The Servant
Leadership Role of Catholic High School Principals
Joseph Nsiah and Keith Walker

There is a world-wide thirst for authentic leaders who are somehow able to create school learning communities characterized by the purveyance of flourishing faith, hope, and love. Servant-leadership for Catholic school principals is considered one of the most meaningful and effectual callings imaginable. Informed by conversations with six exemplary servant leaders, this book explores the servant-leadership vocation of Catholic school principals. The culmination of conversational framework emphasizes the importance of personal identity and faith formation as foundational to the exercise of authentic servant-leadership. As each Catholic school community lives out its unique features, signature history, a particular call to meet community needs, and its leader-shaped personality, this book serves to remind educators to clarify and sharpen their service toward the common mission of Catholic schooling.
The relevance of servant leadership in the Catholic school principalship is demonstrated through the experiences, insights, narratives and expertise of the principals and then synthesized with conceptual reflections. An underlying theme in this book is that the exercise of servant-leadership provides hope for followers because of its exceptional interest in helping all constituents develop their own capacities, capabilities and potentials such that each person becomes a servant leader.
THE SERVANT
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Joseph Nsiah
and
Keith Walker
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THE BOOK IN A NUTSHELL

This book explores the servant-leadership role of Catholic high school principals, informed by our conversations with six exemplary servant leaders in that role and by our review of the literature on the subject. Family background, professional and extra-curricular experiences, and priests were important sources of their notions of servant-leadership. Principals’ faith in Jesus Christ, and the positive outcomes of their Faith-informed professional practice motivated their servant-leadership.

We will say at the outset that we believe servant-leadership is well practiced outside of the Faith Community but the Catholic school settings provide both the particular context for our background research and our descriptions in this book. This said, our readers will notice that our culminating conceptual frameworks emphasize the personal identity formation and faith identity in Jesus Christ as foundational for authentic servant-leadership in the context of Catholic high schools. Accordingly, childhood experiences, mental models, passions, motivations, and professional convictions serve as antecedents to the identity formation of principals and variously propelled these dedicated persons towards the effective and authentic practice of servant-leadership. We delineate five aspects of servant-leadership: faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, community-inspired vision, relational credibility, sustained trust, and service. Service is identified as the culminating dimension of their work, with the understanding that servant-leadership is established and strengthened in the very act of a high school principal’s rendering of service. Servant-leadership for Catholic school principals is considered one of the most meaningful and effectual callings imaginable.

This book is based on findings from our study of servant-leaders, wherein the signifying and inspiring qualities of servant-leadership were explored, including: altruism, patience, compassion, caring for the interests and growth of followers, living by example, and the unselfish desire to serve others. Additional fruits of servant-leadership that we identified were empowerment and respect for followers, establishment of healthy relationships, support for one another, collaborative leadership, offering constituents different possibilities for development, community building, self-sacrifice of the leader for his/her community, and the servant-leader’s representative of the idea and ideals of service to members of the school community.

Strategies for success in the kind of servant-leadership advocated in this book include: tenacity of purpose, respect for all in the school community, fostering collaboration, care and trust of followers, and avoidance of needless reprimands in the event of failure. An underlying theme is that servant-leadership provides hope for followers because of its exceptional interest in helping them develop their potentials and grow to become leaders.

We assert the need for policies requiring principals of Catholic high schools to be practicing Catholics and to pattern their servant-leadership practices on the servanthood of the Lord Jesus Christ. We have provided several models or heuristics for
understanding and practicing servant leadership but none of these will be efficacious without “looking to Jesus, the Author and Finisher of our faith” (Hebrews 12). True servant leadership is about having a dynamic and transforming relationship with Jesus and being empowered by the Holy Spirit. We emphasize the importance of understanding and aligning one’s agentic leadership attitudes and practices to the educational mandate and mission of the Church. Second, we encourage formal and informal policy that will support superintendents of Catholic school districts to make intentional choices to promote servant-leadership in their school jurisdictions, at all levels and with all those involved in the learning communities. We advocate servant leadership as a school system ideal for personal and professional development, performance expectations and as a measure for Catholic school leadership. We believe that creating a culture and expectation of servant leadership for all school leaders (whether parents, students, staff, teachers, or school-based administrators) is important. Third, using vivid servant-leadership symbols as a way of making a lasting impression on new principals during the hiring process is a practice worth developing and sustaining. Fourth, superintendents, principals, and chaplains continued practice of being exemplary servant-leaders is a means to inspire new and other leaders.

This book is about servant leadership as ideally expressed in the lives of leaders in Catholic high schools. We have gained the “hands-on” insights of six principals who are the main contributors to this book. We think their lives and work warrant our attention. We have much to learn from their stories and insights. We have sorted through our conversations with these women and men, and attempted to convey the themes and the richness of their generously provided experiences and practiced wisdom. The book is divided into four sections. At the beginning of each section, we highlight some of the content contained in the chapters.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Writers often depend upon other people to successfully complete their efforts. We wish to express our appreciation to people we describe as servant-leaders support of us. Without their generosity and dedication, this book would not have been possible.

We wish to thank educational experts Drs. Sheila Carr-Stewart, Brian Noonan, John Rigby, Dave Burgess and Fred Renihan for offering valuable comments to this work. We would acknowledge the reviews and insights of Delmer Wagner, former Director of Education of Trinity School Division, Doug Robertson, Director of Education of Lloydminster Catholic School Division, Gwen Keith, former Director of Education for Yellowknife Catholic and Regina Catholic School systems, Jerry Zimmer, former Director of Education for Saskatoon Catholic School Division and Superintendent of St. Albert School District, Rob Currie, Director of Education – Regina Catholic School Division, and Terry Fortin, former Director of Education Prince Albert Catholic & Superintendent of Edmonton Catholic system.

Words cannot fully express our gratitude to the superintendents who permitted our contact and engagement with the six principals. We wish to convey heartfelt
gratitude to our co-researchers, the six will high school principals, for their insights, precious time, kindness, candor and willingness to share their experiences and reflections of servant leadership in action. We were basically their scribes and messengers; as now they humbly and respectfully offer advice and encouragement to other school leaders who join with them in the aspiration of becoming more effective and authentic servant leaders to their learning communities. From the beginning we had hoped to honour the best of these leaders’ ideas and observed actions but have been somewhat limited to do so, in detail, because of our promises and necessary conditions of providing anonymity to principals, their schools and school system. To these anonymous but well-known and loved persons: May God continue to richly bless you and continue to make you a blessing to those you serve.

Father Joseph’s specific acknowledgement to: Bishop Albert LeGatt and the entire diocese of Saskatoon, who deserve his most profound gratitude for the support and opportunity to stay in the diocese. He acknowledges with gratitude, the moral support of all the parishioners of St. Philip Neri (Saskatoon). He expresses heartfelt gratitude to Bishop Gabriel Mante, his Bishop in Ghana for allowing him to stay five years outside the diocese of Jasikan. To Jane Preston, thank you for being a wonderful and caring colleague. To Dr. Frank Vella, Rick Murza, and Heather Hickey (parishioners of St. Philip Neri), who equally deserve Father Joseph’s thanks for their support. To Fr. (Dr.) Ephraim Mensah who has been of immense encouragement to Father Joseph. To Mgr. J. Bluysen-Missiefonds of DAs-Hertogenbosch, and the Bresillac Foundation, both in the Netherlands for providing Dr Nsiah with financial support. To Sue and Ray Ruszczynski of Port Huron, USA, “May God, in His infinite benevolence, reward and thank you for all the support during my entire stay in Canada,” says Father Joseph.

Keith Walker’s specific encouragement: To his wife Viv, who provided him the time and space during their sabbatical travels to work on this manuscript. As parents, Keith and Viv have experienced almost 50 years of accumulated Catholic school experiences through their four children and their schools. They’ve experienced highs and lows, but mainly they’ve seen the Catholic school system working according to mission through dedicated and servant-like educator-leaders. To Father Joseph for his willingness to invite Keith into this writing journey, as a part of his mission to make a different in the world for Christ through educational leadership, Keith says “thank you.” Like Dr. Nsiah, Keith is grateful for all the personal and professional support he receives: From the Department of Educational Administration, Headed by Dr. Sheila Carr-Stewart and the Johnson Shoyama Graduate School of Public Policy, lead by Dr. Michael Atkinson (both servant leaders). The University of Saskatchewan has been Keith’s academic home for over 20 years – he attests to having been extremely well supported by colleagues and the institution, itself. Finally, Keith acknowledges the company of Drs. Berg, Sanga, Donlevy, Scharf, Barnes, McIntire, Manoia, Ralph, and Stanford with whom he has been able to think through some of the servant leadership concepts and issues . . . A great community of scholars to have as friends.

