transcripts in order to check that the interpretation was consistent with the surrounding context of the quotation.

Gomm (2004) used the term 'thematic analysis' in a way which is helpful in the current study. In a thematic analysis the "analyst looks for themes which are present in the whole set of interviews and creates a framework for making comparisons between the different respondents" (p. 189). In the current study there were two levels to this framework. Themes were needed which facilitated comparisons among the participants from each individual school, and then among the schools. Once these themes were determined, "the analysis is in terms of which kinds of people said what, which relates to a particular theme, and how saying something with regard to one theme relates to saying something with regards to another" (Gomm, 2004, p. 189, 190).

The second phases of the analysis required the themes which emerged from the data to be compared with those that emerged from the literature review. In

particular, the focus was on historical leadership narratives or theories. This was not easy. Leadership narratives are not good categories because of the way they overlap. The qualities of a good set of categories are:

1. Categories should be exhaustive;
2. Categories should be mutually exclusive;
3. Categories should be sensitizing, and
4. Categories should be conceptually congruent. (Merriam, 1998, p. 183)

From this list it was immediately obvious why leadership theory based categories were not easy to manage. They were not exhaustive and they were not mutually exclusive. The history of leadership theory is a history of gaps and overlapping ideas:

In an initial examination of relevant literature, we sought to identify different prominent theories of leadership, and produced a non-exhaustive list of 35 separate theories... This diverse spectrum of scholarly perspectives is further complicated in that even leadership theories of the same name did not necessarily exhibit theoretical uniformity across sources. In other cases, seemingly identical theories were referred to by different names. (Richmon & Allison, 2003, p. 35)

Any categories based on historical leadership narratives are likely to reflect these problems. But the research questions required the data to be sorted in such a way as to reflect those narratives that were present and highlight those that were not. The ambiguities of this had to be managed in some way.

Consequently, the various aspects of the categories were discussed as fully as was feasible in the data presentation and conclusions chapters.

#### ***4.8.2 The Constant Comparative Method***

The basic task of data analysis is to compare one unit of information to the next in the search for patterns in the data. The core strategy of the constant comparative method of analysis is to do just that, constantly compare. The researcher begins with a particular incident from an interview and compares it with another incident in the same set of data or in another set. The comparisons lead to tentative categories, or in the case of this study, tentative allocation to an existing category. These are then compared to each other and to other instances. Comparisons are constantly made within and between levels of conceptualisation until a theory can be formulated. This constant

comparison was a fundamental part of the analysis process in the present study.

### **4.8.3 Memoing**

Memos were used to assist in the analysis process. A memo can be defined as “the theorizing write-up of ideas about codes and their relationships as they strike the analyst while coding” (Glaser, 1978, p. 83). Memos were used frequently in the data analysis for this study. Many were later discarded, but some became instrumental in indicating areas needing to be followed through in Chapter 6.

### **4.9 Ethical Considerations**

This study was conducted with the support of Lutheran Education Australia and the Council for Lutheran Education South Eastern Region. (As a member of this council, the researcher declared a conflict of interest and removed herself from the discussion at the time when access to schools was sought.) Due to the intimate nature of the Lutheran school system, and the relatively small number of secondary schools, there was an increased risk that the schools and individual participants may be identifiable. While every effort was made to avoid this, participants were made aware of the risk in the information letters they received.

Protocols set down by the Human Research Ethics Committee were observed, as well as the requirements of the Lutheran system. Permission was obtained from both bodies (see Appendices A and B). The deputy principals in the selected schools were approached only after permission had been gained from the principal. Participants were provided with information about the project (Appendix C), as well as the description of the project required by the Human Research Ethics Committee (Appendix D). While many participants found this document difficult to read, the researcher believed that it added to the transparency of the project. Participants were invited to forward questions pertaining to the document and the study in general by email prior to the interview, but no-one took advantage of this opportunity.

One potential ethical issue was the use of the non-deputy key informants. These participants were reflecting on the leadership of the deputy, rather than their own leadership. The study relied on the integrity of the informant and the researcher to maintain the focus on what was being observed and indicated about leadership. The potential always existed for the interview to descend into gossip about a particular person. It was felt that this potential problem was at least partially addressed by the fact that the deputies nominated the key informants. This gave them the opportunity to nominate people they trusted. The deputy principals were also aware that the key informants were reflecting on the deputies' leadership and not on their personalities. The researcher was alert to the need to maintain the focus on leadership throughout the interviews.

As the researcher is a doctoral student, the ethical issues relating to inexperience, such as competence boundaries and research integrity and quality are relevant, but were suitably managed. "Stay self-aware" suggested Miles and Huberman, and make use of "critical friends who can supportively counter your taken-for granted approaches and suggest alternatives." (2002, p 397). Frequent advice from the study supervisors, senior executives in Lutheran Education Australia and Lutheran Education Australia (South Eastern Region), and the study mentors, was the means used to address this issue.

Another ethical issue was that of honesty and trust. There was no temptation to mislead respondents about the true nature of the inquiry during or before the data gathering stage, but there were times when deep reflection was required in order to conclude that the summaries in Chapter 5 were a reasonable interpretation of the data and not just wishful thinking. Member checking was a technique used to ensure that the final report contained conclusions that the participants believed were a fair interpretation of their comments.

Finally, it should be noted that the researcher was the recipient of both an Australian Catholic University Fee Waiver Scholarship and a

Muetzfeldt/Hoffmann/BLEA Scholarship during the research period. The former paid tuition fees, and the latter assisted with the costs incurred in gathering the data.

#### 4.10 Design Summary

The design of this study was qualitative case study using semi structured interviews with nine participants from three schools. All were chosen through a purposeful sampling strategy in order that the cases cumulatively met a broad range of criteria. Replication logic was of greater significance than sampling logic. Ensuring the study was manageable was also a selection factor.

Data were gathered during a four month period in mid 2005 and were analysed using thematic analysis that involved coding, memoing, using tables and other display devices and constant comparison. Eventually the themes, which emerged from the data, were also compared with preexisting themes from the literature. The timeline for the study is provided in Table 4.3

**Table 4.3 Timeline for the study**

Event	Date
Proposal Defense	8 <sup>th</sup> September 2004
Permission to Conduct Study in LEA Schools	4 <sup>th</sup> November 2004
Ethics Clearance	19 <sup>th</sup> January 2005
Approach to Principals	February-April 2005
Approach to Deputy Principals and Key Informants	March-June 2005
Interviews	May-September 2005
Data Transcription	June-October 2005
Initial Data Analysis	February-April 2006
Initial Member Checks	April 2006
Peer Examination	April 2006
Further Data Analysis	May-July 2006
Follow Up Member Checks	July-August 2006
Final Submission	November 2006

Member checks, peer examination and the supervisors' input assisted in ensuring that the findings and conclusions were justifiable. The understandings embedded in the role of the deputy principal in the Lutheran secondary school are presented in the next chapter. The research questions were used to scaffold the understandings and provided a structure for making

them accessible. Chapter 6 then proceeds to discuss the conclusions and recommendations which arose from these understandings.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **Presentation and Analysis of Research**

#### **5.1 Introduction**

The purpose of this study was to explore the understandings about leadership embedded in the current role of the deputy principal in Lutheran secondary schools. Underpinning the study were constructionist assumptions about the existence of multiple truths and a symbolic interactionist perspective, which focused on the meanings and behaviours the participants attached to the concept of leadership and the language they used to describe these meanings and behaviours. In this chapter the research findings are presented. The research questions provided a structure for the presentation, and for the analysis, which considered the leadership concepts apparent in the data.

#### **5.2 Design of Research**

The methodology used was a multisite case study. Three schools were chosen using criterion-based selection aimed at including a broad range of information-rich cases. The deputies from these schools were then invited to participate in the study. Where there was more than one deputy, a particular one was selected by the researcher's principal supervisor. The breadth of the sample was a key criterion in this process.

The other key informants were teachers holding middle and senior management positions in the selected schools. They were nominated by the deputies, who were asked to consider two criteria in their selections (Section 4.5). It is acknowledged that there was an element of idealism in these criteria. Whether intentional or not, deputies perform a significant volume of work which is likely to be largely unobserved by outsiders. It was possible to infer this from the comments of the deputy principals. This suggested that, while the key informants were in a position to observe and comment on the deputy's leadership role, there were still inherent limitations in their ability and opportunity to observe the role.

The deputy principals and the key informants were interviewed by the researcher in their individual schools. The transcripts were provided to the interviewees for validation and checking purposes.

The data were analysed using a data reduction, data display and conclusion drawing/verification model. Member checking and peer examination were key aspects of ensuring the internal validity of the findings.

The findings are presented in seven sections which parallel the research questions, summarised in Table 5.1

**Table 5.1 Overview of the Presentation of Findings**

Section	Reference	Topic
Section 1	5.3	In what ways do the deputy principals perceive that they exercise leadership in their schools?
Section 2	5.4	How do the deputy principals understand leadership?
Section 3	5.5	Which, if any, of the identified leadership narratives do these understanding reflect?
Section 4	5.6	In what ways do the key informants perceive that the deputy principals exercise leadership in their schools?
Section 5	5.7	How do the key informants understand leadership?
Section 6	5.8	Which, if any, of the identified leadership narratives do these understanding reflect?
Section 7	5.9	What are the significant similarities and differences in the understanding(s) of leadership between deputy principals and other key informants?

The structured and sequential nature of the research questions meant that they could form the scaffolding on which to analyse the data and present the findings. In order to help ensure that the participants could not be identified, the masculine pronoun was used in quotes throughout this chapter, even when the deputy or another key informant was female. For the same reason, the deputies' words were not presented in such a way that comments made by an individual deputy could be collated.

### **5.3 Deputy Principals' Self Perceptions**

Before discussing ways in which the deputies perceived that they exercised leadership, it was necessary to establish that they actually saw themselves as leaders. Cranston and his colleagues (2004) reviewed previous research which examined the roles of deputy principals and suggested there was a deep rooted custodial management emphasis in the deputy's role. The

deputies in this study acknowledged this, but saw themselves as both leaders and managers. As one deputy quipped “Sometimes when I’m snowed under I think I’m just managing! But, no, I see that I’m both.” The relevance of distinguishing leadership and management is discussed shortly. The deputies had various understandings of leadership, and various frustrations about the degree of fit between their understanding and what their role enabled, but all believed that they were leaders in their schools.

Six areas were identified where the deputies considered they were able to demonstrate leadership:

1. Completing administration tasks in a way that improved outcomes for staff and students;
2. Having input into decision making through various formal and informal structures;
3. Working to resolve staff issues;
4. Teaching allocated classes well;
5. Having and communicating high expectations, and
6. Providing a good example and/or modelling certain values.

These areas are now considered in turn.

### **5.3.1 Administration Tasks**

The perception of themselves as leaders did not prevent the deputies defining significant components of their role as management tasks. There was talk of the busyness, and the continuous pressure to take on more. “So that was more or less added on, but then every other year something else is added on.” None of the deputies in this study had a key role in the discipline structure of the school, although they assisted willingly in this area when asked. Tasks associated with daily organisation or timetabling commonly occupied significant time. Schools were operating three or four different timetables in a year. “I do the timetable and allocate staff as an indication of who we need...and ...in middle college...every trimester there is a change in the timetable.” Daily organisation and allocating extras (otherwise known as relief lessons) were also significant tasks. Deputies responsible for this inevitably

allocated themselves many more extras than were expected of other staff. “It is not uncommon for me to have forty or fifty internal reliefs in a term.” Since this is nearly a day a week, it is no wonder that this deputy concluded that “(this) then makes me unavailable for other things”.

While the current study acknowledges that organisational tasks are significant in the role of the deputy, no attempt was made to distinguish between management and leadership and allocate a time fraction to each. In fact to do so would have been counter productive. Perhaps paradoxically, it was often through organisational tasks, which they defined as management, that the deputies saw themselves as best able to exercise leadership. This was consistent with a move away from models (Bennis & Nanus, 1985) which attempted to delineate between leadership and management, to a more holistic conceptualisation of leadership. However, caution needs to be used here. The potential to mistakenly define management as leadership is very real, especially given the management-focused history of the role of the deputy in schools.

It appeared that the deputies in this study perceived one aspect of leadership emerging from management type tasks, when the motivating focus was on people affected by the outcomes of the task. In other words, the deputies perceived that, if their focus in completing a task was to achieve the best possible outcome for the teachers and students involved, this was leadership. This allowed even complex organisational tasks, such as constructing the timetable or allocating extra lessons, to be perceived as acts of leadership. The critical factor was the emphasis on achieving the best outcome for stakeholders. As one deputy reflected;

There are a lot of things that I do that are mechanical management type things, and I sometimes think that there is a little bit too much of that. But when I talk to the principal about all the things I do, it helps me realise that I probably show quite a bit of leadership in how I do things, which ultimately improves outcomes for people, whether it's students or staff.

The deputies believed that although their work comprised numerous tasks which they defined as management, there was still potential for leadership in

the way these were carried out. “So I just feel that doing my job well and keeping well ahead of things...makes a big difference.” Making a positive difference to staff and students, and in some cases parents and the broader community, was a motivating factor for deputy principals and one which they perceived as leadership. Management tasks were perceived as an opportunity to exercise leadership.

### **5.3.2 Input into Decision Making**

Three aspects of decision making emerged from the deputy principals’ interviews. These were: capacity for input into decisions, ability to make a final decision, and knowledge of decisions that had been taken.

All the deputies indicated that they were part of the general decision making processes in the school in various formal and informal ways. One deputy summarised the formal opportunities for input into curriculum decisions, “in those sorts of venues, curriculum committee, and key learning area leader meetings, I have a lot of input.” Another highlighted the role of the management committee in decision making. “I’m involved in the management committee...the management committee makes lots of decisions and recommendations to the board.” The deputies also saw capacity to have informal input through their discussions with various members of staff. “The school pastor... often will come to me and we’ll talk about what direction we should take with things.” In the main the deputies were satisfied with their opportunities for input as part of the broad decision making structures within the schools.

There was less consistency among the deputies when it came to their capacity to actually make decisions, as distinct from having input into collective decisions. Where a deputy had a clearly defined area of responsibility, they were generally able to make decisions within that area. “I probably have total responsibility and flexibility to implement things the way I would see them.” But where the deputy’s role was less clearly defined, so too was their capacity to make decisions. One deputy, responding to a question about involvement in curriculum decision making, commented;

I could probably talk for hours about how I get frustrated over that with this role, because you are involved in everything, but often in a superficial way. In some areas your role is undefined, and curriculum is one of those. It is sometimes difficult to get involved.

There were also instances of the deputy not being involved in decisions, which related directly to their work. "And we've just basically decided if I'm the human resources manager maybe I should be involved in interviews for new staff." It seemed that in schools where the deputy's role had been deliberately structured and conceptualised, the individual decision making capacity was also clearly defined. In schools where the deputy's role had grown without deliberate planning, or where a leadership team had developed around the deputy and encroached on some of the territory traditionally associated with the deputy's role, some anomalies in decision making capacity had emerged. As noted above, this resulted in mixed reactions from the deputies about the strength of their capacity to make decisions.

The final area relating to decision making was deputies being informed when decisions had been made, and being aware of the reasons for those decisions. The priorities of the principal seemed to be instrumental here. One deputy felt fully informed.

We hear about every decision that's made and why it was made. We meet every Thursday and then individually we also meet with the principal once a week. So we know why decisions were made and what's happening.

In other cases it was more incidental.

I'm not the principal and I don't hear a lot of things; perhaps aspects of them. The principal tells me when he's got time. Attendance at council meetings helps me to get a perspective on the whole-school operation.

The deputies recognised the importance of being informed in their role as leaders, but had different experiences as to how well and how consistently this was achieved at the school level.

### ***5.3.3 Resolving Staff Issues***

One deputy in the sample had a role description which explicitly contained staff welfare, one was inevitably involved in staff issues through the vehicle of daily organisation, and the third had a brief in curriculum that involved working

closely with staff in order to impact on classroom work, and hence was incidentally drawn into some staff issues. All three saw this as an area containing leadership potential, although they were uncertain if staff saw their work here as leadership. One commented:

I don't know to be honest. I'd say a lot (of staff) would be very happy if I was just solving their individual problems and just making sure that everything works really well. I think they'd be quite happy with that.

Whatever the staff perception, the deputies defined this kind of work as leadership. One commented, "I think (leadership) happens in the little things. When there is a parent, or a staff member, or a student, who is annoyed or angry about something...I just listen to all sides". Another was asked to give an example of leadership in pastoral care and replied "My role involves the pastoral care of staff, and this is a huge role. I work with staff members all the time, talking about their issues and how these affect their work." The deputies perceived that their role in working with staff to resolve issues constituted leadership. As one deputy summed up, "when people come in here and they've got a question or a problem, its how I work with them that I think is leadership too".

#### **5.3.4 Teaching Well**

Teaching well was identified by all the deputies as a part of leadership. They saw the need to teach their own classes well, and comments were made about the difficulty of finding enough time amidst their busyness to prepare quality lessons. The deputies often stepped up to take difficult classes, or subjects, where there had been issues. The deputy with the biggest role in curriculum also explicitly saw credibility with the teaching staff as related to teaching personal classes well, "you must be seen to 'do' sometime".

The deputy principals did not spend a great deal of time talking about their teaching role. Good personal teaching practice seemed to be taken for granted as far as they were concerned. There was no pattern in their perception of whether they were instructional leaders, as Hallinger and Murphy (1985) defined the term. This seemed to hinge on the individual and the role description. Whether the deputies were teacher leaders depends on

the definition used. As discussed in the literature review, some definitions preclude teachers who do not spend the majority of their time in the classroom. However, in light of the framework of Crowther and his colleagues, it would seem that all the deputies in the study define themselves as teacher leaders. They would see that their behaviour “facilitates principled pedagogical action towards whole school success” (Crowther, Kaagan et al., 2002, p. 11), and that they model this in the classroom.

### **5.3.5 High Expectations**

Two of the deputies in the current study articulated the association they perceived between their leadership and having high expectations of staff and students. High expectations appeared to be defined in terms of the deputies’ own standards, not by reference to some external standard. Areas nominated by the deputies where they had high expectations included building community relationships, student learning, teaching to achieve good results, and student behaviour. Asked about leadership in the teaching and learning program, one deputy summarised, “I guess the bottom line is by having high expectations and by not accepting second best from either the students or the teachers.” The other deputy was also clear about the need to communicate high expectations at both group and individual levels as evidenced by his words:

We need to communicate (high expectations) through assemblies and when we do academic presentations, and I probably need to do more of that. But I probably do it (better) individually, if a student is sent to me for having done something that’s not acceptable.