We both give thanks for the privilege of the transforming friendship we each have with Jesus Christ.
THE INTENDED AUDIENCE FOR THE BOOK

This book is not intended as an academic treatise on ethics nor classical ethics; but rather as a tool to be used by instructors and students of ethics who are concerned with having a firm grounding of the main concepts and processes involved with ethical discernment. It will be apparent to the reader that this book is intended for use by those in education as the plays and the cases take place in educational settings. Indeed, as will be noted later in this book, some of the issues which will be considered relate specifically to the duty of care owed to the children in schools and fundamental fairness owed to those in the educational community. However, ethical analysis – that is the process by which one arrives at an ethical decision which is at the core of this book – may be applied to any ethical issue facing an individual, a group, or an institution. One can argue whether or not there are universal ethical values but one cannot argue that it is possible to avoid making ethical decisions, that is, decisions between what one considers good and bad, and at times, bad and bad. Further, institutional decisions produce consequences for the decision-maker which she or he must live with both in the private and in the public square.

Therefore, although this book has been primarily written for school teachers and school administrators, it will be found useful by many others should they wish to know more of how one can utilize ethical reasoning in dealing with ethical decision-making in their personal and public lives.
SECTION 1

INTRODUCTION TO SERVANT LEadership
IN CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOLS

Section one provides what we believe to be some necessary context setting considerations for this book. After all, the notion of servant leadership in Catholic high schools affords opportunity to set forth some distinctive and situated understandings for both those within the Catholic tradition and those readers who might consider themselves outside the Catholic domain. Background contexts and understandings help us interpret the words spoken and written words shared; so in this section we provide a number of “briefings” on the Catholic and leadership context of this book. Those who may not be familiar with the education and Catholic high school sector should know that education and forms of schooling do vary in expression throughout the planet. Our principals, and the schools they served, are located in Canada. Again, each province and territory in Canada is unique in certain ways. For these reasons we have taken some space to provide some thoughts, descriptions and connections to the mission, the agency of Catholic schools to the mission of the Church and to the respective roles of various groups (i.e., parents, Church community, teachers/staff) within Catholic schools. By no means do we wish to be exclusive in these declarative statements at the beginning of this book. The contexts of the book may be just as relevant and appropriate for elementary principals and post-secondary educational administrators as to high school principals. Further, we think that leadership is typically and ideally dispersed or distributed in organizations; so the ideas, insights and inspirations of these words may have just as much use to the classroom teacher or school secretary.

We hope teachers, staff, parents, and community members will learn from these pages, should they pick this book up. Many human services professionals will resonate with the ideas and experiences presented here. In fact, we would not be surprised if, having read this book, any leader or follower benefits from hearing from these Catholic high school principals. This book tunes into the best of human experiences, in the service of others. We like to see more of this and have given lots of attention to what is working for these principals. This may give the text a pollyanna or sanguine feel to it but this, if experienced, was not our attention. We’ve just focused on the positive aspects of servant leadership that is working well (for our purposes,

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1 We constantly struggle with what to call followers, those served, constituents and those in the community being led. We’ve used numerous ways of describing or labeling these persons or groups and do so in a fashion that always has in mind their dignity, co-equality, and our upmost sense of respect. Usually we are referring to respective roles, leaders with Others.
SECTION 1

not wanting to be distracted by elaborating on the “warts,” messy interactions and imperfections that MUST be assumed in every, yes, “every” situation and context where servant leadership is exercised). The first section introduces some basic ideas around extant leadership theories, and the relationship of these to servant leadership. We finally say a few words about our approach to collecting insights from Catholic high school principals and who these people are, together with some brief descriptors of their school and school system contexts.
CHAPTER 1

THE MISSION FOCUS OF CATHOLIC EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP

The mission of Catholic school leadership is focused on the good of human beings, in all aspects of their lives (Sullivan, 2001). This is not different from the Church’s mission of ultimate salvation for all humankind (Wallace, 2000). In order to better fulfill their responsibilities, Mulligan (2005) suggested that Catholic school leaders need to constantly ask themselves whether or not their followers are reaching their potential; that is, learning, serving, and achieving their goals? The relevance of Catholic educational leadership depends on its contribution to the mission of the Church and to the good of followers and it is definitely not for aggrandizement of its leaders. Catholic school leaders need to be willing to commit themselves, wholly, to Catholic education and to assure the transmission of Catholic culture and beliefs to future generations (Hunt, Oldenski, & Wallace, 2000). These leaders need to be spiritually attuned, fully alive to Christ and His work in the world. According to Hunt, Oldenski, and Wallace, through this kind of commitment, they “guarantee that Catholic schools will continue to be a means of transforming society from the perspective of peace, justice, and love in order to ameliorate the plight of the poor and victims of oppression and injustices” (p. 2).

The mission of Catholic educational leadership and the inestimable value of servant-leadership (see the leadership shown by Jesus, depicted in the New Testament book of in Philippians, Chapter 2) can be examined through what is sometimes called “the security triangle of home, school and church.” We will say a bit here about mission and Catholicism before unpacking the security triangle.

Mission

The meaning of the word mission is generally determined by the context and the vision for which it is used. Mission signifies an aim, a duty, an undertaking, a task, a responsibility, an activity, or a function. For the Catholic Church, it signifies the responsibility of all believers in spreading the Gospel (Ordo, 2009). This is the purposeful activity of Gospel work – work commissioned by Christ. Catholic educational institutions play a vital role in the Church’s primary mission of evangelization. Schools are integral agents in the mission of the Church (Pope Benedict; The National Congress, 1992). Catholic institutions may be viewed as places of encounter with the living God who, in Jesus Christ, reveals his transforming love and truth (Pope Benedict XVI, 2008). According to Belmonte and Cranston (2009), schools reflect the holiness of the Church, their distinguishing marks being in their
“… religious character and mission … [that identifies them] as agencies that help to hand on Catholic religious traditions” (p. 295). The implication is that leaders in Catholic schools ought to exercise leadership in ways that compliment the mission of the Church and that seeks to promote the pursuit of holiness on the part of staff, students and school families.

The mission of Catholic schools, as enunciated in various Church documents, has been well summarized (Grace, 2000) as follows:

- Education in the faith (as part of the saving mission of the church);
- Preferential option for the poor (to provide educational service to those most in need);
- Formation in solidarity and community (to live in community with others);
- Education for the common good (to encourage common effort for the common good); and
- Academic education for service (knowledge and skills: a means, not an end).

These five points indicates that faith plays an important role in Catholic education and that Catholic school leaders need to demonstrate their faith by living it (Miller, 2007). Ideally, Catholic education has a holistic, non-discriminatory view of education for all who wish to avail themselves of it. Community formation is important because living in community helps in the cultivation of solidarity with others. The common good of humanity cannot be divorced from Catholic education. Groome (2002) pointed out that “Common does not mean totalitarian, as if the group counts for everything. Rather, the good served is common precisely because society serves the personal good of every member” (p. 119). Catholic education leaders must understand the need for the “whole-person” formation of students (academically, socially, physically and spiritually) for the enhancement of humankind and to further God's salvific purposes.

Using Christ and Scripture as its foundation, The Congregation for Catholic Education (1977) described the mission of Catholic schools as follows:

The Catholic school is committed … to the development of the whole man, since in Christ, the Perfect Man, all human values find their fulfillment and unity. Herein lies the specifically Catholic character of the school. Its duty to cultivate human values in their own legitimate right in accordance with its particular mission to serve all men has its origin in the figure of Christ. He is the One who ennobles man, gives meaning to human life, and is the model which the Catholic school offers to its pupils. (para. 35)

For those who assume leadership in Catholic schools, this statement implies that they must be aware that Catholic education is concerned with the good of the person, that Christ is the mission of Catholic education and He is the divine force who inspires and enables the school leader. Catholic education aims to give meaning to the lives of students through the fostering of human values and appropriating the grace of Christ into their lives. Catholic education does not serve itself but serves the people who participate in it (Woodard, 2009). This means that Catholic education leaders
THE MISSION FOCUS OF CATHOLIC EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP

perceive each person as important and that the ‘dignity of the person’ principle dictates the leader’s spirituality, morality, and justice commitments (Grace, 2002). Catholic school leaders need to read the signs of the times, so as to be able to appropriately respond to the needs of the Church and the world in fulfillment of the Church’s educational mission (Gaudium et spes, 1965).

Canon 795 explained that true education must strive for complete formation of human persons; looking to their final end as well as to the common good of society. This requires raising of children and youth in ways that enables them to develop their physical, moral, and intellectual talents that leads them to attain a good sense of responsibility and of right use of freedom so as to be equipped to actively participate in society. This is why the formation advocated for Catholic educational institutions is holistic (Gravissimum educationis, 1965) and why morality is seen as an integral component (Grace, 2000). Miller (1990) argued that this holistic approach to the education of students means that “human experience is integrated; we cannot isolate facets of children’s lives without doing violence to their healthy development. Children do not simply learn through their minds, but through their feelings and concerns, their imaginations and their bodies” (p. 153). This calls for leadership to place a premium on the moral development of students and the school community for the good of society in general, since “The Catholic … ‘mission’ for education is the moral nature of God and the Church” (Arthur, 1998, p. 50).

The emphasis on moral education and respect for the human dignity of students does not disregard academic rigour (Woodard, 2009). Instead, The National Congress (1992) reminded Catholic school leaders that “Catholic schools are called to be models of academic excellence and faith development” (p. 21). These schools contribute to the evangelization work of the Church, by being transmitters of the Good News (Gravissimum educationis, 1965). For Catholic education, academic accomplishment is not an end in itself but a venture serving a purpose (Grace, 1999). In short, Catholic education leaders should promote an education that becomes a means for the salvation and sanctification of all involved.