In both cases the deputies saw a link between their own high expectations and encouraging and working with teachers so they also had high expectations. “I really feel that my role is to help staff be able to implement that high expectation.” The deputies saw leadership in their role in holding high expectations, communicating them, and facilitating other staff and students to do so as well.

### **5.3.6 Being a Good Example**

All three deputies believed their role required them to be a good example to staff and students, although what they saw themselves modelling varied.

Some of the modelling was in areas that appeared to move into complex substantive or lifeworld concepts, other modelling was more management focused. One deputy, for example, modelled by “example of clean living, good work ethic, that type of thing”. Later punctuality was added to the list, and the deputy concluded “I think that sometimes I might be seen more as a manager type person than as a leader type person.” This may be true, but as will be discussed shortly, the deputies perceived that leaders were hard working and involved, so modelling a good work ethic could indicate a leader, or a manager, or both. So too could clean living, especially to the extent that it overlaps with the lifestyle the church expects of its school leaders, as outlined in Chapter 2. The research design in this study assigns equal importance to the perspectives of the deputies and the other key informants in establishing the leadership understandings embedded in the deputy’s role. Perhaps modelling is one instance where the interpretation of the followers is particularly crucial. According to the axiom, it is not what is taught, but what is learned, that is significant. Perhaps here it is not what is modelled, but what is seen to be modelled, that matters. This perspective is taken up in research question three. The comments of the other deputies in regards to their modelling behaviours are considered next.

While the previous deputy struggled in the first instance to see leadership in what was modelled, another was readily able to articulate many of the substantive elements of setting an example, including modelling a living Christian faith. Leadership was described as “the way I work with staff members, witnessing to them and talking about my faith in the school context. Praying together and praying for each other is a powerful way of witnessing to others.” The same deputy also saw the significance of attending church services when the school visited local congregations. “When we go out as a school to various congregations, I always make a point of going. Although I choose to do this, it is an important part of my role anyway.” The element of choice was important to this deputy. Modelling a Christian manner of going about being a deputy was a deliberate decision which had involved conscious consideration of what this involved. There were a number of facets to the answer. Some were simple. “I set reliefs, and I give myself home group

(pastoral care) as often as I can cope.” Others were complex theological considerations, which had a distinctly Lutheran element. “Take, for example, the theology of glory/theology of the cross. That’s a big one for me. How do you act that out?” For this deputy much of the modelling was intentional, if hard work. The comment “I’ve trained myself to react in situations in a way that I think is dignified and that is a model for others” suggested that reflection, effort and will power had gone into the process. This deputy deliberately reflected on, and worked towards, modelling the core values and ethos of the school.

The third deputy acknowledged a modelling role in classroom practice, but also in defining school culture. Senior staff meetings included deliberate attempts to shape school culture. “Our culture is still growing, so we talk about it. We are always writing a new policy ... and putting things into place. So it is definitely much about where we want something to go.” This deputy understood that deputies always participate in shaping culture “I suppose you do whether you like it or not.” The senior staff in this school were actively involved in and conscious of the process of shaping school culture.

### ***5.3.7 Individual Strengths***

The six areas above represent a summary of the common themes which emerged when the deputies were asked to reflect on their own leadership practice. There were, however, several points made by individual deputies which are worth reflecting on, despite being unique to one person.

One deputy particularly understood that the basis of the leadership in the role, as structured in that school, was to facilitate leadership in others. This deputy spoke clearly about working with other staff to enable them to be leaders. “I see my role as very much working with heads of departments to facilitate their areas...it’s probably not even to help them in some cases but to support what they do.” While all the deputies spoke of supporting other staff, this one had a definite role in supporting them to be leaders in their own right. This suggested elements of servant leadership (Greenleaf, 1977, 1996) and

distributed leadership (A. Harris, 2004). The other two deputies spoke of support more in terms of pastoral care.

One deputy appeared particularly able to recognise the limitations of being a leader in the deputy's role as defined in that school, and to find new ways of leading in spite of the confines. In this case leadership seemed to 'break out' whenever and wherever it was not deliberately inhibited by others. The deputy revealed leadership initiative through various comments. "I started that group" and "I decided to get involved in trying to..." and summed up the approach with his personal philosophy:

I've also had a personal view that...if you are sitting still, hesitating, that's not what happens in schools...I'd lose my purpose if I wasn't always trying to think of new ways of doing things or new ideas or getting excited about something...I love teaching, love schools, love kids, love Lutheran schools. I love being here. So it's pretty hard to be negative and still in that environment.

A deputy used the term 'servant leadership' to describe his leadership role in the last school. It was a role of doing things for others; staff and students. The impression (confirmed by the key informants), was of a deputy with so much pressing day to day administration, that just managing the job, not being overwhelmed by it, and doing it in such a way as to ease the stress on staff, was a suitable leadership goal. Looking beyond this was not a natural inclination for the incumbent or inherently required by the position. Whether this resulted in servitude or servant leadership is considered in Section 5.5.6.

### ***5.3.8 The Question of Being Lutheran***

All three deputies were asked how important they thought being Lutheran was in their roles as deputy. Their individual and collective responses are outlined in the paragraphs below.

The three deputies understood that they operated out of a personal worldview and that this worldview affected the way they acted. "I guess my doctrine is strong, and yes I would make decisions according to that. It is the way I live my life." However, there appeared to be two levels of response to the particular importance of being Lutheran. On the one hand there was

recognition that Lutheran schools are Lutheran (and by implication need Lutherans in them). “Lutheran schools exist because they are Lutheran, and that’s a difference from schools down the road.” In the big picture, having a Lutheran perspective was important. “For my role in the bigger picture of things in the school, I think it is important, yes.” It was, however, a significance more readily recognised in the overall nature of the schools.

The deputies were less certain that being Lutheran was particularly necessary in their day to day roles. The following responses indicate this uncertainty. “Specifically as a deputy and staying as a deputy it may not be so important.” “In terms of how I would do my day to day running, interaction and curriculum knowledge, it’s not specifically relevant to that.” It is worth noting that all three deputies had a Christian background and all three had, or were, studying Lutheran theology. Not all were Lutheran. There was a sense that somehow the Lutheran identity of the school was bigger than the individual, and that Christians who understood something of the way in which Lutheran theology impacted on practice could operate successfully as deputies within a Lutheran context. The participants spoke of Christian modelling, not Lutheran modelling. However, as one Lutheran deputy commented:

I think I would find it much harder to identify with the overall goals and aims of the system and what we are on about if I wasn’t Lutheran. I’d find it hard to study unique Lutheran theology and practice if I had a different faith background.

The requirement to obtain a Lutheran theological qualification may be more difficult for non-Lutheran deputies, but this is a different issue from whether their role inherently required them to operate from an underlying Lutheran theological worldview. There was a general sense that this was not necessarily the case.

With one exception, the deputy principals did not perceive themselves as having a significant leadership role in defining the Lutheran nature of the school. Not all participated in school council meetings, where such discussions might be expected to take place. They did not attend principals’ conferences or school pastors’ conferences, which are other forums for such

discussion. They were not always a part of the school 'mission and ministry committees'.

### **5.3.9 Summary**

The three participant deputy principals were able to speak critically and with insight into their own role. They were able to reflect on their weaknesses as well as their strengths. The deputies were busy people and worked long hours. They understood that there was much about their role which might be viewed as management, but they generally had a sense of themselves as leaders, and most looked for opportunities to live this out in practice. On the surface, management tasks occupied a considerable amount of their time, but the deputies focused on the improved outcomes from these tasks for teachers and/or students and hence considered them as leadership opportunities.

The deputies perceived that they were leaders in the way in which they contributed to collective decisions in the school. They acknowledged significant opportunities to be involved in such decisions. They felt frustrated by the restrictions on their capacity to make decisions as an individual, and, at times, by their lack of knowledge of decisions taken by others.

The deputies perceived working to resolve staff issues as opportunities for leadership. Good personal teaching practice was also seen as necessary for their credibility as an educational leader, and holding and communicating high expectations of teachers and students was important.

The deputies also considered themselves as leading through role modelling, and were able to describe the values or characteristics that they perceived themselves modelling. These characteristics ranged from management-focused ideals such as punctuality, to more substantive qualities like living a Christian faith. Modelling good teaching was also seen to be an important characteristic of the deputies' leadership.

Finally, the deputies also had various individual emphases that were not common to the group. They did not perceive that their role necessarily required a Lutheran incumbent.

#### **5.4 Deputy Principals' Understanding of Leadership**

Both the deputies and the other key informants were asked what they thought leadership was. All the respondents found this difficult to answer. Many of them, including one deputy, commented that they had not reflected a great deal on their own leadership, although in contrast, one deputy suggested that on “the whole, it’s a very complex area, but I think about it a lot”, and this was apparent in the quality of his reflections. The deputies were generally more able to articulate a personal understanding of leadership than most other key informants. Their reflections are summarised in five statements. While there was overlap among these and the ways in which the deputies perceived themselves exercising leadership, there were also some notable differences. The five summary statements were:

1. Leadership is understood as hard work. It is visible and involved;
2. Relationships are understood to be significant in leadership;
3. Leadership is perceived to involve leading by example;
4. Access to information and authority to make decisions are understood to be elements of leadership, and
5. Leadership is perceived to involve setting direction, maintaining an overview and having vision.

Each of these statements is now explored in more detail.

##### ***5.4.1 Hard Work, Visibility and Involvement***

The deputies felt that leaders worked hard and were seen to work hard. They were visible within the school and became involved in a range of activities. The deputies had no trouble identifying these characteristics in themselves. “Yes, I involve myself in everything.” Sometimes the desired type of involvement was restricted by the approach of other senior staff, “I have to be careful that I don’t overstep the boundaries of my responsibilities”. But if the deputies felt limited in some areas, they created opportunities in others. The commitment to involvement and visibility often extended beyond the

immediate school community. “I go, as often as I can, (to a Sunday night youth service at a local church) and a lot of students see me there.”

There were several levels to the discussion of visibility. These largely centred on the question of ‘visible to whom?’ Involvement and visibility are related. Where the deputy was involved, they were usually visible. Visibility also had an interactive or relational aspect. “I’ll walk around the yard and talk with students as much as I can.” The deputies could readily provide examples of occasions when they were visible to students, and others when they were visible to staff. They also had times, albeit significantly fewer than their principals, when they were visible to parents. Beyond involvement in a local congregation, visibility in the broader community was more difficult. It was almost always the principal who was perceived to have the opportunities to be visible in an official capacity within the local community. The deputies perceived a very limited role for themselves in being visible outside of the school.

#### ***5.4.2 Relationships***

The deputy principals understood leadership as being relational. They talked about leadership in terms of their capacity to form and maintain relationships with others, particularly staff. Key elements of these relationships included support, listening, encouraging and building people up. One deputy described leadership as “being there and supporting (people).” Another spoke of his role to “talk and share” with students, as well as his attempts to “try and meet the students and get to know them a bit more.” But while the deputies recognised relationships with students were a part of their leadership, their roles generally appeared to be more directed towards developing relationships with teachers and other staff.

Where the deputies were able to identify limitations to their leadership, these were often elements that hindered them in their relationships. In particular, time was a factor. “Sometimes it is hard to get everything done in the day that you want to get done and to find time for people who might have issues that need to be addressed”. The general busyness also drew comment, “I would

say some people here don't really know me as well as they could, because I'm too busy doing other things. And maybe if they knew me more, they'd get more out of the opportunity to work with me." The deputies understood that circumstances which hindered their relationships with people, directly hindered their leadership.

### **5.4.3 Leading by Example**

The deputies perceived and articulated that leaders set an example. They understood that leaders modelled values in action to staff and students: "leadership too is what sort of person you are, what sort of model you are." In this area there was congruence between what the deputies perceived leadership to be, and what they saw themselves doing. The Lutheran nature of this was stronger for some deputies than others. One deputy had reflected on what it meant to be a Lutheran deputy in a Lutheran school.

I'd hope people could look at me and say, "Well that's what a leader in a Lutheran school is. That's a person who is something a bit different because it's a Lutheran school and that person fits that".

This deputy perceived Lutheran theology as providing a base for action and for what was modelled. There was, however, a sense that a Christian faith, rather than a Lutheran faith, provided an adequate basis for the modelling. All the deputies acknowledged in some way that their leadership example grew out of their worldview and personal theology.

### **5.4.4 Access to Information and Authority to Make Decisions**

As discussed previously, the deputies had different opportunities in regards to their capacity to make decisions, and some found it easier than others to identify areas where they had the responsibility and the authority to make decisions. There was, however, a perception that leaders make decisions where necessary. This is not to say that leaders do this in isolation or without consultation, but, as one deputy reflected, leadership is "to be there to make a decision that needs to be made ... or just to be definite about stuff when people need a definite response". Another recognised the link between decisions and knowledge of the bigger picture. "Most teachers know what to do in the classroom, but outside of that they are not fully aware. People make

suggestions and they don't know the consequences, so you've got to find out the consequences." Once the consequences are as fully known as possible, then a leader will guide the discussion and the decision. Another deputy took up this theme of understanding the bigger picture in setting direction. "It is sometimes the big rocks, the bigger picture things. Trying to see what they are and trying to do something positive to assist people or the organisation to move in that direction". The deputies perceived decision making associated with bigger picture thinking as part of leadership.

#### **5.4.5 Direction Setting, Overview, Vision**

There was a general acceptance that school leadership involves vision, direction setting and maintaining an overview. The concept of vision created a dilemma for the deputies. It did not appear in the list of the ways in which the deputies perceived that they exercised leadership. Indeed, one deputy went so far as to say, "I don't see myself much as a visionary. I always hope that the principal would have that sort of thing." Another perceived the principal as needing vision for the whole school, while the deputy had a more focused vision relating to his specific responsibilities. The third deputy spoke of leadership as "the way I try to work towards a vision. If it's my own vision for the school, or the vision that we have as a school community." But later he spoke of the frustrations of the role in terms of being "boxed in to a degree" and often not freely able to develop a vision and implement it. There appeared to be perception amongst the deputies that principal leaders needed vision, and this was recognised by the whole school community, but vision at the deputies' level was considered less important and perhaps not expected by the school community. "I think with the deputy the expectation is that you are going to get things done." The data were inconclusive in regards to the visionary component of leadership at the level of the deputy.

#### **5.4.6 Summary**

There were a number of similarities between the way the deputy principals perceived their own leadership role and what they recognised as leadership in general, but there were also some discrepancies.

The deputy principals saw leadership as requiring hard work, visibility and involvement. They perceived themselves as meeting these criteria. The deputies saw leadership as relational and provided examples of their relational work, especially in the area of pastoral care of staff. Some deputies were better at this than others.

The deputy principals perceived that leadership involved setting an appropriate example, and they could articulate the example they set. They also perceived that leadership included having input into decisions and access to information, but this did not always happen for them, in their schools, as much as they would like. Finally, the deputy principals saw that leadership included setting direction, maintaining an overview and visioning. Some deputies did not feel encouraged to set direction, or develop vision within their school, but this experience varied considerably among schools.

There was a gap between the way in which the deputies perceived leadership generally, and how they perceived themselves operating as leaders in their schools. In particular, there was discrepancy in the areas of authority to make decisions and set direction.

## **5.5 Leadership Narratives Reflected**

### ***5.5.1 Bureaucratic Leadership Models***

The schools in the study had a variety of leadership structures. Both the traditional hierarchical structure and flatter models were represented. It appeared that the deputy from the school with the flattest structure expressed less frustration about the leadership role, had less need to search out opportunities to lead and had a clearer picture of the leadership that was deliberately built into the role and was, therefore, expected of the incumbent.

The leadership situation in the hierarchically structured schools was more difficult for the deputies to define. In both cases the middle management structures had been adjusted and new positions created within the last five years. Responsibilities had been reallocated in senior and middle management roles. A stand-alone deputy's position still existed in both

schools, but other significant leadership positions had been developed. In the school's management hierarchy, these positions were on a lower level than that of the deputy, but it is beyond the scope of this study to consider the leadership embedded in them. However, it is potentially significant that responsibility for pastoral care/discipline was a stand alone position in both schools, one also having a head of curriculum. Whether perceived as leadership or not, deputies have traditionally had a role in these areas.

In Lutheran schools, strong pastoral care is often part of the defining character and, as was apparent in Chapter 3, much recent emphasis has been placed on leadership that impacts on curriculum, pedagogy and student outcomes. So if these key opportunities for leadership have been taken out of the deputy's role, perhaps as an example of Harvey's (1997) claim of "the emergence of the school based specialist teacher positions" (p. 121), the potential certainly exists for a dearth of leadership in that role. The existence of a hierarchical management structure does not necessarily exclude the deputy principal from a leadership role but, where the structure had been reconfigured with new positions encompassing areas traditionally handled by the deputy, there was a risk that the role of the deputy became a collection of the left over management tasks.

### ***5.5.2 Distributed Leadership***

It was difficult to infer from the data whether the deputies saw themselves as operating within the context of a distributed leadership model, or even part of a leadership team, where leadership, and not just administrative responsibility, was shared. As indicated in Section 5.5.1, there was a sense that perhaps some leadership activity had been distributed away from the deputies, but no corresponding evidence was found that alternative leadership opportunities had been created for them.

Once again the exception appeared to be in the school with the flattest structure. Here, deliberate attempts were apparent to share leadership and intentionally to shift it from the principal to the deputy.

The focus of the interviews with the deputies was their own leadership. Only when a deputy spoke of leadership in the context of the team was the operation and understanding of the role of the leadership team followed up. A more common situation was summarised by one key informant;

Well I just think the deputy has taken on the role that he's got and he just works on that and ... the principal's just come on board to do what he does and just expects the deputy to keep the rest of it going while he's doing his side of it.

The job was done because there was a group of individuals with certain responsibilities who did it. What each individual would do was understood. The sense of team, or any emerging sense of distributed leadership, was difficult to find in the data.

Deputy Principals' comments regarding the limitations on their personal authority to make decisions and set direction also suggested that distributed leadership was not widely understood or practised in the schools. Nicoll (1986) suggested that, "Although in many instances a number of us are talking about new ideas, most of us are, in critical ways, nonetheless prisoners of vastly outdated precepts" (p. 29). The statement was made twenty years ago in the context of a discussion about the passive, reactive role that the notion of a leader at the top of a hierarchy assigns to followers. However, it may also have relevance here. Concerns about the limitations of personal authority in the context of a discussion about leadership does suggest underlying hierarchical assumptions. Distributed leadership requires a different conceptualisation of decision making, visioning and direction setting. This was not so apparent in the data. The lack of emphasis on developing other leaders also suggested that distributed leadership was not prominent in the participative schools.

### ***5.5.3 Instructional Leadership***

The deputies did not perceive that they had a significant instructional leadership role. They were part of the collective curriculum decision making process, and one deputy was responsible for communicating information from the board of studies, but they did not have a high profile role in teaching and

learning that they considered to be leadership. They were able to identify factors in the school that prevented them from being leaders in curriculum. The exception to this was the deputy whose role was defined as Director of Curriculum. This deputy had a major leadership role in the teaching, learning and curriculum development processes in the school. The deputy's role in this school was differently conceptualised, and instructional leadership was a major component.

#### **5.5.4 Teacher Leadership**

The deputies perceived that teaching their own classes well was part of their leadership role. Particularly for the deputy with the curriculum role, personal classroom practice was a credibility issue. But did this equate to teacher leadership? There were difficulties in reaching this conclusion because of the variation in the definition of 'teacher leadership' that is commonly in use. As previously noted, Muijs and Harris's (2003) review of the literature on teacher leadership concluded that teacher leaders spent the majority of their time in the classroom. This would exclude the deputy principals. On the other hand, teacher leadership is also about classroom and staffroom practices that lead to whole-school success. Nothing automatically excludes the deputy principals from this and they certainly perceived good classroom practice as an element of their leadership. Whether this can actually be classified as teacher leadership however, depends on the definition used.

#### **5.5.5 Substantive Leadership**

Substantive leadership works with the larger sense of meaning, mission and identity which motivates and guides the members of the organisation. The LEA statements suggested some of what was deemed necessary in this area by the church. The deputies perceived themselves to be working with meaning, mission and identity and understood this to be part of their leadership roles. Their faith base was a crucial element in this. Sharing their faith, in small groups, one to one, and in whole-school devotion settings was one element, operating out of that faith in their day to day activities was another. Both are part of what the church expects of its school leaders (Lutheran Education Australia, 2001a).

Each of the deputies had completed some formal studies in Lutheran theology. This theology informs the meaning, mission and identity of Lutheran schools. It can be assumed therefore, that the deputies were aware of the expectations of the church in relation to their substantive leadership role. The church charges school leaders, in conjunction with the school pastor, with the responsibility of ensuring that the church is functioning as church within the school. The deputies' role in sharing their own faith suggested that they were working in this area, although it was interesting that, in spite of this, they did not perceive being Lutheran as critical to their leadership.

The church also requires school leaders to define, articulate and demonstrate the practical implications of being a Christ-centred school (Lutheran Education Australia, 2001b). The deputies perceived that they were involved in this, although it seemed that this was more significant for some deputies than for others, and it was the Lutheran deputies who were involved to the greatest extent. Section 4.2.1 addressed the relationship between faith and knowing (an essential part of the understanding of a Christ-centred school). Significant substantive questions were posed: What kind of faith does an explicit dialogue with knowing create? What kind of knowing is created in dialogue with faith? How does this dialogue shape those who engage in it and are engaged by it? While the deputies perceived themselves to be involved in substantive leadership within the school, the depth and quality of their involvement in discussion of such difficult questions was not directly ascertained during the interviews. The deputies did not list involvement in this type of dialogue amongst their leadership responsibilities. So if they are involved, this contribution is not regular or significant enough to come to mind, when they discuss their leadership.

The question of whether the deputy's role required a complex understanding of the Lutheran theological positions on law and gospel did not ultimately arise. The fact that none of the participating deputies had a major role in the discipline structures of the school may explain this, although it could be argued from the data that the deputies' role in dealing with staff issues suggested a need for such an understanding.

The deputies very clearly saw that they had a role in identifying and communicating what was important and valued in the school. Much of their discussion on what they modelled centred on what the school valued and how they demonstrated this. The schools' Christian ethos and the deputies' role in this was a common starting point.

### **5.5.6 Servant Leadership**

The implication of the theology of the cross on Lutheran school leaders is that it requires them to define and demonstrate a life of service in the school context. Only one of the three deputies actually used the term servant leader, but all of them understood that they were there to serve others. This was largely revealed by their focus on improving outcomes for others by the way they went about their routine administration tasks. The emphasis on care for other staff is also an example of the deputies living out their vocations as school leaders. This vocation is based on care for one's neighbour. Again, the school leader is required to live out a life of service and care.

As discussed in Chapter 3, Sergiovanni (1995) considered Greenleaf's (1977) seminal work on servant leadership in the context of schools. He wrote of servant leaders: "They minister by furnishing help and being of service to parents, teachers and students" (p. 321). The deputies recognised this element in their roles but, unlike Greenleaf and Sergiovanni, who included two other significant elements, there was a sense that the deputies limited their definition to the servitude element, or at least focused on this aspect to the detriment of the others. There was no consistent understanding that servant leaders "minister by providing leadership that encourages others to be leaders" and "they minister by highlighting and protecting the values of the school" (Sergiovanni, 1995, p. 321). Both elements have already been discussed, and they were not missing entirely. However, they did not appear to be seen as a part of servant leadership. The deputies perceived that they had a role in highlighting and protecting the values of the school. The responsibility of encouraging leadership in others was less consistently recognised. The full nature of servant leadership did not seem to be widely understood.

### **5.5.7 Moral or Ethical Leadership**

Sergiovanni also linked servant leadership to moral leadership. He perceived moral authority as the basis for servant leadership. This enabled the servant leader to be “a leader of leaders, follower of ideas, minister of values, and a servant to the followership” (Sergiovanni, 1995, p. 321). To be true servant leaders therefore, the deputies must also be moral leaders. In addition, they require followers who are ‘active and responsible shapers’ (Nicoll, 1986, p. 34). Except for the emphasis of one deputy on creating leaders, no references were made to followers. The understanding of the moral aspect of servant leadership also appeared limited, although it may have been unstated rather than absent.

There was only one direct reference to moral or ethical leadership in the data, and this came from a key informant. Given their openness about the role of their Christian faith in guiding their actions, it is difficult to conclude that the deputies did not see their leadership as a moral exercise. It is possible that the deputies saw moral leadership as being inherent in the Christian leadership that they perceive themselves providing, or that a moral perspective was simply assumed, and therefore did not require comment. But this is speculation on the part of the researcher, as the data did not provide clear evidence.

### **5.5.8 Visioning**

As suggested previously, individual deputies had different perspectives on the importance and scope of vision to their role. Both personal and school-based limitations were indicated. There was no consistent understanding on the part of the deputies that their role required them to be visionary. They did, however, consistently view vision as a part of leadership. There was a gap here between their theoretical view and what they were able to do in practice.

### **5.5.9 Sergiovanni’s Leadership Forces**

Sergiovanni’s (1995) leadership forces framework provided a helpful means of categorising the ways the deputies perceived themselves to be exercising leadership. Table 5.2 below lists the deputies’ themes on the left, and Sergiovanni’s forces on the right.

**Table 5.2 Comparing the deputy principals' data with Sergiovanni's (1995) leadership forces.**

<b>Deputies' Data</b>	<b>Sergiovanni's Leadership Forces</b>
Completing administration tasks in a way that improved outcomes for staff and students Having input into decision making through various formal and informal structures.	Technical
Working to resolve staff issues.	Human
Teaching allocated classes well.	Educational
Providing a good example and/or modelling certain values.	Symbolic
Having and communicating high expectations.	Cultural

It appeared that the deputies collectively perceived their leadership role as involving all of Sergiovanni's leadership forces. Much of what the deputies did on a day to day basis seemed to fit the technical category, but they saw the way that they went about these tasks as moving their activities beyond this category into the symbolic and cultural forces. As one deputy put it, "If you look at my role statement, you might say that it's one of a manager, but I try to make it so much more than that."

While the current study did not focus on the leadership/management divide, it seems appropriate to make a passing comment despite Yukl's (1994) conclusion that simplistic stereotypical labelling of people as leaders or managers did not advance the understanding of leadership. Table 5.3 illustrates Yukl's summary of the nature of managerial work.

**Table 5.3 The nature of managerial work**

<p>The pace of work is hectic and unrelenting.          Content of work is varied and fragmented.          Interaction often involves peers and outsiders.          Interactions typically involved oral communication.          Decision processes are disorderly and political.          Most planning is informal and adaptive.</p>
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(Yukl, 1994, p. 21-26)

This table shows there is clearly overlap between Yukl's (1994) summary and what the deputies in this study perceived as leadership. The question is then whether the work becomes leadership just because this is what the deputies perceive it to be, or whether the distinctions that the deputies make are significant enough to transform the management tasks into leadership. This will be taken up further in Chapter 6.

Whether or not the organisational tasks which often occupied the deputies can be viewed as leadership, the deputies perceived themselves as having a role in defining, articulating and changing the traditions, rituals and norms that define the school culture. This touches another concept explored by Sergiovanni (2000), namely, the lifeworld of the school. As stated in the literature review (Section 3.5.9.2) this was the school's local values, traditions, meanings and purposes. The deputies' work here was evident in many ways, including the way they spoke about their contributions to the school worship program, their comments about high expectations, and their reflections on senior management meetings. The deputies generally had a very practical, hands on role, but they still perceived themselves as working in the abstract areas of values and meanings, as well as the concrete day to day life of the school.

#### ***5.5.10 Missing Narratives***

Some historical leadership theories were not reflected in the ways the deputies described themselves as leaders. Change management did not emerge, nor did 'trait', or 'great man', theories. No specific reference was made to emotional intelligence, or transformational leadership. There was only limited reference to instructional leadership, and uncertainty in the area of moral leadership theories. The latter was rarely explicitly discussed, but underpins some theories that were discussed, such as servant leadership. Neither did the deputies talk about themselves in terms of authentic leadership, although the key informants referred to some elements of this, so perhaps authentic leadership is a perspective more easily noticed from the outside.

It is acknowledged that the absence of these leadership ideas may relate to a limitation of the data collection instrument. Some gentle prompting in these areas may have uncovered significant understandings. All that can be concluded from their absence is that these ideas did not suggest themselves to the respondents in the first instance, or even when they reflected on the examples of leadership they had provided.

### **5.5.11 Summary**

A number of historical concepts or understandings of leadership emerged quite strongly in the way the deputy principal participants understood leadership and perceived it to be present in their role. In particular, they understood themselves to be substantive leaders. (The adequacy of this understanding is discussed in Chapter 6.) However, the deputies' role in Christian modelling clearly involved working with the broader meaning, mission and identity of the school. There was also a pattern to their perceptions of leadership which paralleled Sergiovanni's (1995) leadership forces. A limited understanding of servant leadership in the form of assistance to others was also apparent, although the actual term was rarely used.

The data were inconclusive about the extent to which the deputy principals were involved in distributed or shared leadership. There were a number of relatively new middle and senior management positions in the schools, which suggested an emerging structure capable of embracing shared leadership. The deputies, however, referred to the struggles of not encroaching on the territory embedded in these roles, and the limitations to their personal authority, rather than the potential synergy of distributing leadership. Only in one school was there a sense that sharing leadership (as distinct from organisational tasks) with the deputy was a strong priority for the principal.

A number of leadership narratives did not appear to be referred to in the data. Of most significance were the teaching and learning elements contained in the instructional and teacher leadership narratives. In general the deputies operated alongside, but outside, teaching and learning as the core business of the school. This is significant at a time when school leadership is increasingly conceptualised as that which makes a difference to student learning outcomes. (Bennett, Crawford et al., 2003; Crowther et al., 2001; Leithwood & Riehl, 2003)

### **5.6 Key Informants' Perceptions of the Deputy Principals' Leadership**

The data provided by the key informants proved more difficult to analyse than that from the deputy principals. Common themes were less apparent, and it

appeared that amongst this group there was more underlying uncertainty about leadership. There were exceptions, but the key informants' responses to the request to define leadership were generally less precise than those of the deputy principals. The key informants appeared to face at least two additional difficulties in responding to the interview questions: they were observing the leadership of the deputy principal from the outside, not living it as the deputies were; and their own understanding of leadership was generally less developed than that of the deputies.

In spite of these difficulties a number of broad themes emerged from the key informants' responses. They perceived the deputies' leadership practice to be centred in several areas:

1. Modelling a Christian faith;
2. Operating from a set of values and principles of action, and
3. Being knowledgeable

Broad as they are, the categories are problematic in that there is overlap among them. For example, modelling Christian faith is an outcome of operating from a set of values and principles of action. It has been singled out as a result of its prevalence in the data and its connection to the expectations of the church as outlined in Chapter 2. In spite of the overlap, the categories seem adequate as a basis for the following discussion on the perceptions that some of their colleagues have of the leadership of the deputy principals.

### ***5.6.1 Modelling Christian Faith***

Two of the three deputies were seen to be clearly modelling their Christian faith in their role, and this was recognised as an element of their leadership. The key informants who nominated Christian ethos as of crucial importance to the school, also readily acknowledged the deputy's role in modelling Christian thinking and action. This modelling was apparent to the key informants on two levels, which they were able to articulate. The first level was whole-school activity. Leading whole-school devotions was seen to be critical here. All the key informants who reflected about the role in terms of Christian modelling referred to the deputy's willingness to be regularly involved and visible in the school's worship program. They uniformly felt that neither the staff nor the

students were in any doubt about these deputies' Christian faith positions. It was also known that the deputies were involved in local congregations, and were active within that context.

The second level of Christian modelling was more personal, and it was not always easy to delineate between this and the second theme of operating out of a set of values. This was when the deputies were seen to be living out their Christianity. "His whole demeanour is very Christian". Again, this was regarded as leadership. The comments were made in direct response to questions about showing leadership in the area of the school's Christian ethos. The way the deputies treated staff and students was perceived to be related to their Christian modelling. One respondent spoke of the Christ-like actions of the deputy. "I think in the way he develops relationships and where he places himself in relationships with students...". These were complex relational concepts. "Oh, I just think it's been the way the deputy acts, and talks, and treats people." It is interesting that the key informants provided relational examples as instances of Christian modelling. They appeared to connect particular ways of the deputies relating to people with living out a Christian faith. Modelling a Christian faith included being involved in the worship life of the school, but also maintaining positive relationships with staff and students.

An aspect of Christian modelling, which warranted a specific comment from one key informant, related to the practice of being a Christ-centred school. This informant perceived that the staff in a Christian school would be "like Jesus to the students". The deputy was clearly seen in these terms. "The staff are...displaying their Christ-like side to the students and, I thought, yeah, that's (the deputy)". The same was true of the way this deputy was perceived to relate to staff. "If I thought of those people in my life who have been Christ-like in their actions; (the deputy) would be one of five people who come to mind". On the basis of this Christ-like manner and his involvement in the devotional life of the school, the key informant concluded that this deputy's faith was "up front and modelled to us as staff". From the perspective of the

deputy's role in substantive leadership in the school, it was also significant that he was recognised as modelling an element of being Christ-centred.

### ***5.6.2 Operating From a set of Values and Principles of Action***

Informants also referred to values and principles of action, which were demonstrated by the deputy principals. Where at least one informant referred to a value, it is listed. Some values, like caring, were mentioned in relation to all three deputies. These values included: caring, understanding, helping, listening, mentoring, trusting, being supportive, approachable, providing wise counsel, relating to and valuing students, honesty, integrity, genuineness, gentleness, being an advocate, being measured and unflappable, respectful, patient and flexible. The common characteristic, which appeared to link all these values and principles, is that they are relational. They inform and describe the way in which the deputies interacted with other members of the school community. The key informants recognised that the deputies had more than enough work to do, but much of what they perceived to be leadership amongst the workload consisted of tasks which were inherently relational, or became so because of the way they were undertaken by the deputy. "I'll stamp it or not stamp it would be an approach, but it is not the approach that I see taken. More often than not it is listening to what they are on about..." The key informants had various perspectives on how well the individual deputies handled the relational nature of their leadership, but it was apparent that they perceived that the deputies' leadership required a strong relational emphasis.

### ***5.6.3 Knowledge and Information***

Like the deputies themselves, the key informants perceived that knowledge was an important aspect of the deputy principal's leadership. There were four ways informants spoke about knowledge or information. Again, some related to more than one deputy, others were particular to one. The four were:

1. Historical knowledge and understanding of the school and the local community;
2. Ready access to information and the ability to source information as necessary;
3. Knowledge of broad trends in education, and

#### 4. Deep understanding of what was occurring within the school.

According to the informants, knowledge of the historical context of the school and the workings of the local community were more significant for some deputies than others. “He is very knowledgeable of the community...particularly those Lutherans who are third and fourth generation or whatever...he is very knowledgeable with (the Lutheran community) dynamics.” For Lutheran schools in traditional Lutheran areas this knowledge of the community can be important. This was identified by the key informants in the school that was located in a historically Lutheran area. It was less significant for schools in other environments.

Access to internal and external sources of information was also identified by many informants as a characteristic of leadership. All of the deputies were perceived to have such access, and to be a source of information within the school. One informant reflected, “The deputy is good at being a resource for most things that you need to know around here. And if he doesn’t know, he knows where to get it.” This sentiment was echoed by an informant from another school, who commented, “In decisions and issues he actively seeks information and will attempt to pull it all together and then (make it) work.” There was recognition that deputy principal leaders had information and were proactive in seeking out further information.

The key informants also understood that educational leadership required an awareness and understanding of broad trends in education. They generally perceived their deputies as having this. “In terms of being aware of those things outside the school that relate to his area, I think he does that. He is in tune with wider trends and wider strategies.” A similar comment was made about another deputy. “He just keeps his ear to the ground and listens to what goes on...he reads a lot...So yes, he is very much aware, both from the upper areas of the board of studies but also at the school level.” Understanding of internal and external educational trends, along with access to internal and external sources of information, was deemed by the key informants to be part of the deputies’ leadership.

The idea of internal awareness needs to be explored further. School-based awareness of curriculum or pedagogical practice has been acknowledged, but there was another aspect to this internal awareness. The key informants perceived that deputies' leadership involved having a deeper understanding of the school mood or undercurrents, as well as the activity in the school. It is the idea of having a 'finger on the pulse'. One informant expressed the deputy's understanding as, "He knows what's going on out there. I think that's important to staff. To know that we have a leader there somewhere, who is pretty aware of what's going on." This key informant perceived that leadership of the deputies required a deep understanding of the complexities of the school. It has been suggested that this may come with experience (A. Wiles, Principal Luther College, personal communication, April 9, 2006), but the key informants perceived it as part of the repertoire of relational skills in leadership.

#### ***5.6.4 Individual Strengths***

Like the deputies, the key informants nominated some perceptions of leadership which were unique to their deputy or their school. These often reflected the same emphases as the individual deputies, and this provided a degree of validation for their comments.

As previously indicated, one deputy perceived leadership in terms of facilitating others to be leaders, and felt that the role was defined as such in the school. This perception was also held by both key informants from that school. "It's a hard leadership role because, in fact, (the deputy is) managing all these people who will manage their own individual programs...I think it is a key to his role that he is...able to...trust in those who drive the individual programs." The key informants also spoke of the intentional development of teacher leaders within the school. It seemed that the deputy's role was part of a broad based and widely recognised emphasis in the school on developing teacher leaders at all levels.