The United States Catholic Conference (1976) exhorted the Catholic school leadership to consider adopting a wide-ranging approach to youth ministry so as to promote student growth, participation, and empowerment (for example through retreats, prayer and worship, community service, and social action experiences for students). To such approaches Heft and Davidson (2003) added liturgical celebrations, plays, and leadership training. These provide students with a language and forum to comprehend and express their faith.

At Vatican II, the Church Fathers invited Christians, and non-Christians to send their children to Catholic schools (Gravissimum educationis, 1965); while pointing out that no one who chooses to attend a Catholic school is to embrace the Christian faith against his/her own will. This respect and universal invitation for the religious freedom of non-Catholics confirms that the mission of Catholic education is for all of humanity, and this same mission must be the concern of every Catholic educational leader (Mulligan, 2005). If Catholic school leadership is to be relevant, it must promote the mission of the Church.
In the literature on Catholicism, the meaning of the word ‘Catholic’ is complex and has changed over the centuries. Frequently its use carries diverse understandings from different periods in the history of the Catholic Church. While ‘Catholic,’ with reference to allegiance to the Papacy may connote isolation, sectarian, elitist, discriminatory, and distinctiveness (Groome, 1996), the word’s etymology broadens its meaning and, ironically, signifies inclusiveness and universality. ‘Catholic’ means ‘general or universal’ and is derived from belonging to the whole in Greek (Sullivan, 1995); coming from a combination of the words kath holou, ‘according to the totality’ or ‘in keeping with the whole,’ for short ‘universal’ (Redford, 1999).

The names that Christian Churches attribute to themselves generally reflects what they believe about themselves, and what they profess is important (Redford, 1999). The various ways the Catholic Church interpreted the term over the centuries reflects her beliefs and ways of viewing her relationship with other Christians, non-Christians, all of humanity, and her education. In relation to the Papacy, the term marks the distinctive divide between the Catholic Church and other Christian churches and traditions (McBrien, 1980). Interpretation of the term in broader terms implies there are common grounds. These common grounds include respect for human dignity, freedom and justice, a radical openness to all truth and to every value, and salvation for all of God’s children. Catholicism identifies with other churches and with all of humanity where these hunger for truth, dignity, and freedom (McBrien, 1980).

Before Vatican II, the Catholic Church took a more inward looking and self-protective posture with regard to the world. Distinctiveness was interpreted with clearly marked borders that tolerated no ambiguity regarding who was inside and who was outside the Church. Catholics were encouraged to refrain from external influences that might contaminate their faith. Similarly, Catholic schools isolated themselves from outside influences (Sullivan, 2001).

However, at Vatican II, because of their developed understanding of human existence and of education, the Church Fathers considered all believers in Christ, who have been truly baptized, as being in communion with the Catholic Church (Lumen gentium, 1964). Since then, the Catholic Church has not hesitated in sharing her faith and beliefs with people of other faiths and with anyone willing to share her convictions (Byk, Lee, & Holland, 1993). Inclusiveness does not mean that the Church harbours intentions of converting those enthusiastic about sharing in the benefits of the Catholic faith (Gravissimum educationis, 1965); but rather inclusiveness stems from Catholic schools’ commitment to educate students of different economic, cultural, religious, racial, and ethnic backgrounds (The National Congress, 1992).

Distinctiveness and inclusiveness function in tension with each other and both are needed for Catholic education that has integrity (Sullivan, 2001). The distinctiveness of ‘Catholic’ has meaning for education as it determines the identity of Catholic education (Groome, 1999), since:

… the distinctiveness of Catholic education is prompted by the distinctive characteristics of Catholicism itself, and these characteristics should be reflected
in the whole curriculum of Catholic schools. By ‘curriculum’ [it is meant] the content taught, the process of teaching, and the environment of the school. (p. 107)

Miller (2007) added that inclusiveness must go hand-in-hand with keeping the strengthening of the Catholic identity of Catholic schools on the front burner. Drawing from Gilkey (1975), Groome (1996) identified five distinctive characteristics of the Catholic understanding of human existence and of education:

- its positive anthropology of the human person;
- its sacramentality of life;
- its communal emphasis regarding human and Christian existence;
- its commitment to tradition as source of its story and Vision; and
- its appreciation of rationality and learning, epitomized in its commitment to education. (p. 108)

For Groome, these characteristics had the following implications. First, a positive anthropology of the human person admits the potential of the human being to sin, but maintains that human beings are fundamentally more good than evil. As a result, Catholic education affirms essential goodness of all students by promoting their worth and dignity and respecting their basic rights in ways that help them develop their gifts to the fullest (Long & Schutloffel, 2006). Additionally, Catholic education encourages students to live in ways that enhance and advance the well-being of all. Second, the sacramentality of life means that God’s creation is fundamentally good, though the possibility of misuse and abuse exists together with the profound consequence of sin. A sacramental awareness perceives God’s presence in all of creation and what He wills for the human person. This presence of God in all things means that students are encouraged, regardless of their subject of study, to use the critical and creative powers of their minds (reason, memory, and imagination) to look at life so as to raise questions that lead them to the quest for Divine truth. Third, the emphasis on community that human beings have arises from a natural attraction for relationship and their capability for relationship with others (Gravissimum educationis, 1965). As a result, the school environment has to provide for a community in which such relationships are nurtured. Community life is not merely an ideal but a value to be realized, because the school influences people’s identity, their ways of viewing the world around them and their values (Gavsissimum educationis, 1965). The school becomes an environment of accepting and welcoming, inclusion is cherished, and students learn that being a good neighbour does not imply boundaries, but openness and care for others (Groome, 1999). Fourth, the commitment to tradition goes hand in hand with scripture to illumine the way forward. Signs and symbols are cherished as they make the past present and contribute to the educational process. Fifth, appreciation of rationality and learning acknowledges the right of every student to the truth provided by faith and education for their holistic formation and eternal salvation. These characteristics explain the perception of Catholic education with regard to humanity and students’ formation.
McBrien (1980) observed that ‘Catholic’ must not be viewed in its exclusive sense. But rather, the term must be understood as distinctiveness, not meaning exclusiveness, but an identity that generates other characteristics that show a radical openness to all truth that is comprehensive, all-embracing, that is to be shared with all of humanity. ‘Catholic’ and ‘catholic’ call on Catholic school leaders to view distinctiveness and diversity as integral to Catholic education without diminishing its unity (Sullivan, 2001).

THE INEXTRICABLE PARTNERSHIP OF HOME, CHURCH AND SCHOOL IN THE RAISING OF NEW CITIZENS

Although it may be possible for education to just happen; normally, education takes place through people who work for it: agents. An agent is person (or institution, structure, or organism) that undertakes an activity that generates an outcome (Buetow, 1988) for a “principal,” cause, mission or larger purpose. At this point we would like to set forth some expressions of the larger purposes of Catholic education and its mission. We claim that the Catholic school administrator is first and foremost a servant of Jesus Christ and His Church. So, perhaps ironically, the Catholic school principal is first an agent of the Principal, Jesus Christ. There are a number of ways of seeing this:

The primary agents of education are God and the student. God sustains the whole educational enterprise in its existence . . . three principal groupings are in partnership: the family, the Church and the State, and ‘education which is concerned with man as a whole, individually and socially, in order of nature and in the order of grace, necessarily belongs to all these three societies.’ The family, the Church, and the State are the secondary agents or partners of education. (Buetow, 1988, p. 139)

The above quotation views students and God as the key partners in education. Students have a reliance on God, family, Church, and State, with each meaningfully playing their roles in the students’ education. In the context of this book, our focus is on the role of a Catholic school principal in missional context of the family, the Church and the school. For students to have meaningful and holistic education, family, Church, and school serve as cooperating partners to animate and guide fruitful human formation. We will see, later, how the principal serves to “make the space” for family, Church and school to work in partnership on behalf of the best interests of children, and young adults.

But First . . . the Family

Except under extraordinary circumstances, which, sadly, are all too common, parents are to be the first and most important educators of their children (Strommen & Strommen, 1985). The role of the family in the education of children and young
THE MISSION FOCUS OF CATHOLIC EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP

adults can not be assumed. *Gravissimum educationis* (1965) made parents’ role poignantly clear:

Since parents have given children their life, they are bound by the most serious obligation to educate their offspring and therefore must be recognized as the primary and principal educators. This role in education is so important that only with difficulty can it be supplied where it is lacking. Parents are the ones who must create a family atmosphere animated by love and respect for God and man, in which the well-rounded personal and social education of children is fostered. Hence the family is the first school of the social virtues that every society needs. (para. 3)

The role of the family as the “domestic church” (Holy See, 1983) was given emphasis by Canon 774 in its statement that “before all others, parents are bound by the obligation of forming their children by word and example in the Faith and practice of Christian life” (para., 2).

However, it is clear that parents are not to be left alone in fulfilling this nurturing responsibility. They need help and such help must be provided by the Church (Grochlewski, 2009). Canon 796 para 1, urged parents to hold schools in esteem, as “schools are the principal assistance to parents in fulfilling the function of education.” In a joint venture with parents and with the help of the entire Catholic community, the mission of a Catholic school system is focused on promoting the human dignity, self-transcendence, and liberation of students (Dobzanki, 2001). Again, parents are the key educators of children and vital partners in the work of developing them under the stewardship and trust of school learning communities.