Various comments were also made in relation to vision and, in one case, strategic thinking. Some key informants were able to nominate areas in which

their deputies demonstrated vision. It is notable that these generally paralleled the examples provided by the deputies. Where the deputy did not indicate vision as a relative strength, neither did the key informants. The single comment on strategic thinking was important, as it drew attention to the predominant absence of references to involvement in strategic planning or thinking at the deputy level. This is not to say that deputies were not involved in this activity, but no-one perceived it to be significant. This is consistent with the findings of Cranston et al (2004), who found that only 14 percent of deputies spent a “great deal of time” (p. 236) involved in strategic planning.

#### ***5.6.5 Key Informants’ Perspectives on Being Lutheran***

The key informants shared the doubts of some deputies about whether being Lutheran was essential to the position. Again there was recognition that the church was within its rights to insist upon it as a general principle, and it was seen to be important that there were some Lutheran staff in the school. However, only rarely did an informant suggest that being Lutheran was necessary for deputies to perform their roles effectively. A more common opinion amongst the key informants was reflected in the words of one. “I think...if you had a strong Christian deputy regardless of the denomination...I’m sure they could do the job, and effectively.” One key informant was not sure that it was necessary for the deputy to be Christian. “Because I think the holistic development of students and the curriculum and the sense of self, all those sorts of things I think can be done without a foundation in a strict religious doctrine”. The key informants clearly had different opinions about the significance of any role of the deputy in defining, identifying and living out what it means to be a Lutheran, or a Christian, within the context of their role.

Some understanding was shown by the key informants of the church’s position insisting that deputy principals in Lutheran schools were Lutheran. “There were times when I thought, ‘No, it wouldn’t need to be’, but I can understand the reasons behind it”. In a similar way to the deputies, these were seen to be “bigger picture, system” reasons.

Most of the key informants were not Lutheran and many were members of other denominations. Informants recognised the broad areas of consistency in faith among denominations, rather than the detailed theological differences, as significant in guiding leadership practice in schools. It may be that a predominantly Lutheran cohort of informants would have provided a different perspective on this issue, if only because they were more familiar with an appropriate Lutheran lexicon. However, the reality in the participating schools was that the middle management positions were not consistently occupied by Lutherans. There were non-Lutherans helping to create the meaning attached to the leadership role of the deputies. Their understandings were relevant. They were the operational understandings creating the reality in the schools. The possibility that a Lutheran context and a predominantly Christian, not Lutheran, middle management team, may generate an underlying tension is acknowledged, but it is outside of the scope of the current study to consider this in any detail.

#### **5.6.6 Summary**

There was less consistency in the data from the key informants than that of the deputies. This possibly reflects their natural distance from the deputies' role, or a less well developed collective understanding of leadership, or both. In spite of this, the key informants identified a number of leadership elements in the deputies' role. These included Christian modelling, a range of other values and principles of operation, and a significant position within the knowledge and information channels of the school.

#### **5.7 Key Informants Understanding of Leadership**

Some of the key informants struggled to articulate their understanding of leadership directly, although they could provide examples of what they perceived to be leadership within the context of the deputy in their school. Nevertheless, five themes emerged from their responses to the question of how leadership is understood:

1. Leadership is understood to require good relational skills;
2. Leadership involves having, articulating and moving others toward a vision;

3. Leadership is understood to include the ability to make hard decisions and accept the consequences;
4. Leadership involves equipping others to lead;
5. Leadership includes modelling what is expected from others.

Each of these themes will now be described briefly, prior to considering how they reflect historical leadership narratives.

### **5.7.1 Good Relational Skills**

The emphasis on relational skills was variously expressed: “leadership is providing quality support for staff”; “leadership is two way communication”; “leaders have passion tempered with an understanding of the dynamics of human relationships”; and “leaders are happy to come and walk beside you”. Most key informants referred to the importance of relational skills in some way.

### **5.7.2 Vision**

Vision was referred to a number of times. It was notable that, on all occasions when vision was included in their definition of leadership, the key informants went on to expand the concept. It was not enough for leaders to hold a vision. They needed to be able to “articulate what they want”. They needed to “engender ...vision within the people they are leading” and be “able to take others with...towards the vision.” Vision was more than a pictured outcome. Rather, it was an active process of accompanying people on a journey with the end in mind. It also contained an element of risk.

One thing I've noticed with (the deputy) is that I think he is really willing to give things a go. I don't think he's too reserved in what he's willing to investigate and look at implementing and maybe that's where his vision is,...(the deputy) is willing to take a risk.

### **5.7.3 Decision Making**

This theme was not as strongly represented among the responses as the previous two, however several informants referred to tough decision making. The sense was that leadership required being willing to make unpopular decisions when necessary. “Leadership is putting your head on the block.” “Leadership is having to make hard decisions and not always keeping

everyone happy with those decisions.” Thus leadership was perceived as the ability and willingness to make decisions and accept the consequences of those decisions.

#### ***5.7.4 Equipping Other Leaders***

As noted earlier, this theme was unique to one school. Leadership was “about giving other people what they need to be able to do” and “allowing people to work towards...school priorities”. Those exercising leadership provided other people with the skills, knowledge and resources to find a pathway towards the school vision, and hence to show leadership themselves. The link between this understanding, servant leadership and distributed leadership was previously explored. (Section 3.5.4)

#### ***5.7.5 Modelling Expectations***

In spite of the numerous references to modelling when discussing the ways deputy heads demonstrated leadership, the idea did not figure prominently in many of the leadership definitions the key informants articulated. Only two referred to modelling, and in both cases the emphasis was on modelling behaviours or attributes they would expect from others. On the surface at least, this appeared to be a different emphasis from earlier reflections on the role of modelling in the deputies’ leadership, which was about living out their Christian faith and hence relating to others in a particular manner.

#### ***5.7.6 Summary***

The key informants had a number of expectations about leadership. As was the case with the deputies, these did not always reflect what they perceived the deputies to be doing. The major leadership emphases of the key informants were relational skills and vision. There were mixed opinions as to the strength of the deputy principals in these areas. The key informants also perceived decision making, developing leadership in others, and modelling expectations as elements of leadership.

## **5.8 Leadership Narratives Reflected**

### ***5.8.1 Bureaucratic Leadership***

No particular references were made by the key informants to the fundamental leadership structures in the school, except where they were specifically asked about them. The interview questions did not generally lead respondents to reflect on the school leadership structures, although there were opportunities for the informants to raise the topic if they saw it as significant. Thus the key informants did not identify fundamental structural issues as contributing to the leadership in the role of the deputy.

### ***5.8.2 Distributed Leadership***

The key informants did not use the language generally associated with distributed leadership to describe deputies. Where the key informant was another senior staff member, they were more likely to make some reference to the deputy as being part of a leadership team which involved both of them. The key informants with middle management backgrounds focused on the deputy as an individual. (The interview questions did not automatically prompt them to consider the deputies' role in terms of team leadership.) When there was a comment about the deputies' role on the senior management team, it was generally in the context of decision making. There were some comments which suggested that restructuring had occurred within the ranks of the senior managers, but this seemed to have shifted responsibility to different individuals rather than creating a model where leadership and responsibility were more fluid. "I think they have provided a leadership model for (two other senior positions were named) which has actually taken away some of the responsibility (for curriculum matters) from the deputy". The deputy was effectively sidelined from this activity in the school by the management structure.

As has been discussed, distributed leadership is more than working in teams, and more than groups of individuals taking individual responsibility for individual areas. The key informants did not collectively convey a strong sense of distributed leadership involving the deputy.

### **5.8.3 Collaborative Leadership**

The key informants were divided about whether or not the deputies exercised collaborative leadership. Some individual deputy principals were deemed to be collaborative in their approach. Others were not. Not all the deputy principal roles inherently demanded a collaborative approach.

### **5.8.4 Instructional Leadership**

The key informants did not generally recognise the deputies as instructional leaders in the school, except where the deputy was the designated Director of Curriculum. This deputy had a clearly defined instructional role, and was recognised for this. The others were not seen as strong instructional leaders, and indeed, as discussed in Section 5.8.2, some management restructuring had actually lessened this role.

### **5.8.5 Teacher Leadership**

The deputies were recognised as good classroom practitioners, but the key informants did not speak of them as being at the cutting edge of classroom practice or curriculum development. There were no particular references to the deputies working with small groups of teachers on intensive curriculum development relevant to their classes. This does not mean the deputies were never involved in this kind of activity, but there did not appear to be particular emphasis on the deputies as teacher leaders. The possible exception was the deputy in charge of curriculum.

To the extent that instructional leadership and teacher leadership are about curriculum leadership, the lack of emphasis is consistent with the Cranston et al (2004) study. In that case, only 21 percent of deputies in the Queensland state system claimed to spend a 'great deal of time' in educational/curriculum leadership. Fifty three percent said they spent 'some time' (p. 236). The key informants did not perceive the deputies in the Lutheran secondary system to be strong educational or curriculum leaders either.

### **5.8.6 Substantive Leadership**

The underpinning Christian nature of the meaning, mission and identity of their schools was apparent to most of the key informants, who readily listed the school's Christian ethos or basis amongst the things that were important at the school and underpinned its success:

I think curriculum and that kind of stuff is a bit secondary to...when you have a sense of all of us working for a common good with a strong Christian backing and relationships, whatever evolves out of that is generally going to be pretty strong and pretty on the money as well.

Some key informants perceived that the deputies had a role in defining and communicating the meaning, mission and identity of the school. This was apparent through the recognition of the deputies' attempts to live out their Christian faith and to apply it in the school setting. One deputy was perceived to be particularly strong in this area. The extent to which the identity of the Lutheran secondary school was dependent on the deputy principals being Lutheran was questioned. The key informants expressed a range of views on this and many were unsure. They recognised a broader Christian meaning, mission and identity much more clearly than a Lutheran one, and often perceived the deputy's leadership as Christian, rather than specifically Lutheran.

### **5.8.7 Moral and Ethical Decision Making**

Only one key informant referred to a deputy principal's ongoing commitment to making moral and ethical decisions. "I see...someone who tries to make moral and ethical decisions." Decisions are "made in a thoughtful, moral kind of way." However, as with the deputies, there was no explicit emphasis on leadership as a moral undertaking. Again, it may be that this was assumed, given the emphasis on the deputies operating from a Christian worldview. However, the moral dimension of leadership only attracted the two short comments quoted above.

### **5.8.8 Servant Leadership**

The key informants did not initially use the term servant leader to describe their deputies. Those who were specifically asked, agreed readily enough that the deputy was a servant, "He is very much a servant. He works and does so

much for everybody else...not for him.” Again, the concept of servant leadership seemed to be defined by the key informants in terms of doing a lot of hard work, and doing it for others. The elements of providing leadership that encourages others to be leaders, and highlighting and protecting the values of the school were not discussed in the context of servant leadership, although some reflection on the latter was apparent in the various ways the participants spoke of Christian modelling.

### **5.8.9 Authentic Leadership**

As noted in Chapter 3, there are a number of aspects to authentic leadership. Starratt (2004) considered the idea that authentic leaders promote the work of authentic teaching and learning. The LDP documentation referred to concepts of motivation, morality and spiritual awareness, as well as personal characteristics of faith commitment, honesty, integrity, ethical reflection and self-critique. (Lutheran Education Australia, 2005c) Many of these characteristics, like honesty and integrity, were clearly perceived by the key informants (see Section 5.6.2). Others, including morality, can be inferred from general comments. The area that did not appear to be addressed was reflection and self-critique. This, of course, is a very personal undertaking, and it is the researcher’s view that the deputies could not have spoken so fluently about their leadership role without having reflected upon it. However, the key informants did not comment about this.

### **5.8.10 Leadership Forces**

The connection which emerged between the deputies’ perception of their leadership and Sergiovanni’s (1995) leadership forces was not as apparent in the key informants’ responses. They acknowledged that the deputies worked hard and long hours, but did not always see the activities that occupied this time as an opportunity for leadership in the same way as the deputies did. As can be seen in Table 5.4, most of what the key informants identified as leadership appeared to fit into the categories of symbolic or cultural leadership. In particular the modelling, and the value based operating principles are elements of these leadership forces.

**Table 5.4 Comparing the key informants' data with Sergiovanni's (1995) leadership forces.**

<b>Key Informants' Data</b>	<b>Sergiovanni's Leadership Forces</b>
Leadership is understood to include the ability to make hard decisions and accept the consequences	Technical
Leadership is understood to require good relational skills	Human
	Educational
Leadership includes modelling what is expected from others Leadership involves having, articulating and moving others toward a vision	Symbolic
Leadership involves equipping others to lead	Cultural

### **5.8.11 Missing Narratives**

The limited references by key informants to leadership structure, instructional leadership, teacher leadership, distributed leadership, and collaborative leadership have been discussed. The key informants were also consistent with the deputies in that there was little or no comment made in relation to change management, 'trait', 'great man' emotional intelligence, moral or transformational leadership theories. The key informants appeared to focus on relationships based on Christian integrity, which had positive outcomes for the stakeholders.

It must be acknowledged that, as with the deputies, if the key informants had been asked directly about these leadership theories, it may have been revealed that they were a part of their understanding of leadership. They did not, however, emerge unprompted.

### **5.8.12 Summary**

The data from the key informants suggested that the substantive leadership elements in the deputy principals' roles were most widely recognised. To the extent that servant leadership is defined as working hard and assisting people, it was perceived to be significant. There was an apparent gap in the data in relation to the elements of moral leadership that are involved in substantive leadership, as well as servant and authentic leadership. In the whole context of the data, this element may be assumed by the participants. It was not however, explicitly referred to, except by one key informant.

The data from the key informants mirrors the absence of emphasis on instructional or curriculum leadership found in the deputy principals' comments. The exception was the deputy with the specific role in this area. The extent to which leadership was being shared, or was expected to be shared, was difficult to infer. Little reference was made to this during the interviews.

### 5.9 Similarities and Differences in the Understandings of Leadership

Table 5.5 summarises the similarities and differences between the deputy principals and the other key informants in their understandings of leadership. Each column in Table 5.5 includes the summary themes from one of the research questions. Each row represents a different understanding of what leaders do or are. Where there were similarities between the responses in more than one question, they are contained in the same row.

**Table 5.5 Summary of Leadership Themes**

Deputies' Self Perception (Research Q.1)	Deputies' General Understanding of Leadership (Research Q.2)	Key informants' perception of the Deputies' Leadership (Research Q.3)	Key Informants' General Understanding of Leadership (Research Q.4)
Completing administration tasks in a way that improved outcomes for staff and students	Leadership involves hard work, visibility and involvement	-	-
Having input into decision making through various formal and informal structures.	Leadership requires access to information and authority to make decisions	Being knowledgeable	Leadership involves making hard decisions and accepting the consequences
Teaching allocated classes well.	-	-	-
Working to resolve staff issues.	Relationships are significant	-	Leadership involves having good relational skills
Having and communicating high expectations.	-	Operating from a set of values and principles of action	-
-	Leadership involves setting direction, maintaining an overview and having vision	-	Leadership involves having, articulating and moving others towards a vision.
Providing a good example and/or modelling certain values.	Leadership involves leading by example	Modelling a Christian faith	Leadership involves modelling what is expected from others

### **5.9.1 Similarities**

There were two types of similarities in the data. The first type comprised the elements that were perceived by both the deputies and the other key informants as inherent to leadership and part of the deputies' role. There were also aspects of leadership in the historical understandings that were not noted by either group in the current study. Both areas of similarity are discussed in the paragraphs which follow.

### **5.9.2 Leading by Example**

Respondents in all groups recognised that modelling the underlying values of the school was part of the deputy's leadership role, and they perceived the deputy to be doing this. In particular, the deputies were seen to model the Christian values of the school and their own Christian faith. Several leadership narratives were illustrated. In particular, substantive leadership, involving the underlying meanings, mission and identity of the school was strongly perceived and understood to be part of the role. The key informants used the language of authentic leadership more readily than the deputy principals themselves, although it appears reasonable to infer authentic leadership from the deputies' data. The same is true of moral leadership. Neither the deputies nor the key informants used the language normally associated with this aspect of leadership. However, the way in which both groups spoke of the deputies as Christian role models in the school, suggested a moral understanding operating in parallel with a deeply Christian one. This moral understanding was not explicitly articulated by either group.

### **5.9.3 Relationships**

All the groups perceived that leadership was relational. The deputies provided many examples to illustrate this. The key informants also perceived skills in human relations to be part of leadership. They had various perspectives on how accomplished the deputies were in this area. Some deputies were perceived to have very strong relational skills, and this was acknowledged; others were not perceived to be so strong. It did not appear that the position of deputy in all schools inherently demanded these relational skills, although if present they were clearly seen as beneficial.

#### **5.9.4 Access to Information and Decision Making**

While access to information and decision making have been grouped together for the purposes of discussion, participants emphasised different aspects. Both groups understood that leadership involves decision making, and recognised that the deputy principals contributed to decisions in the school in various formal and informal ways. In terms of decisions for which deputy principals are ultimately responsible, the key informants tended to emphasise that leaders make the tough decisions and accept the consequences. The deputy principals themselves seemed less concerned with consequences and more aware of the ways in which school-based factors limited their decision making authority. In both instances the comments on decision making suggested ingrained notions of individual power and authority, which reflect underlying bureaucratic hierarchical assumptions about leadership. Both groups felt that leadership involved access to information and that leaders were knowledgeable about school and educational matters. The key informants felt that the deputies largely had this knowledge, or had access to it. The deputies had mixed views about this. Some felt they were consistently kept well informed, others were less confident about this and perceived that information sometimes passed them by. As noted in the literature review, access to information is one way the classic bureaucratic model has influenced leadership in schools: “leaders must be well informed, have access to governing and funding bodies, and be able to control personnel” (Donaldson, 2001, p. 4).

#### **5.9.5 Vision**

Deputy principals and key informants understood vision to be a part of leadership. Various participants explored aspects of vision, such as articulating or communicating it, and encouraging others to work towards it. The other significant understanding common to both groups with respect to vision, was that it was difficult in practice for deputies to demonstrate it. There was a gap here between what the participants thought leadership was, and what they saw the deputies doing. This is not to say that the deputies did not demonstrate vision or set direction, but they either had to search hard to find areas where they could set direction without intruding on others' areas of

responsibility, or they perceived the sphere where they could freely be visionary as relatively narrow. Again, it did not appear that the position inherently demanded the deputy to be visionary.

#### ***5.9.6 Instructional Leadership/Curriculum Leadership***

The participants generally felt that the leadership strengths of the deputies were in areas other than teaching and learning. Some frustration was expressed by a deputy who wanted to be more of a leader in this area, but felt excluded from it by the leadership structure in the school. The clear exception to this was the deputy whose position was defined in curriculum terms. This deputy was readily identified by all the participants from the school as an instructional leader. The lack of emphasis in this area is notable, given that some authors (Crowther, Hann et al., 2002; Leithwood & Riehl, 2003) perceive the future of school leadership in terms of action which improves students' educational outcomes.

One area where most of the deputies were still involved was that of staff appraisal and/or professional development. In some cases this was perceived as an opportunity for leadership by the deputy and the key informants. "He's heavily involved in the professional development of teachers and has developed an amazing professional development program within the college." Responsibility for staff appraisal and professional development appeared to have been linked to the staff welfare role, rather than the curriculum and pedagogy role.

#### ***5.9.7 Distributed Leadership***

As indicated earlier, the data were inconclusive in the area of distributed leadership. It was apparent that when a school had deliberately embraced and intentionally worked towards distributed leadership at all levels, this was recognised both by the deputy and the other key informants as an element of leadership in the school, and an element of the deputy's leadership. A key factor seemed to be the perception that the principal was also sharing his/her own leadership responsibilities. On the other hand, where no real sense of distributed leadership was suggested by the deputy, the other informants

concluded. There were leadership structures which indicated the presence of other leaders, but this did not automatically result in distributed leadership. Indeed, there were suggestions that the opposite was the case, as those in leadership positions sought to establish and protect their areas of authority. For distributed leadership to be recognised, a whole-school focus on multiple levels of leadership appeared to be required.

#### **5.9.8 Transformational Leadership**

Transformational leadership did not appear to be articulated in either set of data. The fact that moral leadership was implied but not stated has been discussed. Transformational leadership also has this moral element. The various indicators of the perception that leadership is a 'moral art' (Hodgkinson, 1991) are inconclusive.

#### **5.9.9 Differences**

There were two types of differences in the data. One was the different perspectives on the same core theme, for example, the different perceptions about information and knowledge. Most of these have been discussed in the preceding paragraphs. The other difference was where one group of participants recognised something that the other group did not. There were two instances of this which seemed potentially significant.

#### **5.9.10 Hard Work**

The deputies perceived that leadership involved working many hours and was hard work. The other key informants acknowledged that the deputies worked long hours, but they did not necessarily perceive this to be leadership. They saw much of this activity as paperwork that got in the way of leadership. The difference relates back to the deputies' idea that beneficial outcomes for staff and students turned a management task into leadership.

#### **5.9.11 Sergiovanni Leadership Forces**

The data from the deputies revealed a parallel with Sergiovanni's concept of leadership forces that was not apparent in the data from the key informants. Interestingly, it was not the more complex symbolic and cultural elements that

were missing from the key informants' perceptions, but the technical (which they did not recognise as leadership) and the educational forces.

### **5.9.12 Summary**

In summary, there were more similarities than differences between the way the deputies and the other key informants perceived the deputies' leadership. However, subtle differences emerged in the perceptions. In most cases, where the deputy indicated a particular strength or weakness, the key informants confirmed this. It was often true that, where a deputy provided an example of leadership in some context, the key informants provided the same example, although they sometimes highlighted different aspects of it. A particularly important aspect of leadership appeared to be a deputy's interpersonal skills. Not all the participants perceived the role of the deputy to inherently require these skills, but they seemed to be a significant element in leadership. This raised questions about whether the role necessarily required leadership from the incumbent.

### **5.10 Conclusions**

In this chapter the findings relating to the five research questions were presented and considered. Chapter 6 offers a systematic discussion about the conclusions which can be drawn from the findings in this chapter. Using a process of data reduction and display, the data gathered from the interviews were summarised and presented in a manner which assisted in addressing the various research questions used to explore the understandings of leadership embedded in the role of the deputy principal. It was found that there were similarities and differences in the way the deputies understood their own leadership, compared with their general view of leadership. The key informants recognised some elements of leadership in common with the deputies, but identified other elements that were not so clearly perceived by deputies. The leadership of the deputies appeared to be most clearly understood by all groups in substantive leadership terms, although there were limitations and inconsistencies in the way in which substantive concepts like authentic and servant leadership were developed. Various other leadership narratives gained recognition from one group or both, and a number did not

appear to be included at all. For example, perceiving the deputy to be a visionary leader appeared to be problematic, although all groups recognised vision as an element of leadership.

In considering the similarities and differences between the way in which the deputies and the key informants perceived leadership, it appeared that the similarities were generally broad themes, and the differences emerged in the detail.

The data presented in Chapter 5 provided insight into the understandings of leadership embedded in the role of the deputy in Lutheran secondary schools. However, the implications of these understandings for the system, schools and the deputies themselves have yet to be explored. Chapter 6 draws the final conclusions about the leadership understandings embedded in the role of the deputy principal in Lutheran secondary schools. These conclusions primarily related to the need for further development in the areas of servant, distributed, authentic and substantive leadership. Based on the conclusions, a series of recommendations for further research and action were made.

## **CHAPTER SIX**

### **Conclusion and Recommendations**

#### **6.1 Introduction**

This research was designed to study the understanding of leadership within the context of the deputy principal in Lutheran secondary schools. Chapter 6 outlines the conclusions and recommendations from the research. These were linked to the key ideas of servant, distributed, authentic and substantive leadership, which emerged as significant in Chapter 5.

#### **6.2 Purpose of the Research**

The research explored the understandings about leadership embedded in the current role of the deputy principal in Lutheran secondary schools. Underpinning the study were constructionist assumptions about the existence of multiple truths and a symbolic interactionist perspective.

#### **6.3 Design of the Research**

The methodology used was a multisite case study, where three schools were chosen using criterion-based selection. A deputy from each school was then invited to participate. Other key informants were teachers holding middle and senior management positions in the selected schools. Key informants were randomly selected by the researcher's principal supervisor from a short list provided by the deputies.

The deputy principals and the key informants were interviewed in their respective schools and data were analysed using a data reduction, data display and conclusion drawing/verification model (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Member checking and peer examination were key aspects of ensuring the internal validity of the findings.

#### **6.4 Research Questions Addressed**

Five specific questions were considered in order to explore the understandings about leadership in the current role of the deputy principal. The themes, which emerged from the data, have been discussed in Chapter

5. Here they are summarised as a basis for further consideration of the implications of the findings.

Question 1. In what ways do the deputy principals perceive that they exercise leadership in their school?

The deputies perceive that they exercise leadership by;

- Completing administration tasks in a way that improved outcomes for staff and students;
- Having input into decision making through various formal and informal structures;
- Working to resolve staff issues;
- Teaching allocated classes well;
- Having and communicating high expectations, and
- Providing a good example and/or modelling certain values

Question 2. How do the deputy principals understand leadership? Which, if any, of the identified leadership narratives do these understandings reflect?

- Leadership is understood as hard work. It is visible and involved;
- Relationships are understood to be significant in leadership;
- Leadership is perceived to involve leading by example;
- Access to information and authority to make decisions are understood as elements of leadership, and
- Leadership is perceived to involve setting direction, maintaining an overview and having vision.

Leadership narratives which were reflected by this data included: bureaucratic organisational models, substantive and servant leadership, visionary, cultural and symbolic leadership. These narratives were often partially or superficially represented.

Question 3. In what ways do the key informants perceive that the deputy principal exercises leadership in the school?

The deputies are perceived to exercise leadership when they

- Model a Christian faith;

- Operate from a set of values and principles of action, and
- Are knowledgeable (about education, the school or community)

Question 4. How do the key informants understand leadership? Which, if any, of the identified leadership narratives do these understandings reflect?

- Leadership is understood to require good relational skills;
- Leadership involves having, articulating and moving others toward a vision;
- Leadership is understood to include the ability to make hard decisions and accept the consequences;
- Equipping others to lead is understood to be an element of leadership, and
- Leadership includes modelling what is expected from others.

The key informants' responses reflected concepts of substantive, servant and authentic leadership. Again, they were often incomplete representations.

Question 5. What are the similarities and differences in the understanding(s) of the leadership expectations between deputy principals and other key informants?

The similarities were:

- Leadership is understood to involve setting an example and modelling appropriate values;
- Leadership is perceived to be relational;
- Leadership is understood to involve access information and the authority to make decisions, and
- Leadership is perceived to require vision and direction setting.

The key difference was in the area of 'hard work'. The deputies were more inclined to view their hard work as leadership by focusing on the beneficial outcomes for staff and students. The key informants acknowledged the work, but tended to perceive it as management focused.

## 6.5 Overview of Conclusions

Multiple understandings about leadership were embedded in the current role of the deputy principal in Lutheran secondary schools. While there were common themes in the data, there were also as many different understandings of leadership as there were participants. This was assumed by the researcher at the outset, hence the constructionist epistemology at the core of the study. However, differences in the constructed understandings were also apparent in the data. There is a danger that this diversity is overemphasised. It may have been a result of the different nature of the roles, schools and experiences of the three deputies, and hence the differences can be attributed, at least in part, to the small sample size, which does not allow the direct comparison of deputies with more similar roles. This noted, there was uncertainty, lack of clarity and a limited understanding of some key leadership concepts influencing expectations about leadership, which suggests that the Lutheran school system needs to do further professional development in this area. If there is a distinctive idea of Lutheran school leadership envisioned by the national and regional Lutheran education policy makers, (and the changes made between the MPP and the LDP suggest that thinking has developed in this area), the current research suggests that this is not consistently understood or embraced at school level.

Like other schools, Lutheran schools operate in a context which is recognised as increasingly complex. In addition to this, Lutheran secondary schools seek to incorporate their cultural and religious heritage. Yet for Lutheran schools there still appears to be truth in the claim that the “era of profound educational change has produced little constructive or creative thinking about the deputy principalship” (Harvey, 1997, p. 111). This was particularly evident in the data from schools which commenced in the period when hierarchical management systems in schools were the accepted norm.

A number of historical conceptions of leadership were evident. In all cases multiple narratives were apparent in the dominant understandings, supporting the belief that “the (leadership) movements and the models they produced were not distinct from one another” (Rost, 1993, p. 23). Sometimes the

conceptions were not fully developed, when compared to the theoretical model or understanding. Servant leadership was one example of this. There were also hierarchical assumptions and bureaucratic models involved. The need to be Lutheran in order to be a deputy principal in a Lutheran secondary school was questioned, raising issues of school identity and church mission, and prompting discussion about substantive and authentic leadership.

In order to make the most effective use of the leadership resources available to Lutheran schools, a reconceptualisation of the leadership of the deputy principal, which incorporates distributed, substantive and servant leadership ideas, would be timely. Further detailed discussion of these conclusions and the recommendations which emerge from them, now follows.

## **6.6 Management or Leadership**

The relationship that the deputies perceived between management tasks and leadership opportunity has been discussed previously (Section 5.3.1), but requires further consideration. It has already been stated (Section 3.3.2) that in the current study the distinction between leadership and management is not an emphasis. The epistemological basis of the study also acknowledges that leadership is a constructed concept, where perception, theological underpinnings and cultural context are all relevant. However, the current study is undertaken in the light of previous studies of the deputy principal.

Conclusions from such studies, for example, that “Secondary assistant principals as school administrators are charged with establishing and maintaining organizational stability” (Reed & Himmler, 1985, p. 82) reflect one distinction between leadership and management. This can be summarised as “Managers are oriented towards stability and leaders are oriented towards innovation; managers get people to do things more efficiently, whereas leaders get people to agree about what things should be done” (Yukl, 1994, p. 4).

The deputy principals in the current study were clearly understood to be very significant managers in their schools. They were seen to establish and maintain organisational stability, and move towards getting people to work

more efficiently. The deputies understood the positive outcomes of this activity as leadership. This may be the case, and, to the extent that it forms part of their professional self identity, it contributes to their personal job satisfaction and sense of self worth. However, leadership defined in this way does not appear sufficient to lead to the conclusion that the leadership role of the deputy has developed in an optimal manner. Performing management tasks with desirable outcomes may allow the deputies to involve themselves in leadership or touch on it in some way. It may also help them feel positive about their leadership contribution. However, in the final analysis, management and leadership are usually perceived to be different (Yukl, 1994). As a springboard to leadership, management tasks are inherently limiting. While the role of the deputy begins with an overwhelming focus on stability and organisation, research suggests that it has not developed fully into a genuine leadership role (Koru, 1993; Reed & Himmler, 1985).

## **6.7 Comparison to Other Studies**

There are three Australian studies of the deputy principal conducted within the last fifteen years (Cranston, 2006; Cranston et al., 2004; Harvey, 1997). While the purpose of the current study was not the same as any of these, there were similar findings. Harvey's research was conducted in 1990 and 1994, and considered primary deputy principals in Western Australia. Cranston et al researched secondary deputy principals in the Queensland government system in 2002, and there was a similar study of deputies in the non-government sector in Queensland and New South Wales in 2004. The current study interviewed deputy principals in Lutheran secondary schools in 2005. The potential for different experiences amongst the three groups of deputies is present, but in fact there were many similarities.

### **6.7.1 Harvey**

As noted previously, Harvey (1997) suggested there had not been much constructive or creative thinking about the role of the deputy principal. He added that this 'has occurred despite the establishment of new system and school based specialist teacher positions' (p. 111). This also appears to have happened in Lutheran secondary schools. Increasing workload and

environmental complexity has led to the establishment of new positions of responsibility rather than a redefinition of leadership. Some of these new positions have had the effect of moving potential sources of leadership experience away from the deputy principals.

Nearly ten years ago, Harvey also concluded that “large numbers of deputy principals lacked a significant professional identity” (p. 112). This did not seem so apparent in the current study, although, if Harvey’s questions had been used, it may have emerged more strongly. The deputy principals in the present study found a means of developing a professional identity. In some cases they achieved it by defining leadership in sympathetic ways.

Understanding servant leadership chiefly in terms of ‘helping’ or ‘serving’ was one such strategy, another was to focus on the outcomes of management tasks and define this as leadership. A second strategy was to actively search for and work in areas that fell outside other leaders’ direct brief. Here deputies felt they could lead without ‘stepping on others’ toes’. This was a significant strategy for one particular deputy. He was an example of a practitioner who found “spaces in (his) professional effort to participate in more proactive pursuits” (p. 121). Whatever strategy was used, however, the deputies appeared to have, and were able to articulate, a professional identity. The issue in Lutheran schools was more the quality and appropriateness of this identity in the contemporary context of school leadership.

The concept of the lifeworld of the school was also taken up by Harvey. He argued that some educators had responded to change forces in schools by promoting,

a professional model of school organisation which recognises the energy and commitment of the lifeworld. (And) since the position of the deputy principal is sustained by bureaucratic notions of organisation then the future of this position in Australian secondary schools is not clear. (p. 115)

The links between the way the deputies in Lutheran secondary schools and others view their leadership and bureaucratic understandings have been noted previously, as has the importance of leaders working at the level of the school’s lifeworld. Further discussion of these connections occurs in Section

6.8 and Section 6.15, since the conclusion that the emphasis on leadership as working at the level of the school's lifeworld, casts doubt on the future of a deputy's role sustained by bureaucratic assumptions, is worthy of discussion in Lutheran school circles. Perhaps such discussion has already begun, given that there are newer schools which do not have a deputy principal in the traditional role. An alternative to abandoning the role, however, is surely to redefine or reconceptualise it.

### **6.7.2 Cranston, Tromans and Reugebrink**

In their studies, Cranston and his colleagues (Cranston, 2006; Cranston et al., 2004) found that the deputies identified "strong interpersonal/people skills, inspiring and visioning change, delegation and empowerment and being a good manager as key skills for their role" (2004, p. 225). Again, there appears to be agreement between these findings and the current study, but there are also some differences.

The deputies in the current study identified good relational and management skills as critical to their leadership role. However, as has been discussed, the visioning component was problematic, in that opportunities (and sometimes skill and/or desire) in this area were limited. The area of change leadership was neglected, except to the extent that it is implied in progressing towards a vision. As noted in Chapter 5 (Sections 5.5.10, 5.8.11), change management was not mentioned explicitly by either the deputies or the key informants in their reflections on leadership. The participants in the current study did not appear to understand 'inspiring and visioning change' as a key part of the deputies' leadership in the Lutheran secondary system.

Another area of difference was delegation and empowerment. Here there was a diversity of opinion among the participants from different schools. In one school, where the deputy had a less traditional role, empowerment and the development of teacher leaders was a clear responsibility associated with the position. In the other two schools this emphasis was not so apparent, and where the individual deputies involved themselves in this; it was not because their role required or expected it of them.

Another interesting area of the Cranston et al (2004) study was the notion of team development among members of the school administration team. The researchers found that almost 80 percent of respondents commented positively on team development among administration members at their school. About one third of the respondents in the non-government sector reported that their school's leadership team was 'highly developed' (Cranston, 2006, p. 96). "The general situation would seem to be that the notion of team is well developed (or developing) in most secondary schools. The attitudes, skills and competencies of team members (principals and deputies) are key contributors to this" (Cranston et al., 2004, p. 234). Satisfaction with the team was not so evident in the current study. There were a group of individuals with certain responsibilities and what each individual was required to do was clearly understood. The sense of team, or any emerging sense of distributed leadership, was difficult to find in the current study. In considering the implications of their research, Cranston et al concluded that there may be "professional development implications with regard to developing effective senior management teams in schools" (p. 241). According to the current study, this is most certainly also the case in the Lutheran secondary system.

Cranston et al (2004), found that, as a result of recent changes, deputies had an enhanced leadership role, and they needed to be equipped for this. This enhanced leadership role is not the reality described by many of the participants in the current study. They were certainly completing many complex and challenging tasks which required multiple skills, but, at times, they felt disempowered as leaders. They needed to be proactive in searching out leadership opportunities, but were often prevented from doing this by the weight of their management functions.

### **6.8 Hierarchical Understandings**

Rational, bureaucratic models of school leadership were discussed in Section 3.4. The deputies in the current study did appear to be operating within a climate that valued hierarchical assumptions about leadership. This was most apparent in the schools with the most defined lines of authority, and where the title 'deputy principal' still existed.

The ways in which the deputies and key informants understood leadership were each summarised under five headings in Table 6.1:

**Table 6.1 The participants’ understandings of leadership**

<b>Deputy Principals</b>	<b>Key Informants</b>
Relationships are understood to be significant in leadership.	Leadership is understood to require good relational skills.
Leadership is perceived to involve leading by example.	Leadership includes modelling what is expected from others.
Access to information and authority to make decisions are understood as elements of leadership.	Leadership is understood to include the ability to make hard decisions and accept the consequences.
Leadership is perceived to involve setting direction, maintaining an overview and having vision.	Leadership involves having, articulating and moving others toward a vision.
Leadership is understood as hard work. It is visible and involved.	Leadership involves equipping others to lead.

These understandings can be compared to the classical bureaucratic leadership model, which emphasised rationality and control. (Donaldson, 2001) influenced school leadership in four ways. These are used below to structure the discussion.