*Church’s Role in the Nurture of Children and Young Adults*

*Gravissimum educationis* (1965) noted:

Education is, in a very special way, the concern of the Church, not only because the Church must be recognized as a human society capable of imparting education, but especially it has the duty of proclaiming the way of salvation to all men, of revealing the life of Christ to those who believe, and of assisting them with unremitting care so that they may be able to attain to the fullness of that life. (p. 729)

The Church’s contribution to education and schooling has been evident for nearly two thousand years (Buetow, 1988; Grace, 2000). Buetow identified three reasons that dictate the Church’s right to be involved in education and schooling as “social justice, the betterment of human life, and the nature of education as essentially moral enterprise” (p. 167). The Church views herself as *mother* with the responsibility of providing education for her progeny so that their lives may be inspired by the Spirit of Christ. She views schools, with parents, as major carriers of social values that shape society and determine the future of society. Buetow explained, “As people who
are, if you like ‘specialists’ in the area of values and meaning, the people of God … have a serious interest in those values and in the shape of the society which those values will form” (p. 167). The Church views improvement in the quality of life as directly connected with the Kingdom of God, for, “There is no dichotomy between the natural and the supernatural, the spiritual and human progress, human values and the values of the Gospel” (p. 168).

Additionally, the Church’s involvement in education is conceived of as a moral enterprise whose purpose is dialogue and making people good:

Because the Church and the world are mutually related, Catholic Church members should be prepared to enter into dialogue and cooperation with others who have completely different ideas from theirs. Catholics individually and the Church communally must be involved, as part of their vocation, in the major problems of the age. (Buetow, 1988, p. 168)

The Catholic Church perceives herself and her members as contributors to making the world a better place. She exhorts her members to be concerned about education and schooling because the work of salvation must be done while living with the daily concerns of the world (Gravissimum educationis, 1965).

Gaudium et Spes (1965) encouraged the people of God to enthusiastically participate actively in the activities of the world, and to see the Church as being not alongside the world, but within it; and not in a position of dominance over the world, but acting as its servant. Catholic schools must therefore be seen as servants of those in their charge by being actively involved with their daily concerns. Pope Benedict XVI (2008) indicated that the Church feels it her duty to help in the education of children because involvement in education is a fulfillment of her evangelizing mission (Grocholewski, 2009).

Because of her rights and responsibilities, the Church deems it important to establish schools as an integral part of her evangelization work. Catholic and non-Catholic parents who wish to benefit from Catholic education are encouraged to send their children to Catholic schools (Gravissimum educationis, 1965).

The School’s Role in Nurturing Children and Young Adults

Gravissimum educationis, (1965) acknowledged the rights of parents to the fullest freedom with regard to choice of school. Catholic education leaders should bring joy to parents for their choice of Catholic education because as (Grocholewski, 2009) observed:

If … parents, concerned about the religious education of their children, entrust them to a Catholic school, the school must not disappoint them. Just as on the other side, the school must not disappoint the Church, which entrusts it with such an important mission. (p.156)

Catholic school leaders should ensure the delivery of educational content to the reasonable satisfaction of parents and closely examine the objectives and aims of
Catholic education. Along with the various organs of education, the school is of outstanding significance (Gravissimum educationis, 1965) and must be appreciated and supported by parents for the good of their children. For those parents interested in both the academic and religious formation of their children, it ought to be heartening to know that sharing Christ with the world is the rationale for the existence of Catholic schools (Woodard, 2009).

The United States Catholic Conference (1991) exhorted Catholic school systems to support parents in their mission of educating their children, because the school environment is the place where the systematic formation of students occurs (The Congregation, 1977, para. 27). In the school environment, students experience the meaning and truth of their individual faith-journey experiences, and important values are derived from and through faith.

The Catholic school is to teach as Jesus did, by teaching all subjects as best as they can be taught; especially teaching the Good News of Jesus Christ, and forming learning communities where God’s presence is experienced among a faith-filled people, and by serving others (Heft, 1991). In carrying out their educational mandate in schools, leaders need to remember that the spiritual dimension can never be severed from this work. This essential dimension can never be eliminated because it determines the identity of the Catholic school (Klein & Izzo, 1998). It seems to us that any “Catholic school” that ignores, denies, diminishes or avulses the spiritual dimension of its work or merely nominally associates with Christ and the Church will at that point of departure cease to be a Catholic school. Apart from its pedagogical aims, the goal of the Catholic school is to transmit the values of faith and rationality to students. The transmittal of faith and rationality demands constant nourishment through the examples of those who live the faith; principals of Catholic schools are to be amongst those examples (Moore, 2000). But the vision for Catholic schools is much grander than transmission. As we have said, the Catholic school is to be an agent or instrument of the very heart of God in His divine desire for and loving transformation work with each child, each young person and each member of the school community.

It is important for Catholic school leaders to reiterate that Catholic schools have the important characteristics of the church. First, they are inspired by a supernatural vision because of Christ’s presence; so that the education provided is not only about good citizenship and Christian life in the world, but is intended to lead the school community to their eternal destiny. Second, the Catholic school is founded on the Christian anthropology of the person which views each person as a child of God with a dignity derived from their natural and supernatural natures. Third, the Catholic school is animated by communion and community, because of its social nature as a community of faith working together. Fourth, the school is to be permeated with a Catholic world view throughout its curriculum with a concern for the holistic formation of the person, the development of all the human faculties, preparation for professional life, development of social and ethical awareness, and attention to the transcendent and to religious education. Fifth, the Catholic school is sustained by Gospel values stemming from the vital witness of its teachers and administrators.
because with them lies the immediate duty of engendering a Christian school climate (Miller, 2007). By promoting and living these characteristics, Catholic school leaders ensure that students and their parents understand how the gospel and church teaching call on all to choose life, to serve the least within communities, to hunger and thirst for justice, and to be peace-makers (The National Conference of Catholic Bishops, 1998).

The Code of Canon Law 803, para 3 prescribed that instruction and education in a Catholic school must be grounded in the principles of Catholic doctrine [with] teachers [being] outstanding in correct doctrine and integrity of life. In short, the Catholic school forms students in order that they can participate in the evangelization mission of the Church by being living examples of faith, based on sound Catholic doctrine.

Catholic High School Leadership

Having considered the crucial elements of the “security triangle,” (home, school and Church) for the raising of children and youth, we now consider the mediating and catalytic work of Catholic high school principals in this triangle. Catholic principals and their counterparts in other school systems/schools have similar leadership roles (Shaffer, 2004), but because the Catholic school is a ministry of the Church (Gravissimum educationis, 1965), the Catholic principal has added responsibilities, including that of being a faith leader. The link between faith and mission of Catholic school was emphasized by Pope Benedict (2008) when he expressly exhorted Catholic educators to educate and prepare students in a faithful and fruitful understanding of the role of the Catholic school in the mission of the Church. Mulligan (2005) emphasized that the purpose of leadership in Catholic schools is:

intended to serve the Catholic education community. We do not need careerists who look for power, perks, status, enhanced salary and upward mobility. We urgently need the non-careerist whose first concern is, in a spirit of faith, what is best for the kids. (p. 188)

For Woodard (2009), a major task for the Catholic school principal is to focus on who the students are becoming. The kind of person being formed in schools comes as priority over the job that person will eventually perform. Here, character formation of students takes precedence over tasks, since good character formation will naturally influence their future responsibilities, roles and responsibilities. Persons in positions of authority in the Catholic school need to have standards of behaviour which include the promotion of discussions regarding how the weakest members of the school community are treated and cared for in the prospect of their formation as students (Woodard, 2009). For Grace (2000), educational leadership as a vocation to serve is the way to total dedication to one’s responsibilities for the holistic formation of students.

Like other Christians, Catholic school principals share in the priestly, prophetic, and kingly ministry of Christ, which they live out as their vocation to holiness in
the sphere of education (Miller, 2007). Thus, they should see themselves as doing more than exercising themselves in a socially valuable profession. They carry out a valuable service in the context of an ecclesial community. The priestly function challenges the leaders to view themselves as exercising leadership on behalf of Christ rather than on their own behalf. They therefore should exercise leadership in imitation of Christ. The prophetic ministry requires that they establish a sound foundation for the future successful life of students. The kingly ministry demands that they see themselves as servants of their constituents: To lead is to serve.

While serving their local churches, Catholic schools form part of the larger church community, the universal church (Ristau, 1991). Because Catholic school principals serve the Church community (Gravissimum educationis, 1965; Drahmann & Stenger, 1989), they should bring spiritual qualities to their work priorities by living their own faith every day. They become effective if they are clear and honest about the role that faith plays in their schools (Miller, 2007). Faith and spiritual life are so important in the Catholic school context that the leaders need to view themselves as spiritual leaders who are called to be Catholic school principals and not vice versa (Cappel, 1989). The expression of a principal’s faith in the Catholic school was the most distinguishing characteristic of effective Catholic school principals in a study conducted by Ciriello (1989). In effect, faith is the foundation of all success in the Catholic school.

The National Congress (1992) summarized the nature of Catholic school leadership in five key propositions:

- Leadership in and on behalf of Catholic schools is rooted in an ongoing relationship with Jesus Christ;
- Leadership in and on behalf of Catholic schools is deeply spiritual, servant-like, prophetic, visionary and empowering;
- Effective leadership is critical to the mission of the Church and the future of Catholic schools;
- The recruitment, selection and formation of leaders is essential to the future of Catholic schools; and
- Leadership in and on behalf of Catholic schools involves a shift from vertical models to collegial models.

These propositions emphasize that the faith, spiritual, and religious dimensions, being the forces that propel everything in Catholic school leadership cannot be underestimated.

The responsibilities of the Catholic school leader are such that the leadership approach appropriate for the Catholic school context is servant-leadership, because this orientation to leadership calls on the leader to lead as Jesus did (Schafer, 2005). This call for servant-leadership in Catholic schools reflects a similar view as held by Greenleaf (1991) that the leader of an institution consider it their role to be one of a servant. In fulfilling their priestly, prophetic, and kingly roles in the mission of the Church, principals are reminded that the leadership required of them is faith-based.
and promotes the dignity and freedom of students. As members of the ecclesial community fulfilling their Christian vocation, Catholic school principals need to renew their understandings of leadership for a better exercise of their role.

According to Ristau (1991):

Catholic educators should understand what leadership means. Ideas about a great leader, one in a position at the ‘top’ who has all the answers and who can make anything happen are out of date. . . . In fact there may be good people at the ‘top’ who are doing the wrong things well. There is a need for a new kind of leadership. (p. 12)

Implied in this observation is that contemporary societal changes demands that leadership ought to cater to the present day needs of students. Leadership for its own sake is not relevant in our times. In short, school-based leadership centered on the principal’s role and single leader approach has outlived its usefulness and is severely outmoded. Rapid societal changes call for a new form of leadership (Crowther, Kaagen, Ferguson, & Hann, 2002).

THE INESTIMABLE VALUE OF SERVANT LEADERSHIP FOR HIGH SCHOOL PRINCIPALS

There is no universally approved leadership concept which suggests a unique source of leadership success (Walker & Scharf, 2001; Philips, 2002). However, a leadership model that promotes effective, ethical, supportive, and responsible leadership, and engenders an enabling environment for constituents to attain their highest potentials is desirable for our times (Sergiovanni, 1993; Wheatley, 2004). Servant-leadership may be this kind of leadership (Spears, 2006) because of its adherence to ethics, morality, and spirituality (Greenleaf, 1970). Walker (2007) advocated for servant-leadership in today’s school institutions. He declared, “The servant-leadership concept can become an incredible force of good in school systems when infused into the culture of learning communities. Servant-leadership builds trust in relationships” (p. 21). Walker further noted, “Servant-leadership is safe to follow and, consistently models a value-based core of commitments as people are served and educational purposes are pursued” (p. 21).

Servant-leadership is collaborative, empowering, and a serving way to build learning communities, and is built upon the premises of individual respect, stewardship, and service to one’s school community (Crippen, 2006). Servant leadership offers hope and insight for a new epoch in human development, and for the establishment of better, more caring, institutions (Spears, 2006).

For Catholic school leaders, servant-leadership in their daily professional life is “a fundamental, foundational and essential expression of their vocation within the Faith-community” (Walker & Scharf, 2001, p. 16) because of their special calling as Christian leaders. The Vatican II document Gravissimum educationis (1965) stressed that the purpose of Catholic schools is to provide holistic education to children.
while promoting Gospel values. In Catholic theology, these qualities include: trust in God, honesty, compassion, forgiveness, mercy, community, servant-leadership, simplicity, justice, peace, love, faith, and hope; all of which were taught by Jesus Christ in the four Gospels and epitomized in the beatitudes (Matthew 5:3-10). Of course, these valued qualities are by no means to be considered exhaustive of the Gospel values. The emphasis in the documents of Vatican II for the promotion of Gospel values in Catholic schools is an implicit call to live up to the responsibility of promoting Gospel values by leadership. The promotion of Gospel values and Catholic identity in Catholic schools has to be an intentional choice (Duignan, 2007). Catholic school leaders need to decide on their schools’ future direction and affirm their values. The decision to promote a school’s Catholic mission ought not be understood as a decision to maintain the status quo. Instead, such a decision implies making positive institutional changes that guarantee a vibrant catholicity (Duignan).

When leaders perceive themselves as servants they appreciate that “… serving others is the most glorious and rewarding of all leadership tasks” (Kouzes & Posner, 1993). Leaders who value self esteem, power, and prestige over humility, selflessness, and service, end up serving themselves rather than those they are responsible for (Barach & Eckhardt, 1998). Echoing the holy words of Jesus Christ, Depree (1998) reminded leaders that it is service that leads to greatness.

Servant-leaders are not necessarily extraordinary human beings, but their commitment, and the right use of power and position in humble service is what makes them extraordinary (Greenleaf, 1970). Though paradoxical, the desire to serve for the good of followers is the force that unleashes the power of servant-leadership.

Servants, by definition, are fully human. Servant-leaders are functionally superior because they are closer to the ground – they hear things, see things, know things, and their intuitive insight is exceptional. Because of this they are dependable and trusted, they know the meaning of that line from Shakespeare’s sonnet: ‘They have power to hurt and will do none.’ (Greenleaf, 1991, p. 42)

In brief, servant-leaders are down-to-earth (or “of the earth” – humis), and in the context of Catholic leadership, servant leaders are united with the incarnate Christ who lives his servant life through them (Galatians 2:20). This is the secret of the effectiveness of their service.

Have This Mind in You (Philippians 2 Kenosis Passage with Focus on Jesus)

Jesus, who taught and embodied leadership as service, provided our ultimate model of servant-leadership (Wilkes, 1998). In His life and work, Christ demonstrated greatness that comes from humility and servanthood. To reiterate, the two main qualities that led to the greatness of Jesus, the exemplar of servant-leadership, are: humility and service (Philippians 2:5-11). The supreme act of humility was giving up His divine prerogatives and taking on the form of a human being and then dying
on the cross (Philippians 2:8). Newly appointed Catholic principals have the position and power of their new office but they trade the conventional understandings for the paradoxical role of service (paradoxical in sense that their promotion up is a call to bend down to serve).

Leaders are cautioned against hubris as they interact with those they serve. With Christ as exemplar, they are reminded to hold those they serve in high esteem so as to serve them better. Jesus’ attitude teaches Christian leaders that stooping low to relate with those they serve ensures their dignity and freedom (Wilkes, 1998). Jesus left His heavenly kingdom to relate with sinful humankind. Unfortunately, humility is sometimes slighted and viewed as a weakness; but for Jesus, humility was strength. We are further reminded through His example that God resists the proud but gives grace to the humble. As Paul wrote, “Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus” (Philippians 2: 5). Jesus’ authority was not in force and power, but in gentleness and humble service. Humility does not imply a degradation, or reduction of oneself before others, rather it is having “an awareness, acceptance, and appreciation of one’s true worth and value” (Munroe, 2009, p. 159). Genuine leaders are by nature humble in the full sense of the word.

Jesus was exalted by His self sacrificing action and attitude. Self-abnegation has greater value than making a reputation. Jesus’ readiness to serve is exemplified in emptying Himself and taking the status of a servant, and accepting death, even death on a cross (Philippians 2:6-7). Jesus’ message on servant-leadership is best summarized in His own words in Mark 10:43-45: “. . . whoever wants to be great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be a slave of all.” An “others first” attitude is necessary for the leader; for with selfishness, true service is not possible (Greenleaf, 1970).

For Christian leaders servant-hood is not degrading and does not lead to loss of power or authority. The attitude of Christ leads to pertinent questions: whose needs is the leader satisfying? His/her own, or those of the ones he/she is to serve? Who is the leader’s model? Is the leader’s first aim for service dictated by a search for glory (Sims, 2005; Neuschel, 2005)? Is service about direct need meeting behaviour or about connecting with a Cause greater than all other causes?

Jesus’ example of service requires the Catholic high school principal be approachable. The principal needs to ensure that their relationships encourage growth in others, that they see their leadership position as a privileged gift and he/she needs to be exemplary in their faithfulness to Jesus and to those they serve. Wright (2000) wrote, “If our vision . . . [and] values are not shaped by the presence of Christ, if our strategies do not point people to God, then we have failed and probably should go out of business” (p. 93). It is to these characteristics and leadership model that Catholic school principals are called.
CHAPTER 2

SERVANT LEADERSHIP IN THE CONTEXT OF THE PRINCIPALSHIP

The success and failure of the educative and evangelizing mission of the Church in and through Catholic schools lies heavily on the shoulders of principals (Wallace, 2000) because school principals have the distinctive custodial responsibility for the Catholic heritage. In the previous chapter we have asserted that the Catholic school principal is a mediating influence on the missional roles of partners: home, Church and school. It is obvious that principals play, or ought to play, a crucial stewardship role of promoting the quality and future of Catholic schools (Belmonte & Cranston, 2009). The Catholic school principal is required to promote both the religious and academic mission of the school (Earl, 2005) by guiding the spiritual formation of teachers and students through the promotion of sacramental life, prayer, study, and serving others and through ensuring that the teaching and learning processes employed are monitored and aligned to mission. Catholic school principals exercise leadership in contexts that demand not only their leadership expertise and skills, but also constancy and integrity in their own daily interactions with people and life experiences. To be effective, principals need to be pastoral leaders combining spiritual, moral, and managerial leadership skills and dispositions (Grace, 2000).