### **6.8.1 Formal Authority is Vested in Specific Roles**

In a bureaucratic model, formal authority must be vested in specific roles to assure school-wide safety, orderliness, and productivity. The deputy principals had a significant number of management tasks that related to the orderly and productive operation of the school. Most of this was summarised under the label ‘hard working, visible and involved’. The authority to make decisions (or lack of it) was also raised by the participants. They perceived this to be part of leadership, although sometimes it belonged to roles other than that of the deputy principal. The ability to ‘take hard decisions and accept the consequences’ was understood by the key informants as the responsibility of individual leaders. There was no strong sense that this could be, or was, a group responsibility.

### **6.8.2 Leaders Organise Rational Institutional Processes**

When formal authority is vested in a specific role, the “people in these roles must be able to organize a rational institutional process so that the school’s core work with students is uniform and meets state standards” (Donaldson, 2001, p. 4). Again, there was evidence that the deputies were involved in this

type of organising (for example, the deputy being the school contact with the Board of Studies, or the timetabler, or student record keeper). However, this was often perceived to be management, not leadership.

### ***6.8.3 Leaders Must be Well Informed***

Leaders must be well informed, have access to governing and funding bodies, and be able to control the appointment of personnel. There was discussion in Chapter 5 (Sections 5.4.4 and 5.6.3) about the deputies' involvement in information channels. This was seen to be lacking in some cases. The perceived 'need to know', however, seems based on the bureaucratic assumption that leaders need to know more than followers and will have access to information that others do not have. "The deputy is good at being a resource for most things that you need to know around here. And if he doesn't know, he knows where to get it." As would be expected if the underlying perspective is hierarchal, the principal was understood to know more than the deputy. "I'm not the principal and I don't hear a lot of things; perhaps aspects of them. The principal tells me when he's got time."

### ***6.8.4 Leaders Shape Schools***

Vision has often been discussed in the current study. In a bureaucratic leadership model it is the leaders who must have the vision and who must be able to shape the school to meet emerging needs in the environment and among students. The participants in this study felt that individual leaders (the principals) would conceptualise the vision and bring others on board to share their vision. This was not generally understood as part of the role of the deputy principal.

### ***6.8.5 Other Elements***

While some elements of the way in which the participants understood leadership appeared to be based on bureaucratic assumptions, there were others that did not. The most consistent and notable example was the perception that leaders are relational. There were also significant elements of the modelling process which moved into substantive conceptualisations of leadership. Furthermore, the view of the key informants that leaders develop

leadership in others is not a strength of traditional hierarchical models of school organisation and leadership. Leadership involvement in developing other leaders is more apparent in servant leadership, collaborative, participative, shared and distributed leadership.

### **6.8.6 Summary**

Table 3.2 (p. 83) summarised the traditional and emergent facets of responsibility of the deputy principal (Harvey, 1997). The traditional (bureaucratic) model described the role:

Purpose - maintenance of organisational stability (organisational effectiveness);

Emphasis - support of principal, teachers, control of student behaviour;

Staff Management - emphasis: supervision, support;

Curriculum Management - emphasis: implementation of curriculum authority syllabus;

Classroom Teaching - emphasis: transmission of knowledge;

Students – emphasis: discipline, welfare, and

Administrative Routines - emphasis: control of resources, timetable and other schedules to coordinate developmental activities.

Many of these understandings emerged in the current study and have been explored using the structure of Donaldson's (2001) summary of the influences of bureaucratic thinking. There was evidence of bureaucratic assumptions, but these did not explain all the leadership understandings which were apparent. Harvey's (1997) conclusion that "the deputy principalship is intimately linked with the bureaucratic model of school organisation, emphasising a line of authority, close supervision of staff and standardized procedures" (p. 122) appears to be partially true in Lutheran secondary schools. It is, however, an uneasy match, as both the deputies and the key informants understood leadership as more than this. Staff management, for example, appeared to have moved into the 'emergent' category in Harvey's (1997) table. Other models of leadership were also influential and these will be considered shortly. Some confusion and angst seemed to be experienced by deputies, "I could probably talk for hours about how I get frustrated", perhaps because the

old models were being eroded before the new models were fully understood in practice. The old conceptual basis for the role is no longer satisfactory. The dilemma then becomes educating the school community to let go of the old assumptions sufficiently and consistently enough to create space for a new understanding. This appears to have been done more successfully in schools where the terminology 'deputy principal' was never used, and the second in charge had an alternative title.

### **6.9 Distributed Leadership**

Several references have been made in this study to the increasingly complex external and internal environment in which schools operate today. The fact that the principalship is becoming less attractive for school leaders (Neidhart & Carlin, 2003; Whitaker, 2002) was also noted. One response to these findings is to consider a more shared form of leadership.

Shared leadership has a number of manifestations. The most popular in the participant schools was the creation of middle, or senior, management positions to share the work load. Under such a scenario a leadership team may emerge, but this may be no more than an expression for a group of individuals who are largely responsible for discrete areas. This seemed to be the case in two of the schools, where the existence of a leadership team was identified by the participants, but where the 'leadership talk' was predominantly individual not collegial. Various staff, including the deputies, were perceived to be working hard, and the school was functioning, but there were comments about territorial boundaries, and the 'right' people to go to in order to achieve certain outcomes. "I have to be careful that I don't overstep the boundaries of my responsibilities." Neither the deputies nor the key informants conveyed the opinion that the leadership of the deputy was most evident in the context of a leadership team.

Distributed leadership involves more than a group of individuals striving to perform distinct roles. The findings in this study suggested that this is not understood as part of the nature of leadership in the participating schools.

Distributed leadership is referred to for the first time in the official documentation from the national Lutheran schools' office in the Leadership Development Program literature (Lutheran Education Australia, 2005b). Interestingly, no corresponding reference to teachers as leaders appears as yet in the document 'Core Propositions of Highly Effective Teachers' (Lutheran Education Australia, 2000b). More professional development work and thinking is required before schools will be ready to fully embrace the idea of distributed leadership. Part what is required is further consideration of the role of the deputy (and others) in leadership associated with improving student educational outcomes. This is considered in the following sections.

## **6.10 Educational Leadership**

The current study suggests that it is difficult for some deputies to maintain a focus on educational leadership. There are aspects of their roles which support school-based attempts to improve educational outcomes, but these are often operational rather than philosophical, pedagogical or strategic.

### ***6.10.1 Educational Leadership and Improved Outcomes***

The growing emphasis on the relationship between leadership and school improvement, especially improved student outcomes, was discussed in Chapter 3. Reconceptualising educational leadership for the 21<sup>st</sup> century was seen to involve critiquing positional authority, emphasising professional learning and a leadership role for teachers (Crowther et al., 2001). Leithwood and Riehl (2003) also considered how effective school leadership was connected to effective teaching and learning. Their list (Section 3.5) provides a useful structure for reflecting on the data from the present study.

### ***6.10.2 Setting Directions***

The connection between leadership and vision has been explored variously (Bass, 1985; Bennis & Nanus, 1985; Conger & Kanungo, 1998; Kouzes & Posner, 1995). One idea emphasizes that the school vision is about best practice in teaching and learning; "Effective educational leaders help their schools to develop or endorse visions that embody the best thinking about teaching and learning" (Leithwood & Riehl, 2003, p. 3). As noted in Chapter 5,

the present study suggests that the area of vision is problematic for the deputy principals. The deputies in the current study understood vision as an element of leadership, but did not necessarily perceive it to be required of them in their existing role. In some cases they felt constrained and prevented from developing and implementing vision.

The key informants also consistently perceived vision as a part of leadership. They understood it as a process of moving people forward on a journey. Like the deputies, the key informants were not confident that being visionary was a necessary part of the deputy's role.

From the perspective of principal succession, the fact that there is a class of senior leaders in Lutheran schools, who are not necessarily understood or expected to be visionary, is of concern. All the participants expected that school principals would be visionary, but training for this was not inherent in the role of the deputy. This discrepancy needs to be addressed by schools, and particularly by school councils. Through the LDP and by means of other leadership initiatives the Lutheran system can provide some leadership training; this, however, is limited. Ultimately most training and experience comes from the day to day practice in schools. Councils and schools have significant influence over this training for the deputies and other senior staff.

Capacity to be visionary has emerged as an issue in this study. It would be timely to consider this issue in the broader context of reconceptualising educational leadership. Ideas of distributed leadership have the potential to change the way leadership vision is understood in schools. Thus, a broad approach to addressing the issue is necessary.

### **6.10.3 Modelling**

The particular emphasis given to setting an example in Leithwood (2003) is that the leader models behaviour consistent with the school's values and goals. It has been noted that all the participants in this study attached importance to the idea of modelling, both in theory and in their view of the practice. There were various perspectives on what was being modelled,

ranging from organisational to lifeworld aspects of the school. There was no sense that the modelling of the deputies was inconsistent with the school goals and values, however, the questions raised about the strength of the deputies' role in the lifeworld of the school emerged here. The deputies were modelling aspects of leadership, but these were not always understood to be the most fundamental and important aspects. Where they were understood to be modelling aspects of the lifeworld, these tended to be more in the pastoral, relational and spiritual domains than instructional educational areas.

#### ***6.10.4 Developing People***

Very little emerged from the data which could be categorised as the deputies encouraging reflection and assisting staff to change their practice. The deputies were involved in the staff appraisal process, but the comments made about this were brief and did not provide any commentary about the extent to which appraisal was a tool to promote reflection and change in the school. It was also noted in Chapter 5 that the concept of leadership as change management was all but absent from the data. Moving people towards a common vision involves change, but managing this change was not an obvious theme in the data. The deputies and key informants did not understand this to be part of the deputies' leadership role. Given the rapidly changing technological, global and social context of schools, it seems unfortunate that the deputy principals are not regularly nominated as change agents within the school. This appears to be an area where the role of the deputy is not automatically providing sufficient training for the principalship.

#### ***6.10.5 Developing the Organization***

The next characteristic of effective educational leaders is their contribution to the professional learning community in the school. "Effective leaders enable the school to function as a professional learning community to support and sustain the performance of all key workers, including teachers as well as students" (Leithwood & Riehl, 2003, p. 4). The means to achieve this support included aspects such as strengthening school culture, modifying organisational structure, building collaborative processes and managing the environment. The deputies had significant roles in some of these. The extent

of their involvement in school culture is considered in Section 6.15. It was concluded (Section 5.8.3) that not all of the deputies' roles inherently demanded that they be collaborative leaders. It has also been noted that the principals were largely seen to be responsible for managing the school environment, which included working with parents, community members, business and government. The deputies, however, appeared, to have a significant role in monitoring and adjusting the organisational structure, in order to enhance the individual performance of staff and students and the accomplishment of school goals. This was a major aspect of the way they perceived themselves as leaders.

It also appeared that the deputies in this study had a significant role in the pastoral support of staff. They understood this to be leadership, even when it was accomplished through tasks which could be defined as managerial. The emphasis of the support was often pastoral, not professional. This is not to say that the pastoral care of staff is insignificant, or that pastoral issues are unrelated to professional issues or the ability to teach well. The fact that the deputies were often managing the staff appraisal process is noted again, but, with one exception, the deputies did not perceive themselves to have a large role in instructional leadership. This was confirmed by the other informants. In this sense some deputies worked in areas that were necessary, but not sufficient, to develop a professional learning community. Obviously the deputy principal in a school cannot be intimately involved in everything, but there is an issue about how appropriate, or useful, it is to have deputies focused in leadership areas which are on the fringe of the core business of the school. In terms of potential sources of educational leadership in a school, this does not seem very productive.

The idea of a professional learning community is inseparable from the teaching and learning focus of the school which, in turn, is about enacting vision. Teaching and learning will now be discussed briefly, but it seems that these are aspects of the same issue of educational focus.

### **6.10.6 Teaching and Learning**

The tendency of the deputies' role to reflect a management emphasis was nowhere more apparent than in the area of teaching and learning. "Leaders in highly diverse contexts help identify and implement forms of teaching and learning that are appropriate and effective for the populations they serve" (Leithwood & Riehl, 2003, p. 6). One of the deputies in this study was very involved in this process. The other two felt part of an oversight team at best, and excluded at worst, from extensive involvement in curriculum and pedagogical development. The understanding of the leadership role of the deputy did not appear to contain significant teaching and learning components.

The deputies were understood to have a major role in the management process of making the teaching and learning initiatives work. This might include timetable implications, or staffing excursions, or costing extra curricular programs, or any other of a myriad of possibilities. This work was crucial in progressing teaching and learning in the school, but again, there is a sense in which it was occurring on the edge of leadership.

Teacher leadership was included for consideration in this study because all the deputy principals taught at least two classes. They do not, however, readily fit the definitions of a teacher leader, most of which suggested that teacher leaders were "expert teachers who spend the majority of their time in the classroom (Muijs & Harris, 2003, p. 439). A distinction has been made between educational administrators and teacher leaders in terms of the scope and breadth of the nature of the curriculum and pedagogical responsibilities. Teachers focus on specific students and specific activities, administrators on the unity of the learning journey through the school (Starratt, 2003). This appeared to reflect how school operates. However, as previously noted, the deputies were not perceived to be automatically involved in significant curriculum visioning and oversight, or pedagogical development within the schools. Hence, using these definitions, not all the deputies could be categorised as teacher leaders or educational administrators.

### **6.11 The Impact of the Principal**

The impact of the principal on the role of the deputy has been documented by a number of earlier studies, (Ribbins, 1997; Southworth, 1994, 1995), but did not emerge strongly in the current research. The research questions, and hence discussions in the interviews, focussed on what the participants perceived to be the situation in the schools, not on why the situation existed. There were no principals amongst the informants. Comments on the expectations of principals, therefore, were not included in the data. The conclusions of the earlier studies about the extent of the impact of the attitude of the principal in determining the role of the deputy suggest, however, suggest that Lutheran school principals will need to understand and be committed to reconceptualising and redefining school leadership, including their own role, if there is to be a genuine move towards redefining the role of the deputy more effectively in leadership terms.

### **6.12 Summary**

The findings in this study suggest that the understandings of leadership in the role of the deputy principal are in a transitional phase. There is evidence that traditional bureaucratic assumptions about leadership still influence the expectations on the deputies' 'leadership' practice, but these are juxtaposed with other views. While the position of the deputy principal continues to emphasise management and organizational tasks, it will continue to attract candidates with a particular set of skills. These candidates may, or may not, also have strengths in emerging leadership areas.

To the extent that effective leadership in schools is related to work directly focused on the core business of the school of improving educational outcomes, the deputy principals (with one exception) were not understood to provide leadership or expected to.

The deputies were perceived to perform numerous organisational tasks and model values which facilitated successful progress towards the learning vision of the school, but they were often not heavily involved at a philosophical level

in driving the vision or concentrating on the development of teaching and learning in the school.

Distributed leadership is not a concept that is widely understood in school practice, except to the extent that it is reflected in the existence of a senior management team whose members occupy a variety of roles.

There were a number of ways in which the findings of the current study reflected those of earlier Australian studies of the deputy principal. For example, Cranston noted that “interpersonal skills” and “being an effective and efficient manager and administrator” (2006, p. 99), were considered to be important to the role of deputy principal. The deputy principals in the current study included these as part of their leadership role.

### **6.13 Recommendations – Reconceptualising Leadership**

The recommendations which follow are suggested as worthy of consideration, although the researcher is mindful of the limitations of the study, and, in particular, the small sample of only three schools. The systemic nature of the recommendations also suggests that the findings are generalisable within the Lutheran secondary school sector, although the problematic nature of such a generalization was acknowledged as a limitation of the study (Section 1.8). As such, all recommendations should be treated with caution, and system authorities may need to seek ways of confirming the conclusions, and the wisdom of the recommendations using a larger sample.

The role of the deputy principal in Lutheran schools is not generally perceived to encompass educational leadership which directly impacts on student outcomes. It is not part of a genuine model of distributed leadership. The underpinning assumptions about leadership are limiting.

Recommendation 1: That further professional development and system based dialogue take place, in order to educate school communities about alternative, and potentially more appropriate, leadership models, and change their expectations about the role of the deputy principal.

Existing principals in Lutheran secondary schools need to be active participants in the process of reconceptualising the leadership of the deputy principal. A broader understanding of leadership in the context of the deputy principal will ultimately benefit the principals as well as the deputies, and contribute to the well being of the schools, through less principal burn out, and greater effective leadership capacity in schools.

Recommendation 2: That principals be actively committed to the process of reconceptualising the leadership of the deputy principals in their schools. School councils and principals need to be encouraged to understand the potential for leadership in the role of the deputy principal, so that appropriate position descriptions can be developed and suitable candidates appointed. Lutheran schools are called to be schools of educational excellence (Christenson, 2004). It seems to follow logically that deputy principals should be professional educators. It is not good stewardship to structure the deputy's position in such a way that it does not encourage educational leadership. This is detrimental to developing the pool of principal candidates, but also denies schools an immediate source of educational leadership. School councils need to be encouraged to structure the deputy's position in such a way that it is attractive to candidates with educational leadership skills.

Recommendation 3: That system authorities encourage and equip school councils and school communities to seek out educational leaders for the position of deputy principal and to formulate the position in a way that is attractive to such candidates.

#### **6.14 Substantive Leadership**

The core substantive concepts of meaning, mission and identity are of critical importance in Lutheran schools. The schools are an agency of the church, and as discussed in Chapter 2, must be a place of educational excellence, and a location for the church to operate as church (Stolz, 2001). This dual purpose complicates the environment in which the schools operate, and the nature of appropriate leadership in the schools. As society demands more and

more of schools, it is a constant challenge to interpret and reinterpret what this means for a church school, without compromising its theological basis.

An area of potential tension between church and school, is the question of just who is responsible for determining how the church operates in the school. Bartel (2004) considered this in relation to the principal and the school pastor. References to the role of Pastors can be found in documentation from the mid 1980s, but recent official documents only go as far as to say the principal will “promote, enhance and extend the ministry of the LCA” (Lutheran Education Australia, 2001a, p. 2). This leaves unanswered the question of what characteristics of relevant ministry in schools are, as well as, on the surface at least, charging only the principal with the responsibility for ‘promoting, enhancing and extending’ it. What role then, does the deputy have in this? The current study suggested that the deputy’s role in defining and participating in the church being church in the school is often not significant, although some other elements of the substantive leadership role are. This has emerged as a challenging finding.

When the participants reflected on the leadership of the deputies, there was general agreement that part of their leadership involved modelling particular values or principles. These included, but were not restricted to, elements of their Christian faith. Some of the modelling, like the need to teach their classes well, related to the school as academic institution; some, like punctuality, related to the school as organisation. What did not seem to appear as strongly, was modelling that was related to the church being church in the school, noting that this is different from the deputies having a personal Christian faith.