The Pastoral Role of Principals

Principals’ influence and shape school cultures in ways that no other persons or roles can (Kimbrough & Burkett, 1990; & Grint, 2003). In order to shape and impact on school culture, Catholic school principals need to bring spiritual qualities to their work through their personal lived faith experience (Drahman & Stenger, 1989). Such qualities require knowledge of the Catholic faith (Manno, 1988) and the assumption of pastoral responsibilities so that Catholic school principals ought to be vitally concerned about the faith formation of the students entrusted to them (Heft, 1991). This faith formation effort incorporates learning experiences that engender convictions in students to influence the way they make decisions, especially concerning relationships with others (Grace, 2000). As a result of his/her pastoral role, the Catholic school principal could be considered as ‘pastor’ or ‘lead pastor’ of the school.

*Webster’s Third New International Dictionary* (2002) defined *pastor* as one who gives protection or guidance to a group of people, and *pastoral* signifies spiritual care, guidance, and counseling. The vision of Catholic school leadership is based on the biblical metaphor of the shepherd and is about service, about shepherds who care for the sheep (Wright, 2000).
CHAPTER 2

A shepherd is at the same time a leader and a companion (one who shares bread with others) who defends his flock. The shepherd is aware of the flock’s condition, adapts to its needs, cares for each and everyone, and cherishes each sheep as one does for his or her own children (Leon-Dufuo, 1973). The Catholic principal does not only care physically for students, he/she is also a spiritual leader as in Jesus’ saying “I know my sheep, and they know me” (John 10: 15). To borrow Sullivan’s (2001) words, “A pastoral approach to [leadership] starts with people where they are . . . in their . . . circumstances” (p. 4). This shepherd leadership is marked by mutual trust between the principal and constituents (students, teachers/staff and parents) and by the principal’s confidence in the school community which leads to increased freedom and growth of followers.

We pause here to say that the inevitable focus of a book like this will be on the character and chemistry with school constituents’ aspects of leadership. We believe that leaders succeed or fail depending on their character, chemistry and competence quotients. We will give some attention to technical competencies but this aspect is not a priority for us in the project. Nonetheless, a principal’s skills, work ethics and technical knowledge are vital to success.

Principals have managerial, relational, and educational roles (Earl, 2005). The establishment of an orderly school environment conducive to learning requires a substantive set of managerial skills. The existence of cooperation, cordiality, respect, care for one another among staff and students signifies the relational role. And, the principal’s ability to engender the best features of a learning community denotes the educational skills (Earl). These skills are general and are applicable to all schools, public and separate (Sergiovanni, 1984).

For Schafer (2004), the Catholic school principal’s role is generally divided into three areas: spiritual, educational, and managerial, and it is the spiritual role that differentiates the Catholic school principal’s role from the typical non-Catholic school principal role. Fulfillment of the pastoral role includes spiritual leadership, vision for Catholic education, enhancing staff morale, recognizing the leadership of others, and remaining interested in personal growth and development (Cierello, 1998). Other roles include instructional leadership, manager, mediator, public relations person, creator of school climate and goal setter. And, additional responsibilities may include babysitter, trash collector, traffic cop, painter, and bus driver (Augenstein, 1988).

Pastoral leadership involves creating an environment for enabling growth in faith and developing skills, and fostering excellence through which dignity and freedom blossoms. The pastoral role of the Catholic school principal does not imply a dichotomy between academic work and prayer life (Buetow, 1988) but it involves a synergy that leads to the holistic formation of students and growth of the school community.

Focus on Aspiring, Beginning Principals

Studies confirm that despite the valuable role principals play in their schools, there is often a lack of adequate preparation and attention to ongoing formation, and most of principals have to learn on the job (Belmonte & Crantson, 2009). Similarly, most
novice principals indicated they did not have sufficient theological knowledge and spiritual leadership skills (Schuttloffel, 2003). These findings indicate that there is a need for greater attention towards the preparation of Catholic school leaders.

The decrease in the number of religious persons and the changing roles in schools, together with challenges that confront the contemporary Church demand that teachers and principals be given more opportunities for extensive religious formation. This is so that aspiring and future educators might better provide the quality and type of leadership required in Catholic schools (Rogus & Wildenhaus, 2000). Travis (2000) stressed the need for on-going formation for Catholic school teachers. One reason for this was because aspiring principals inevitably come from among teachers. The importance of continuous religious and educational formation of teachers, and for aspiring principals cannot be underestimated as the vitality of an enlivened Catholic culture in the school environment depends on this. For Catholic education to continue to effectively participate in the mission of the Church, there is a need for leaders to be knowledgeable in education, work in the service of education, know the Church, have innovative ideas, and renew what it means to lead well (Ristau, 1991).

Grace (2002) determined that the cultural and spiritual background of principals highly impacted on their success as Catholic school leaders. This finding suggested that the appointment of aspiring principals to leadership in Catholic schools should be based on suitably qualified and skilled principals. Thus, in the hiring process, candidates for the principalship who demonstrate a commitment to Catholic leadership ideals that promote both the Catholic identity and inclusiveness should be considered as warranting preferential consideration in selection (Grace, 2002).

To gradually form future leaders, incumbent principals have the responsibility to collaborate with aspiring principals as a way of helping them develop their leadership skills. Of course principals should collaborate with teachers, through encouragement, role modeling, and promoting values through daily living of the Catholic faith. But beyond this, they should also help aspiring principals with vivid and inspirational examples of Catholic school leadership. Aspiring and beginning principals need a clear understanding of the different types of leadership and the requirements of the kind of leadership they embrace in the Catholic school context.

**Transactional and Transformational Leadership**

Burns (1978) believed that leaders are either transformational or transactional, but according to Stone, Russell, and Patterson (2004), other people “...view leadership as a continuum with transactional leadership at one end and transformational leadership at the other” (p. 2). For many, transactional leadership is the traditional industrial model of leadership (Daft, 2002), while transformational leadership, is the modern style of leadership in which leaders devote considerable energy to leading and valuing the gifts and abilities of their workers (Bass, 1985). By contrast, servant-leadership is propelled by the overarching desire to serve others (Smith, Montagno & Kuzmenko, 2004).
CHAPTER 2

Transactional Leadership

According to McShane and Glinow (2000), transactional leadership is “…leadership that helps organizations achieve their current objectives more efficiently by linking job performance to valued rewards and ensuring that employees have the resources needed to have the job done” (p. 450). A diligent transactional principal moves across the action, to where the people are and where important things are happening in the life of a school. This is a good thing. Primary components of transactional leadership have been identified, such as:

- Providing contingent rewards, where the leader identifies paths that link the achievement of goals to rewards;
- Exhibiting active management with the leader actively monitoring the work of subordinates, employing corrective measures in the face of deviations from standards, and enforcing rules to prevent mistakes; and,
- Emphasizing passive management where the leader intervenes after deviations from accepted standards occur. Corrective measures or punishment are utilized in response to unacceptable standards. (Hellriegel & Slocum, 2007)

Power is a major concept of transactional leadership (Stroh, Northcraft & Neale, 2002). The transactional approach coincides with Theory X assumptions of McGregor (1957/2005) in which the leader is the traditional boss who oversees employees (Tracey & Hinkin, 1998). Transactional leadership approach follows highly structured bureaucratic systems in administrating day-to-day tasks, being concentrated on task completion and employing reward and punishment. For example, politicians who win votes by promising tax reduction exhibit transactional leadership (Northouse, 2004). Such approaches are leader focused or, at best, transactions for mutual benefit (reciprocal altruism: lower taxes and re-election). And, according to Chemers (1984), the relationship between leader and follower is one in which “…[t]he leader is clearly the central figure and prime actor” (pp. 90–91). This approach to leadership “…assumes that the best information and ideas for solving problems are found in the upper echelons of the organization and should be passed down and implemented by those in the lower echelons” (Owens, 2004, p. 280). The transactional principal effectively transacts exchanges and brokers arrangements in favour of school goals.

Transactional leadership appears to have characteristics similar to those of servant-leadership (Burns, 1978). However, the leader’s actions may not benefit the follower and may lead to detrimental ends (Whetstone, 2002). According to Yukl (2002), in contrast to servant-leadership, transactional leadership focuses attention on the personal growth and benefit of the leader or organization first, and attends to the follower second; while servant-leadership primarily focuses on the follower first (Greenleaf, 1977). We have no doubt that brokering, bartering, and otherwise transacting are important aspects of the principalship. Our view is that transactional leadership is an important and likely expression of leadership but that it is not sufficient for exemplary Catholic leadership.
Transformational Leadership

Northouse (2004) referred to transformational leadership as “the process whereby an individual engages with others and creates a connection that raises the level of motivation and morality in both the leader and the follower” (p. 170). Transformational leadership has become the more popular way of describing ideal leadership during the last two decades, and has challenged the traditional, more top down or bureaucratic orientation of transactional leadership (Bass & Avolio, 1994). For Bryant (2003), “transformational leaders are active leaders that have four distinguishing characteristics: Charisma, inspiration, intellectual stimulation and individualized consideration” (p. 36). Charisma is the degree of pride, faith, and respect leaders stimulate their constituents to have in themselves, their leaders, and their organization. Inspiration is the capacity to encourage constituents mainly through communication of high expectations. Intellectual stimulation is the regularity with which leaders stimulate constituents to be innovative at work. Individualized consideration is the extent of personal care and encouragement of self-development a leader conveys to constituents (Bass, 1990).

The main focus of the transformational leadership is to establish a mutual relationship between leader and follower through which both act to improve each other’s lives (Burns, 1978), and to bring about personal and organizational change or transformation (Northouse, 2005). Owens (2004) noted, “the result is a relationship of mutual stimulation and elevation that converts followers into leaders” (p. 269). This relationship empowers people within the organization and increases efficiency and effectiveness, while personalizing the worker and the work environment (Hellriegel & Slocum, 2007). Such positive relationships create an organization that desires and craves success. This leadership has its roots in the Human Relations approach to leadership (Bryant, 2003). More specifically, it builds commitment to organizational objectives and then empowers followers to achieve those objectives (Yukl, 2002). Transformational leadership’s similarities to servant-leadership have led to the question: “Is servant-leadership just a subset of transformational leadership or vice versa” (Stone et al., 2004, p. 4)?

Differences between Transformational Leadership and Servant-Leadership

Servant-leadership is seen by some to be preferable to transformational and transactional leadership (Lubin, 2001). Transformational leadership and servant-leadership are so similar that the question has been raised by Stone et al. (2004), “Are transformational leadership and servant-leadership the same theory, except for their use of different names” (p. 4)? Both emphasize the appreciation and valuing of people, and listening to, mentoring, and empowering followers, but, according to Stone et al., “transformational leaders tend to focus more on organizational objectives while servant-leaders focus more on the people who are their followers” (p. 349). Walker and Sackney (2007) argued that “transformational leadership is usually about achieving significant organizational purposes and servant-leadership is about helping each person grow a wholesome sense of personal significance” (p. 258), so that the extent to which
leaders transfer their focus from organization to followers is the crucial difference in determining whether the leader is a transformational leader or a servant-leader (Stone et al.). We don’t wish to push the distinctions too far – perhaps it is possible to be both.

For Stone et al. (2004), servant-leaders focus on their followers, and “… do not have particular affinity for the abstract corporation or organization; rather, they value the people who constitute the organization” (p. 5); in other words, they both value and privilege human dignity. The transformational leader may have a more macro focus related to organizational success and takes initiative that involves for instance certain risks to end outmoded practices. For the servant-leader, relationships take priority over task and product (Lubin, 2001), and, as Smith, Montagno and Kuzmenko (2004) indicated, may result in more “… skilled people, more interpersonal relationships, creation of shared visions and clear goals” (p. 87). In the context of business organizations where servant-leadership is practiced, chasing of profits becomes secondary, as attention to people is the priority (Harvey, 2001).

Russell and Stone (2002) pointed out that while both transformational and servant-leaders are influential, the latter achieve influence in a nontraditional way through persuasion and a respect for constituents that allows them extraordinary freedom to exercise their gifts. Thus, servant-leaders use service to define the reasons for meaningful work and to provide needed resources (Stone et al., 2004).

Smith, Montagno, and Kuzmenko (2004) further suggested that another difference between servant-leadership and transformational leadership is that “… servant-leadership leads to a spiritual generative culture, while transformational leadership leads to an empowered dynamic culture” (p. 80). This is a distinction worth our attention for Catholic school principals, especially in the context of the mission of Catholic education. Spiritual generative culture allows followers to focus on their own development and on that of others, and provides organizational processes that promote growth, while empowered dynamic culture leads not only to better skills of followers, but to higher expectations being placed on them. While we won’t elaborate, we see transcendent leadership as a natural progression from transmissive (command and control), transactional (interpersonal exchange), and transformative leadership approaches.

According to Wheatley (2004), spirituality in servant-leadership is “… an awareness that people have something beyond the instrumental or utilitarian. People have deep yearnings, a quest for meanings, and an ability to wonder. This is a non-religious view of what spirituality might mean” (p. 246). For Kurtz and Ketcham (1992), spirituality is that which allows a person to get beyond the narrow confines of self.

Drury (2005), for example, viewed servant-leadership as far too complex to be reduced to a set of attributes, but for others like Stronge (1998), Blanchard (1997), Covey (2002), and Yukl (2002), such leaders do exhibit distinctive characteristics that are in harmony with the ten identified by Spears (1995, 2002, 2004) from Greenleaf’s (1977) writings. These characteristics include: listening, empathy, healing, awareness, persuasion, conceptualization, foresight, stewardship, commitment to the growth of people, and, building community. These characteristics should be viewed as lenses through which the servant-leader’s role can be viewed rather than a set of skills or
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techniques (Jennings & Stahl-Wert, 2003). These characteristics are both consciously and unconsciously displayed as every servant-leader exercises leadership.

Relevance of Servant-Leadership in Catholic Schools

The National Congress (1992) argued, “Leadership in and on behalf of Catholic schools is deeply spiritual, servant-like, prophetic, visionary and empowering” (p. 22). Ciriello (1996) concurred and pointed out that “the heart of Catholic school leadership lies in effective spiritual leadership . . . that . . . is servant-leadership – to use Robert Greenleaf’s term – in which the leader is a servant who needs people as much as they need him or her” (p. 1). For Arthur (1998), the Catholic school was to be considered as one dynamic unit, interrelated, interconnected, and interdependent community in which “leaders are essentially the servants of the needs of people in the faith-community and the moral idea that binds them together” (p. 58). Duignan (2007) echoed the perception that the Catholic school is a community of the ‘people of God’ and not just an institution or organization, and Miller (2007) agreed:

Leadership is understood as a diakonia, a ministry for the Church and the wider society. It is about being in the midst of colleagues as “one who serves” (cf. Lk 22: 27); it is about stewardship of a great intellectual, cultural and religious patrimony. (p. 16)

Understandably, a faith and learning community needs an adaptive leadership that espouses an ethic of care, justice, and moral leadership (Heifetz & Linsky, 2002; Fullan, 2003; Starratt, 2004). For Blanchard (1996), Sergiovanni (2000), and Covey (2002), this kind of leadership is servant-leadership.

Walker and Scharf (2001) pointed out that “Catholic educators have a high calling as they obediently follow in the footsteps of Jesus Christ and seek the grace to bear His image and likeness in their work” (p. 15). Walker and Scharf further indicated that for Catholic school principals, servant-leadership is “… a fundamental, foundational and essential expression of their vocation within the Faith-community” (p. 16). Congruent thinking led Mulligan (2005) to state, “Catholic education, by its very nature, is a call to live differently and offer something more: a perspective about our world rooted in the scriptures and social teachings of the church” (p. 39), implying an imitation of the leadership style of Jesus. Arthur (1998) maintained that “for a Catholic school the values underpinning its leadership would indeed largely be derived from religious belief” (p. 51). As the Vatican II document, The Religious Dimension of Education in a Catholic School (1990), reminded Catholic school leaders:

At least since the time of the [Vatican II] Council, therefore, the Catholic school has had a clear identity, not only as a presence of the Church in society, but also a genuine and proper instrument of the Church. It is a place of evangelization, of authentic apostolate and of pastoral action—not through complementary or parallel or extra-curricular activity but of its very nature: its work of educating the Christian person. (para. 33)
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In short, the Catholic school discovers its meaning and vision in the Church and does not separate faith from education. Because of its Judeo-Christian origins and its applicability in varying contexts, servant-leadership offers that opportunity (Wilkes, 1998).

It is no surprise that Catholic Education Boards and authorities recommend servant-leadership to their administrators. Mulligan (2005) wrote that leadership in Catholic education is not a career but a vocation, and is intended to serve the Catholic education community.

GENESIS OF SERVANT-LEADERSHIP

According to Metcalf-Turner and Fischetti (1996), Greenleaf (1977) is credited by Spears (1996), Blanchard (1997), Covey (2002), and Frick (2004) for formulating and popularizing the notion of servant-leadership. As a devout Quaker (a Religious Society of Friends founded in England in the 17th century that tended toward minimal hierarchical structure), Greenleaf was familiar with the concept of servant-leadership. He spent most of his 38 year professional career at the American Telephone and Telegraph Company (AT &T) in the field of management research, development, and education. After retirement, Greenleaf started a second career that focused on the role of education in society and he spent 25 years as consultant to businesses, foundations, universities, churches, institutions, and seminaries in the United States, Europe, and the Developing World. In 1964, he founded the Centre for Applied Ethics, now renamed the Robert Greenleaf Center.