There are mixed messages relating to this issue in the broader Lutheran school community. In Chapter 2 it was noted that LCA policy requires deputy principals in Lutheran schools to be Lutheran. In the same chapter, however, it was demonstrated that official documentation has historically made little reference to leadership in schools, and when it did, it was often a specific reference to the principal. This is likely to be a reflection of the rational,

hierarchical thinking about leadership, which was typical in schools at the times when the documents were composed. This speculation, however, drew comment from a peer mentor. "In my experience, I think we implicitly mean all leadership, but we say principal because to go further gets too complicated" (Personal Communication Rev. M Greenthaner, Member BLEA, May 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2006). This may be true, but in the current leadership climate it is not helpful. There is a tension here that appeared to manifest itself in this study. If the deputies are not really explicitly recognised as leaders involved in enhancing and extending the ministry of the LCA, why does it matter whether or not they are Lutheran? Or, expressed differently, if the deputies do not have a significant role in interpreting what it means to be the Lutheran church operating through a secondary school, why are they seen to require an active participation in a Lutheran congregation and to model a personal Christian faith? (Lutheran Education Australia, 2001a)

Many of the participants in this study, including some deputies, questioned the need for the person performing their day to day school role to be Lutheran. The deputies were aware that they operated and made decisions from a particular worldview, which in some cases was Lutheran, but they saw the Christian elements of that view as more significant than the particular Lutheran interpretation. All deputies and most key informants believed that principals in Lutheran schools needed to be Lutheran. The key difference in what is required of the two roles appeared to be related to the substantive ideas of Lutheran school identity, what it means to be a Christ-centred school and what role the church has in the school. The deputies appeared not to be perceived as having a strong role in symbolic leadership relating to the Christ-centred nature of the school.

With one exception, the deputy principals did not view themselves as having a significant leadership role in defining the Lutheran nature of the school. Where they were involved, this element was not seen as noteworthy by either the deputies or the key informants. The fact that the deputies were not involved in enrolment interviews, where the Lutheran nature of the schools is discussed with perspective parents, also appeared to weaken the need for them to be

intimately involved in establishing, maintaining and understanding the Lutheran nature and identity of the school. The deputy principals were highly visible, but perhaps the symbolic leadership they were attempting to portray was somewhat empty, and lacked the substance to “communicate the purposes, values and ideas that...help schools improve” (Sergiovanni, 2001, p. 28).

The role of the deputies in building Lutheran secondary schools around the themes of giftedness, freedom, faithful criticism, service/vocation and *paideia* (Christenson, 2004) also appeared to depend on the nature, emphases and insight of the individual deputies. The role did not require this involvement or even necessarily encourage it. The deputy who was most involved, actively sought out this participation, and even then was sometimes frustrated by the constraints placed on his work in this area by time, others’ expectations and the tendency for him to be overlooked.

The absence of strategic thinking or planning from the day to day role of the deputies may be related to this lack of involvement in some areas of substantive leadership. It was noted in Chapter 5 that, when the participants reflected on the leadership of the deputies and leadership in general, involvement in strategic thinking and planning was conspicuous by its absence. Unless it was assumed to be a part of vision, there was little understanding that leadership involved strategic planning. This lack of a role in strategic thinking and planning was consistent with the results of Cranston and his colleagues (2006; 2004).

### **6.15 The School Lifeworld**

Another element of the substantive life of the school was expressed by Sergiovanni as the cultural leadership force: the power of leadership derived from “building a unique school culture” (Sergiovanni, 1995, p. 88). Culture is the “range of expectations about what are proper and appropriate actions” (Bennett, 2003, p. 51). The leader helps create and maintain these cultural rules by seeking to define, strengthen and articulate the enduring values and beliefs that make the school unique. This is also a part of servant leadership,

which emphasises both identifying and protecting the core values of the organisation.

The lifeworld of the school includes the traditions, rituals and norms that define the school culture. Within a Lutheran school, this culture reflects the theological, as well as the educational, heritage of the school. The concept of the lifeworld of a school is not new in Lutheran schools, although it may have been identified by terms such as gospel-centred or Christ-centred. The lifeworld and culture of Lutheran schools is intimately connected with their Christ-centred basis, and, of course, their basic existence as an agency of the church. The findings were not clear about the extent of the deputies' involvement in this area. As noted in Chapter 5 (Section 5.5.9 and Table 5.2) there was general overlap between the way the deputies understood that they were leaders and Sergiovanni's (1995) five leadership forces. However, the links with the cultural force were expressed in terms of having and communicating high expectations. There is no doubt that these expectations were about proper and appropriate action in the school, so they are certainly cultural in focus. There is, however, an uncertainty about the basis of the expectations. It is beyond the scope of the current study to determine whether the expectations are the result of a conscious identification and protection of what the school values, or should value, or are the personal expectations and values of the deputy. However, this distinction is noted as potentially significant and is one component of the recommendations from the study.

Further areas which could be perceived in lifeworld terms, emerged from the data. One was the deputies' role in whole-school devotions. This was a very visible expression of the deputies' Christian faith, and regular corporate worship on a whole-school basis is a characteristic of most Lutheran schools. However, while two of the three deputies were regularly involved in the worship program of the school, the comment from another deputy is telling: "As a deputy I could be nowhere involved in devotion life and so, if I were a deputy and I moved onto head, I would see that (being Lutheran) as important". The extent of involvement in the worship program appeared to be left to the discretion of the deputy, and opting out was a perceived option for

this deputy. The expectation about this emerged as different for principals. Both deputy principals and key informants expected the principals to be involved in the worship program of the school.

Another area connected with the school culture, which also emerged, was pastoral care for staff. This has been discussed earlier. Lutheran schools are usually recognised within their local community for strong student pastoral care programs. The deputy principals often work in the area of pastoral care for staff. This is connected to their role in allocating relief lessons, a management task, which provides deputies with a particular insight into which staff are struggling (and why) at any one time. The deputies who performed this function perceived it as a management task, which occupied an extraordinary amount of their time. They were loathe, however, to give it up, because of the leadership it enabled them to show in working with staff who were experiencing health or other personal difficulties. To the extent that they were a key part of the pastoral care program for staff, the deputies were understood to be working at defining and protecting one of the core values of the school.

In Chapter 5 (Section 5.5.9) the work of the deputies in modelling a Christian faith was categorised as part of the symbolic force. This is the power of leadership derived from focusing the attention of others on matters of importance to the school (Sergiovanni, 1995). The cultural force follows from the symbolic force. The range of expectations about what is appropriate action within the school will follow from those things which are understood to be important. Something of a paradox emerges here. Through their role in Christian modelling, the deputies were clearly expected to provide a focus for this aspect of what the school stands for. The church also evidently expects this. However, the deputies were not automatically involved in the forums where the details of this are considered, or where they are regularly required to articulate the Lutheran nature of the school. They also sometimes lacked similar opportunities to articulate what is important educationally. The professional leadership opportunities, which were provided to deputies in

these areas, appeared limited. The deputies perceived the principals to have many more opportunities in this area.

### **6.16 Authentic Leadership**

More recent official LEA documents attempted to unpack the idea of authentic leadership. 'The Leadership Framework for Lutheran Schools'(Lutheran Education Australia, 2005c) states that it “supports an authentic perspective on leadership, in which the leader responds in faith and service to the love and claims of Christ” (p. 1). This statement indicates a system based preference for an authentic leadership model. It also immediately incorporates the elements of responsive faith and service that the current study suggests needs more realistic and comprehensive understanding in practice. The foundational leadership understandings in Lutheran secondary schools may not currently be sufficient to support a smooth transition to authentic (and distributed) leadership.

The leadership framework document suggested that authentic leadership is “centrally concerned with ethics and morality and with deciding what is significant, what is right and what is worthwhile” (p. 1). There is clear overlap here between this working definition and the ideas of substantive, symbolic and cultural leadership. Symbolic leadership involves focusing the attention of others on matter of importance to the school. This definition of authentic leadership refers to deciding ‘what is significant’. The current study indicates that participants understood that the deputy principals managed significant processes, but stopped short of suggesting they spend a lot of time determining what the significant aspects of the school really are. Involvement in this activity appeared to be more dependent on the interests and personalities of the individual deputies, than required by the role. As a result, as suggested earlier (Section 6.14), the symbols may be empty.

Another aspect of authentic leadership acknowledged in the leadership framework was the basis of its authority. “Authenticity in leadership derives its legitimacy from personal integrity, credibility and a commitment to ethical and moral conduct in leadership practice” (p. 1). Leaders are perceived to be

authentic through “actions and interactions that enshrine principles and standards incorporating values of honesty, fairness, compassion and integrity” (p. 1). The list of similar values compiled from the data (Section 5.6.2) was extensive: caring, understanding, helping, listening, mentoring, trusting, being supportive, approachable, providing wise counsel, relating to and valuing students, honesty, integrity, genuineness, gentleness, being measured and unflappable, respectful, patient and flexible. While this was a compilation, and not all the descriptors were used about any single deputy, it was apparent that the key informants perceived and described their deputies in terms of authentic leadership. They implicitly recognised an integration of mind, heart and soul, although the deputies had different personal strengths which may emphasise one over the other.

The terminology which can be found in the scholarly literature, but which was largely missing from this study, was that associated with ethical and moral behaviour and decision making. In the literature considered previously, the term ‘moral’ was used in a number of ways, although in essence all of them relate to the ability to distinguish right and wrong. The MPP documents refer to a moral disposition, and a commitment to “moral conduct in leadership” (Lutheran Education Australia, 2001a, p. 1), Moral authority can drive leadership practice (Sergiovanni, 1995), and this appears consistent with the idea that leadership is “purposeful human conduct, or behaviour, informed and guided by...morals...” (Hodgkinson, 1991, p. 25). As noted previously (Section 3.5.7) it is a moral act to define, articulate and demonstrate the practical implications of being a Christ-centred school. In Section 5.5.7 it was suggested that the absence of the language associated with moral leadership and personal morality may be explained if participants perceived it to be an inevitable part of Christian modeling. It is beyond the scope of the present study to explore this, but it would be useful to investigate it further, as many more recent conceptualisations of leadership use the word ‘moral’. Furthermore, it would be useful to ascertain more precisely what is meant by ‘Christian modelling’ in the 21<sup>st</sup> century Lutheran school context. In the interim there was an understanding amongst the key informants that the deputy

principal operated from a position of personal integrity, reliability and commitment to Christian practice.

Other aspects and definitions of authentic leadership considered in this study included an emphasis on “consciously reflective practices” (Begley, 2004, p. 4). The need for self reflection is apparent in these sources of the definition of authentic leadership. This was not strongly articulated in the current study, although it was possible to infer from the degree of ease with which participants responded to the more difficult questions which of them were more self reflective. Again, this appeared to be an aspect of the personalities of some deputies rather than an expectation, or understanding, inherent in the position.

Starratt (2004) suggested that authentic educational leadership “cultivates and sustains an environment that promotes the work of authentic teaching and learning” (p. 81). The deputies’ involvement in this form of leadership was considered in Section 6.10.

### **6.17 Summary**

Clearly the areas of substantive leadership, the lifeworld of the school and authentic leadership are closely related, and of critical importance to the core identity and purpose of schools. The extent and nature of the understanding of the deputies’ leadership in these areas varies considerably, and again it must be acknowledged that the small sample size may cause this diversity to be overemphasized, but there would appear to be potential in schools for the deputies to be more active in the more abstract elements of the school. There does not appear to be a consistent expectation that deputies will be involved in the strategic questions and planning regarding the role of the church, the nature of the Lutheran identity, curriculum and pedagogy. The role of the deputy does not automatically contain the elements which encourage this type of involvement on a significant level. The key informants did, however, understand the deputy principals as authentic leaders in the area of personal integrity.

### **6.18 Recommendations – Substantive Leadership**

The LCA requires that deputy principals in Lutheran secondary schools be Lutheran. The potential tension between sources of values provides one possible reason for this. It helps to blur the possible differences between the individual and organisational values. However, this is only necessary if the deputies are actually involved in guiding and protecting in a meaningful way, the core culture of the school. Does the deputies' role connect them to the deep lifeworld of the school? The findings here were inconclusive. This may be because in this study the particular elements of the lifeworld of the schools were not defined in order to ask direct questions about the deputies' roles in those areas. This may be useful in a further study. However, even without this, steps could be taken to encourage school councils and principals to intentionally include opportunities to dialogue about, and articulate, the Lutheran identity and role of the church in the position descriptions and daily activity of the deputy principals. A considerable amount of this type of discussion occurs in the Lutheran system, but it has traditionally (and in the current climate, unnecessarily) occurred in contexts which excluded the deputy principals. Expanding attendance at events such as principals' or pastors' conferences to include other leaders would appear to have merit.

Recommendation 4: That system authorities ensure that the lifeworld of Lutheran schools continues to be researched and articulated, including exploration of what modelling the Christian faith is perceived to mean.

Recommendation 5: That principals and councils intentionally and regularly provide opportunities for deputy principals to be involved in strategic planning, and to reflect, discuss and articulate the role of the church and Lutheran identity in schools.

Recommendation 6: That principals' and pastors' conferences be restructured in favour of more inclusive gatherings which enable all school leaders to become involved in dialogue about the Lutheran identity of system schools.

### **6.19 Servant Leadership**

The concept of servant leadership in Lutheran schools has the potential to draw together key doctrinal statements, leadership theory and Martin Luther's reflections on vocation, into a cohesive and practical understanding of effective Lutheran school leadership. However, this understanding does not appear to have been developed to date. Instead, servant leadership is in constant danger of being understood as servitude. This means the work might get done, but perhaps schools are not experiencing the full impact of the leadership potential of their deputy principals.

True servant leadership is relational and connected to distributed leadership. It involves followership, substantive leadership, and moral leadership. It develops other leaders. The results of this study (Section 5.5.6) indicated that this was not fully understood.

In a Lutheran context the understanding of the theology of the cross is crucial to a better understanding of servant leadership. When the whole life of Christ is considered, a fuller understanding of service is apparent. It involves all the elements of servant leadership noted previously; distributed leadership, followership, substantive leadership, moral leadership and developing other leaders.

Luther's understanding of vocation is also instructive here. Vocation is a concept of the kingdom of the left. It is not part of God's saving work, but it is part of God's work in caring for his creation. This does not undermine the importance of service, rather it helps to keep it in perspective.

A song, widely used in Lutheran circles, captures, in verse one, the duality of serving and being served.

The Servant Song  
Brother, let me be your servant  
Let me be as Christ to you  
Pray that I might have the grace to  
Let you be my servant, too  
Richard Gillard

(In All Together Again: A collection of Christian community songs)

Being a servant to others involves allowing them to serve you, but this duality has not been strong in the setting of school leadership. The limited understanding that service is a one-way process leads to at least two issues in Lutheran schools. Those serving become burnt out, and the followers are placed into a powerless, passive position. The current study contained more emphasis on understanding expectations on leaders than followers, although the connection between them is acknowledged. The participant deputy principals were not focussed on complaining about their workload, but elements they perceived to be 'service' appeared to be potentially overwhelming. Clerical support was available to them, but this assistance came from the general pool of school support staff, not a designated personal assistant. As a result, the deputies were reluctant to access clerical support. They felt their requests made more work for others. "We've been told these people are available...but I don't have a mindset for it. It's not easy for me to add to their workload". This mindset, along with an ingrained view of service as a one way process, may have been a contributing factor in limiting the full understanding, in a non theological sense, of what servant leadership is.

As discussed in Chapter 3 (Section 3.5.4), Greenleaf (1977) and Sergiovanni (1995) understood servant leadership to involve a fluid arrangement where leaders and followers change places and where followers are empowered to be leaders. Such an understanding seems to reflect the theological principle observed through the words of the song, and Christ's own example in allowing himself to be ministered to (see for example Mark 14:3-9). This is also

consistent with understandings of followership, not as a passive response to leadership, but as part of an active, creative relationship. To the extent that it is understood that leaders and followers influence each other over time, power-influence research (cited in Yukl, 1994) is relevant. However, only one of the deputies in the current study appeared to operate with the explicit expectation that part of the role was the development of leadership in others. This is significant, from the perspective of servant leadership, as well as from the direction in the official Lutheran system documents regarding an emerging awareness and understanding of distributed leadership.

Other elements of servant leadership are moral leadership, and highlighting and protecting of the values of the school. As there is overlap between these elements and substantive and authentic leadership, they were discussed in Sections 6.14 and 6.16.

## **6.20 Summary**

The current study suggests that there is a limited understanding of servant leadership which is influencing the perception and practice of some deputy principals. It would appear premature to think in terms of distributed leadership, while so many of the key elements are not yet fully incorporated into a comprehensive operational understanding of servant leadership.

## **6.21 Recommendations – Theology, Theory and Practice**

More fully developing the concept of servant leadership in a Lutheran context would provide a distinctive and appropriate basis for further development work in the area of distributed leadership. This, in turn, may contribute to the development of a model of leadership which is manageable and attractive for male and female leaders juggling the demands of complex school and personal environments.

Recommendation 7: That system authorities facilitate a formal drawing together of the relevant theological and current leadership principles relating to servant leadership.

Deputy principals must come to a personal understanding of the difference between servant leadership and servitude, and consider how they are able to change their current practice in response to this understanding. If the position of deputy principal is to develop more fully into a position of genuine leadership, deputies require professional development and school based opportunities to exercise leadership. They will need the support of the principal and school council in order to effectively reconceptualise their core practice into genuine and appropriate servant leadership.

Recommendation 8: That, in conjunction with recommendations 1-7, deputy principals acquire, and act out, a practical understanding servant leadership rather than servitude.

## **6.22 Summary of Recommendations**

The findings in this study suggest that the understandings of leadership in the role of the deputy principal in Lutheran secondary schools are in a transitional phase. School communities need to be educated about alternative, and possibly more appropriate, leadership models. School councils need to be encouraged to understand the potential for leadership in the role of the deputy principal, so that appropriate position descriptions can be developed and suitable candidates appointed.

In order for deputy principals to become more involved in substantive leadership and the school lifeworld, they need to be given opportunities and expected to engage in the dialogue between church and school about the purpose, role and function of the two related organisations. This will require some changes to the expectations within the schools and the districts as to which school leaders attend forums such as principals and pastors conferences.

With the move away from traditional understandings of bureaucratic, hierarchical leadership in schools, alternative conceptualisations have linked school leadership to student outcomes, teaching and learning. The deputies performed numerous organisational tasks and modelled values, which

facilitated successful progress towards the learning vision of the school, but were often not heavily involved at a philosophical level in driving the vision, or concentrating on the development of teaching and learning in the school. This witnesses clearly to what is valued in a deputy - the ability to make the logistics of ideas work. There will be staff whose gift is making the school day work. However, if this is all that is expected of deputies, an opportunity to increase the leadership capacity in schools is being overlooked.

The current study suggests that there is a limited understanding of servant leadership, which is influencing the perception and practice of some deputy principals. It would appear premature to think in terms of distributed leadership, while many key elements are not yet fully incorporated into a comprehensive operational understanding of servant leadership. Lutheran theology, the concept of vocation and leadership theory, appear likely to converge in a particular understanding of servant leadership, which would form a useful basis to develop distributed leadership in schools. It is in the interests of all Lutheran school leaders that this development work be done as a matter of urgency.

Taken all together, the above recommendations indicate that the position of deputy principal in Lutheran secondary schools does not generally appear to be providing as much appropriate preparation for the principalship as it could. This needs to be addressed at system-level, but most importantly, at school council and principal level.

### **6.23 Caveat**

As I reflect on the findings and conclusions of this research, it appears that many seem critical of current practice. I am grateful to the deputies, schools and other key informants who allowed me to interrupt their busy schedules and who spoke so openly about themselves and their schools. The research findings are not intended as a criticism of individual deputies. All the participants were steadfast staff members, who loved their schools and were committed to doing their jobs well. To this end they worked many hours. The tasks that the deputies were doing need to be done in schools. They were not

unnecessary, or superfluous to the effective operation of the school, but sometimes prevented the deputy from being focused on leadership. Furthermore, if the Lutheran school system is to move towards more fully understanding and implementing servant leadership, authentic leadership and distributed leadership, this will require a whole-school approach and shared conviction. The leadership of the deputy principal cannot be reconceptualised in isolation. This may be why the newer schools, which started with a different mindset about leadership, appear to have an advantage over those who first must convince whole communities to take a different view of the traditional roles.

This study is exploratory by nature and based on a very small sample. The findings and conclusions therefore, must be treated with caution. However, it suggests that in the current climate of schools today, system authorities and individual schools have much work ahead of them to respond with understandings of leadership that are both theoretically and theologically sound, as well as organisationally and personally practical. This represents a considerable challenge. For the well-being and future of the Lutheran school system in Australia, I hope this reconceptualisation will not be considered an insurmountable obstacle. To this end, I am encouraged by the wisdom of T.E.Lawrence,

All men dream; but not equally.  
Those who dream by night in the dusty recesses of their minds  
Awake to find that it was vanity;  
But the dreamers of the day are dangerous men,  
That they may act their dreams with open eyes to make it possible.  
T.E.Lawrence  
(cited in Bennis & Nanus, 1985, p. 27)

## **GLOSSARY**

This glossary provides a brief definition and at least one key reference for a number of leadership ideas which are part of the history of leadership thinking, but which were not crucial to the development of this study. Passing reference may have been made to these ideas in the text. The definitions are included in order of their historic development based on the key sources. Leadership concepts which are significant to the development of the study are defined within the text.

### **Great Man Theories**

These theories focus on the identification of unique qualities and characteristics of famous leaders. Early research in the field often viewed these superior qualities as biologically inherited. (Jennings, 1960)

### **Path-Goal Theory**

This theory assumes that leaders will motivate subordinates if they satisfy subordinates' needs on condition of good performance, and if they provide supports for subordinates to perform effectively. (House, 1971)

### **Leadership Styles**

This theory examines the patterns of behaviours that constitute action dispositions. Such styles are democratic or autocratic, permissive or restrictive, and participative or non participative. (Bass & Valenzi, 1974)

### **Transformational Leadership**

This theory emphasises two distinct types of exchange leadership; transformational and transactional. Transactional leadership involves rewards as a way of inducing compliance, while transformational leadership involves heightening the consciousness of followers through appeals to higher order values and morals. (Burns, 1978)

### **Purposing**

“The continuous stream of actions by the school’s formal leadership which has the effect of inducing clarity, consensus and commitment regarding the school’s basic purposes” (Vaill, 1984, p. 57).

### **Visionary**

Visionary leadership develops a mental image of a possible and desirable future state of the organisation which articulates a view of a realistic, credible, attractive future for the organisation. The leader provides the bridge from the present to the future of the organisation. (Bennis & Nanus, 1985)

### **Participative**

These theories of leadership examine the potential for participation of group members in various organisational processes. Such participation might involve decision making, consultation or power sharing. (D. Hayes, 1995)

### **Symbolic Leadership**

One of Sergiovanni’s five leadership forces, the symbolic force is the power of leadership derived from focusing the attention of others on matters of importance to the school. The leader models important goals and behaviours, and signals what is valued by his or her actions. (Sergiovanni, 1995, p. 87)

### **Emotional Intelligence**

Emotional intelligence is important for good decision making and successful and satisfying lives (Goleman, 1995). Emotions are seen as significant for organisational success, with workplace emotions and feelings necessary for managerial success. (Peters & Austin, 1985)

# APPENDICES

## Appendix A

### Human Research Ethics Committee Permission Letter

Australian Catholic University  
Brisbane Sydney Canberra Ballarat Melbourne



#### Human Research Ethics Committee

#### Committee Approval Form

Principal Investigator/Supervisor: Dr Halga Naughton - Melbourne Campus  
Co-Investigators: Dr Annette Schneider - Ballarat Campus  
Student Researcher: Ms Meryn Ruwoldt - Melbourne Campus

Ethics approval has been granted for the following project:  
The Deputy Principal: Is it a position of leadership? Understanding the meanings of leadership in the context of the Deputy Principal in the Lutheran Secondary School  
for the period: 19/01/05 - 01/02/08  
Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC) Register Number: V2004.06.23

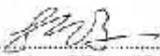
The following standard conditions as stipulated in the *National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Research Involving Humans* (1999) apply:

- (i) that Principal Investigators / Supervisors provide, on the form supplied by the Human Research Ethics Committee, annual reports on matters such as:
  - security of records
  - compliance with approved consent procedures and documentation
  - compliance with special conditions, and
- (ii) that researchers report to the HREC immediately any matter that might affect the ethical acceptability of the protocol, such as:
  - proposed changes to the protocol
  - unforeseen circumstances or events
  - adverse effects on participants

The HREC will conduct an audit each year of all projects deemed to be of more than minimum risk. There will also be random audits of a sample of projects considered to be of minimum risk on all campuses each year.

Within one month of the conclusion of the project, researchers are required to complete a *Final Report Form* and submit it to the local Research Services Officer.

If the project continues for more than one year, researchers are required to complete an *Annual Progress Report Form* and submit it to the local Research Services Officer within one month of the anniversary date of the ethics approval.

Signed:  Date: 19/01/05  
(Research Services Officer, Melbourne Campus)

## Appendix B

### Permission to conduct the study from the National Board for Lutheran Schools

**From:** Jericho, Adrienne [mailto:Adrienne.Jericho@lca.org.au]

**Sent:** Thursday, November 04, 2004 9:07 AM

**To:** mruwoldt@optusnet.com.au

**Subject:** Permission request

Merryn

I am pleased to inform you that the Board for Lutheran Education Australia resolved at its meeting on October 22<sup>nd</sup> 2004:

**RESOLVED** that BLEA grants permission for Merryn Ruwoldt to conduct research in Lutheran schools on the topic *The Deputy Principal: Is it a position of Leadership – Understanding the meanings of leadership in the context of the Deputy Principal in the Lutheran Secondary School*.

I wish you will in your research and will follow its progress with interest. Let me know if I can be of any further assistance.

**Adrienne**

*Adrienne Jericho*

*Executive Director*

***Lutheran Education Australia***

*Tel 61 8 8267 7318*

*Fax 61 8 8267 7320*

## Appendix C

### Information Letter for Participants

#### INFORMATION LETTER TO PARTICIPANTS

THE DEPUTY PRINCIPAL: IS IT A POSITION OF LEADERSHIP?

NAMES OF STAFF SUPERVISORS: Dr H Neidhart & Dr A Schneider

NAME OF STUDENT RESEARCHER: Merryn Ruwoldt

PROGRAMME: Doctor of Education (Educational Leadership)

Dear Participant,

I am writing to invite you to participate in a research project which I am conducting as part of my Doctorate in Education at ACU National.

The study focuses on the meanings attached to the concept of leadership in the context of the deputy principal in Lutheran secondary schools. Studies of deputy principals have consistently found that deputies occupy positions of great responsibility, but not necessarily leadership. The purpose of this study is to gain an understanding of how the role of the deputy principal is viewed in the Lutheran secondary school today. The deputy principal is defined as the person(s) designated as second in charge in a school, irrespective of their actual title. In-depth interviews with participants will be used to explore their perceptions of the ways the deputy is able to demonstrate leadership.

There are two categories of participants in this study, the deputy principals themselves, and informants identified by the deputies as colleagues able to critically observe and comment on their role in the school. No participants or schools will be named in the study. Every effort will be made to conceal your identity. However, you need to be aware that the intimate nature of the Lutheran system may result in an increased risk of identification.

The data will be collected using in-depth interviews with the participants. These will take place at your school during term time, or at a mutually convenient location and time. The interviews will be audio recorded and it is anticipated that each will take approximately one hour. Some participants may be invited to a further brief interview.

This study takes place with the support and consent of Lutheran Education Australia (LEA). Deputy principals have been selected by Lutheran Education Australia in consultation with the regional directors. Other participants have been nominated by the deputy principals and then selected at random by the principal supervisor. You are free to decline to participate in the study without having to justify that decision, or to withdraw consent and discontinue at any time without giving a reason. Research data collected for the study may be published or may be provided to other researchers in a form that does not identify the participants in any way.

Any questions regarding this project should be directed to the principal supervisor, Dr Helga Neidhart or to the student researcher, Merryn Ruwoldt.

Dr Helga Neidhart  
03 9953 3267  
[H.Neidhart@patrick.acu.edu.au](mailto:H.Neidhart@patrick.acu.edu.au)  
School of Educational Leadership  
Australian Catholic University  
Melbourne Campus  
Locked Bag 4115  
FITZROY, VIC 3065

Ms Merryn Ruwoldt  
[mru@luther.vic.edu.au](mailto:mru@luther.vic.edu.au)  
C/O School of Educational Leadership  
Australian Catholic University  
Melbourne Campus  
Locked Bag 4115  
FITZROY, VIC 3065

At the conclusion of the project, an electronic copy of the summary of findings will be made available to all participants.

This study has been approved by the Human Research Ethics Committee at Australian Catholic University. In the event that you have any complaint or concern about the way you have been treated during the study, or if you have any query that the Supervisor and Student Researcher have not been able to satisfy, you may write to the Chair of the Human Research Ethics Committee.

Chair, HREC  
C/o Research Services  
Australian Catholic University  
Melbourne Campus  
Locked Bag 4115  
FITZROY, VIC 3065  
Tel: 03 9953 3157  
Fax: 03 9953 3315

Any complaint or concern will be treated in confidence and fully investigated. The participant will be informed of the outcome.

If you agree to participate, you should sign both copies of the consent form, retain one copy for your records and return the other copy to the student researcher.

Thank you for considering involvement. I look forward to talking with you further as the process unfolds.

Ms Merryn Ruwoldt  
Student Researcher

Dr Helga Neidhart  
Principal Supervisor

**Appendix D**

**Consent Form for Participants**

CONSENT FORM

THE DEPUTY PRINCIPAL: IS IT A POSITION OF LEADERSHIP?

NAMES OF SUPERVISORS: Dr Helga Neidhart & Dr Annette Schneider

NAME OF STUDENT RESEARCHER: Ms Merryn Ruwoldt

PROGRAMME: Doctor of Education (Educational Leadership)

I .....(the participant) have read and understood the information provided in the Letter to Participants. Any questions I have asked have been answered to my satisfaction. I agree to participate in an indepth interview and, if required, follow up discussion. I realize that I can withdraw at any time. 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:.....  
(block letters)

SIGNATURE..... DATE  
.....

I.....(Name of Participant) give my permission/do not give my permission (Delete that which is not applicable) for the interview to be audio recorded.

SIGNATURE OF PRINCIPAL SUPERVISOR.....

DATE:.....

SIGNATURE OF STUDENT RESEARCHER.....

DATE:.....

This copy to be retained by the participant.

## Appendix E

### Consent Form for Researcher

#### CONSENT FORM

THE DEPUTY PRINCIPAL: IS IT A POSITION OF LEADERSHIP?

NAMES OF SUPERVISORS: Dr Helga Neidhart & Dr Annette Schneider

NAME OF STUDENT RESEARCHER: Ms Merryn Ruwoldt

PROGRAMME: Doctor of Education (Educational Leadership)

I .....(the participant) have read and understood the information provided in the Letter to Participants. Any questions I have asked have been answered to my satisfaction. I agree to participate in an indepth interview and, if required, follow up discussion. I realize that I can withdraw at any time. 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:.....  
(block letters)

SIGNATURE..... DATE  
.....

I.....(Name of Participant)  
give my permission/do not give my permission (Delete that which is not applicable)  
for the interview to be audio recorded.

SIGNATURE OF PRINCIPAL SUPERVISOR.....

DATE:.....

SIGNATURE OF STUDENT RESEARCHER.....

DATE:.....

This copy to be returned to the researcher.

## Appendix F

### Brief description of the project as provided to the Australian Catholic University and the study participants

#### Introduction

This study focuses on the meanings key informants attach to the concept of leadership, in the context of the deputy principal in Lutheran secondary schools. Studies of deputy principals have consistently found that deputies occupy positions of great responsibility, but not necessarily leadership. The scholarly literature indicates that school leaders act in an increasingly complex environment, where models which view leadership as residing solely in the principal, are unlikely to be effective.

History has provided a number of recurring, interwoven leadership narratives. The purpose of this study is to explore the understandings of leadership embedded in the role of the deputy principal in Lutheran secondary schools. It is anticipated that these understandings will reflect one or more of the narratives. This will enable discussion about where the current understandings are placed in relation to contemporary thinking about leadership.

Research in the Lutheran school system in Australia is limited. Research on leadership has centred on the principal. This study focuses on the deputy principal. This is timely in a period of sustained system growth, where the provision of a suitable pool of principal candidates is a significant concern. The leadership experiences and opportunities of the deputy principals contribute directly to the ongoing health and viability of the school system.

#### Research Design

Lutheran schools share a common heritage and theological context. A constructionist, symbolic interactionist approach enables the importance of these factors to be taken into account. In particular, the pervasive influence of Lutheran theology is considered. The research will take the form of a multi site case study. A number of key informants, including the deputy principals, will participate in an in-depth interview. The data will be considered by reference to recognized leadership narratives.

#### Theoretical Framework

<b>Epistemology ⇒</b>	<b>Theoretical ⇒ Perspective</b>	<b>Methodology ⇒</b>	<b>Methods</b>
Constructionism	Symbolic Interactionism	Instrumental case study	Interviews

This study explores the expectations about leadership embedded in the role of the deputy principal in a Lutheran secondary school. It does not assume that there is a single, objective understanding common to all schools, or even that the deputy principals will have the same understanding as other key informants. The study does however, recognize the relevance and importance of the Lutheran cultural context. Consequently it is grounded in a constructionist epistemology.

For the purposes of this study symbolic interactionism appears to be a useful theoretical perspective. The core principles can be summarised as meaning, language

and thought. Meaning is central to human behaviour because human action follows from the meanings which are assigned to things. Language gives humans a means by which to negotiate meaning through symbols, and thought, or internal dialogue, enables one to select, check, and review meanings in the light of the situation

The chosen methodology is an instrumental case study. This methodology is appropriate as this study is focused on the specific issue of leadership at the level of the deputy principal in Lutheran secondary schools, rather than on the particular case of the role of the deputy principal. A multi site approach has been chosen. Cross-case analysis is used to enhance generalisability, and to deepen understanding and explanation (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 173). A multi site approach in this study allows an exploration of whether there are common trends among schools, or whether the findings are localized and case specific.

This research is certainly a study of people's understanding of the meanings (of leadership) in their lived world. Participants will be asked to describe their experiences and elaborate their own perspective. For these reasons indepth interviews are an appropriate method to use in this study. A thematic analysis of the data will follow the interviews.

### **General Research Questions**

The general research question underpinning this study is: What are the leadership expectations embedded in the current role of the deputy principal in Lutheran secondary schools? The question includes both leadership expectations and understandings that deputy principals have of their own role, as well as those that others in the school community have of them. Stated, covert expectations and understandings, and underlying, unstated, but assumed expectations and understandings are relevant. The deputy principals are clearly in a good position to reflect on their role in leadership in the school in which they work. Consequently, the first specific research question is: In what ways do the deputy principals perceive that they exercise leadership in their school? (Do they perceive that their day to day activities assist or hinder them in showing leadership?)

There is then a need to consider this data in relation to the narratives of leadership which have been identified in the literature review. The next research question therefore becomes: How do the deputy principals understand leadership? Which, if any, of the identified leadership narratives do these understandings reflect?

It is also necessary to hear the voice of the school community. This will serve the dual role of verifying (or failing to verify) data obtained from the deputy principals, and providing information about the communal leadership expectations of the role from a member of the school community. The third research question follows logically: In what ways do the key informants perceive that the deputy principal exercises leadership in the school? The fourth specific question follows as before: How do the key informants understand leadership? And, in order to categorize these understandings: Which, if any, of the identified leadership narratives do these understandings reflect?

Finally, consideration must be given to whether the views of the deputy principals coincide with, or differ from, those of the key informants. The final question enables

this. What are the significant similarities and differences in the understanding(s) of the leadership expectations between deputy principals and other key informants?

## **Appendix G**

### **Interview questions common to all interviews**

The interviews were semi structured. After initial the introduction and explanation of recording procedures, all interviews began with Question 1 and the associated follow up action. The other questions were asked at some stage during the interview. This occurred either when the topic arose in the discussion, or when the participants indicated that they had concluded their comments in a particular area.

#### **Question 1**

What are the things that you think are important to XXX College? What does it value?

#### **Follow Up**

Okay. What I'm going to do now is take you back to each of those things one at a time, and talk about your (or the deputy's) leadership role in each of those. Let's start with XXX. Can you think of a time where you (or the deputy) you showed leadership in relation to the XXX of the school?

#### **Question 2**

What do you think leadership is?

#### **Question 3**

What are the things that encourage leadership in your (the deputy's) role?

#### **Question 4**

What do you think are the things about the way your (or the deputy's) role is structured here that prevent you from being the leader you would like to be?

#### **Question 5**

One researcher recently quoted a head as saying that there are three aspects of the role of the deputy principal. There first one is filling in for her when she is not there, the second one is being involved in opportunities to be a leader as a practice for being a principal, and the third one is being a general dogsbody that does everything. Discuss each of these aspects in terms of how well they describe your (or the deputy's) role.

#### **Question 6**

You'd know that the LCA more or less requires that its deputy principals are Lutheran. How fundamentally important do you think this is, and why?

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