Greenleaf coined the term servant-leadership after reading Hesse’s (1971) Journey to the East (Spears, 1995) in which a group of men accompanied by their humble servant, Leo, undertook a mythical journey. All went well until Leo disappeared. This created confusion and aimlessness, and, lacking the leadership of their servant, the journey had to be abandoned (Sims, 2005). The wayfarers later discovered that Leo was not merely their servant, but the Head of the great Noble Order of a distinguished monastic community. The image of Leo as the servant and leader transformed Greenleaf’s understanding of leadership. He concluded that a true leader must be willing to first be a servant to others, and that this aspiration to serve makes a leader great. Greenleaf’s “... seminal work, The Servant as Leader (1977) and continues to exert a powerful and growing influence on educators and leaders in business, higher education, service-learning organizations, and religious institutions” (Metcalf-Turner & Fischetti, 1996, p. 114).

Wilkes (1998) pointed out that the notion of servant-leadership originated in Judeo-Christian theology. God demanded of the patriarchs and kings of the Old Testament (i.e., Abraham, Moses, Jacob, Joseph, David, Rehoboam) that they serve the people and not lord it over them. According to Wilkes, the Israelites demonstrated their preference for servant-leadership when the elders advised King Rehoboam, “If you will be a servant to these people today, and serve them, and speak good words to them, then they will be your servants forever” (1 Kings. 12:7, The New King James Version). According to Blanchard (1998), the word servant (along with serve and service) features more than 1,300 times in the Bible.
Jesus Christ’s life, His work, and His words depict Him as a leader whose deeds and vision changed the course of human history, and provide a leadership ideal worth emulating (Batten, 1998); whether one is in the Church or outside of a faith community, Jesus gave this advice to his disciples in Matt. 20:25-26:

You know that the rulers of the gentiles lord it over them, and those who are great exercise authority over them. Yet it shall not be so among you; but whoever desires to become great among you, let him be your servant. (as cited by Blanchard, 1998; Sanders, 1994)

The appointment of the seven deacons in Acts 6 represents the service nature of leadership intended for those who served. Mark 10:43,44 says: “…whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be the first must be slave to all.” According to Wilkes (1998), the term servant used in Mark 10:43 is the Greek word diakonos, which means to wait at table, to provide or care for, to minister, or to serve. Diakonos is the root of the English word deacon. The word slave used in Mark, 10:44 is the Greek word doulos. Wilkes, further pointed out that the radical nature of Jesus’ concept of leadership lies in the use of slave because slavery was repulsive to the Jews of the first century who considered such a comparison to be a terrible attack on their dignity because it connoted a person bound to do the will of a master or superior. Jesus used servant and slave to describe the highest form of leadership.

In Luke 4:18-30, Jesus declared in his inaugural homily that he had come to serve and to proclaim the good news to the poor, to heal the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to captives, and recovery of sight to the blind. This central message was that he had come to serve and not to be served (McNeal, 1998). Philippians 2:5-11 links Jesus’ divinity, with His coming to earth as a servant. The passage says:

In your lives you must think and act like Christ Jesus. Christ himself was like God in everything. But he did not think that being equal with God was something to be used for his own benefit. But he gave up his place with God and made himself nothing. He was born to be a man and became like a servant. And when he was living as a man, he humbled himself and was fully obedient to god, even when that caused his death – death on a cross. So God raised him to the highest place. God made his name greater than every other name so that every knee will bow to the name of Jesus – everyone in heaven, on earth, and under the earth. And everyone will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord and bring glory to God the Father.

Jesus exemplified what it means to be a true servant by what he said and did when he washed the feet of his disciples (Jennings & Stahl-Wert, 2003). According to these authors, in Luke 22:26, Jesus, seeing his disciples not understanding his message about service, said to them:

But not so among you, on the contrary, he who is greatest among you, let him be as the younger, and he who governs as he who serves. For who is greater, he who sits at the table, or he who serves? Is it not he who sits at the table? Yet I am among you as the one who serves.
And in Mark 9:35, he told them, “If anyone desires to be first, he shall be the last of all and servant of all.” The words and actions of Jesus offer a challenge as well as a good example. Jesus’ words “It was not you who chose me, it was I who chose you to go forth and bear fruit” (Jn. 15:16), are a reminder to Christian leaders to imitate Him in their practice of leadership (Helm, 1996).

From the foregoing, it is clear that the Catholic school leader, for whom the proclamation of Gospel values and virtues forms an important and vital part of his/her leadership (Gravissimum educationis, 1965), needs to exercise leadership in imitation of Jesus the servant-leader.

SERVANT-LEADERSHIP APPROACH

Servant-leadership highly values followers and seeks to promote their welfare and interests as an effective way of promoting organizational goals (Patterson, 2003; Drury, 2005). The primary purpose of the servant-leader is to serve others by investing in the development and well-being of constituents for the benefit of accomplishing tasks and goals for the common good (Page & Wong, 1998). Much of the current literature that supports serving and valuing people was presaged by Greenleaf’s (1977) work on servant-leadership (Sarkus, 1996). Greenleaf’s model established service as the characteristic of the leader that attracts followers who will pass on this quality to others (Spears, 1996; Nixon, 2005). An important aspect of servant-leadership is the ability to create leaders from followers (Covey, 2002; Winston, 2005).

Spears (1995) pointed out that at AT & T, Greenleaf experienced the management practices promoted by Taylor (1916/2005) and McGregor (1957/2005) whose theories influenced business leadership education. Greenleaf (1970) concluded that old leadership practices increased level of stress within organizations and often involved leaders who were more interested in power than in serving their followers. He declared, “the great leader is seen as servant first, and that simple fact is the key to his greatness” (p. 21). According to Greenleaf, servant-leadership:

Begins with the natural feeling that one wants to serve first. Then conscious choice brings one to aspire to lead. That person is sharply different from one who is leader first. The difference manifests itself in the care taken by the servant-first to make sure that other people’s highest priority needs are being served. (p. 27)

For Greenleaf, servant-leadership is a moral principle whose raison d’être is the satisfaction of the needs of followers. Yukl (2002) also wrote that servant-leaders must attend to the needs of their followers to help them become healthier, wiser, and more ready to accept responsibilities.

To reiterate, Blanchard (2002) identified two types of leaders: those who are leaders first and those that are servants first. The former tend to be controlling and to give orders when it comes to decision making, while the latter take on leadership if they perceive an opportunity to serve. The difference is that servant-leaders have
as their primary aim to be helpful, while those who are leaders first lead because of their love for power. According to Greenleaf (1977), the best test of the servant-leader can be seen through answering the following questions:

- Do those served grow as persons? Do they, while being served, become healthier, wiser, freer, more autonomous, more likely themselves to become servants? And what is the effect on the least privileged in society? Will they benefit or at least not be further deprived? (p. 27)

Duignan (2007) interpreted these questions as the test for any form of leadership in Catholic schools. According to him, such leadership must be emancipatory, elevating, mutually empowering, and driven by love, and demands careful stewardship and husbandry of very valuable resources; that is people. Since the core of servant-leadership is service, self-interest should not motivate the servant-leader, instead, the leader should ascend to a higher plane of motivation (Pollard, 1996; Russell & Stone, 2002; Greenleaf, 1977).

For power sharing, collaboration, and development of people to be effective, leadership must be based on meeting the needs of the followers rather than of the organization (Patterson, 2003). Collaboration by the servant-leader means abandoning of the self to the strength of others and admitting that we cannot know or do everything by ourselves (DePree, 2004; Wheatley, 2004). The core of the servant-leadership model is the leader’s ability to turn the traditional hierarchical power structure upside down (Spears, 2002a), so as to put others first. Bruffee (1993) maintained that collaboration is the “… willingness to grant authority to, courage to accept the authority granted to oneself by peers and skill in the craft of interdependence” (p. 12). Active collaboration with followers allows the servant-leader access into the thoughts of followers for better service (Walls, 2004). Servant-leadership is service orientated and advocates a group orientated approach to decision making so as to strengthen institutions and to improve society (Spears, 1995).

As a servant, the leader is always searching, listening, and expecting to make the world a better place for his/her followers (Blanchard, 2002). The servant-leader listens to concerns and problems rather than acting on prejudgments or from a position of authority. Listening and getting to know the needs and aspirations of followers, and a readiness to empathize with their difficulties and frustrations is a servant-leader’s worthy responsibility (Autry, 2001; Kouzes & Posner, 2002). The servant-leader’s concern and care for people is reflected in listening to them, and in redirecting them when they deviate from goals; the focus is on service that leads to the growth and development of followers (Blanchard, 1997).

Servant-leaders retract from their aim if they are primarily motivated by the desire for power or personal gratification (Metcalf-Turner & Fischetti, 1996). They work hard to accept and empathize and not to reject outright the suggestions, methods, and ideals of others so as to develop people and help them strive and to flourish (Blanchard, 1997). For Russell and Stone (2002), vision, honesty, integrity, truth,
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modeling, pioneering, and appreciation of others are key attributes and values in servant-leadership that helps followers to grow.

From his study of Greenleaf (1970, 1977), Spears (1995, 1998) concluded that servant-leadership leads to a holistic approach to work, and to promotion of a sense of community at the workplace. According to Spears (1994), servant-leadership is a transformational approach to life that motivates leaders to build a better and more caring society. Greenleaf (1977) attributed the founding of caring societies to individuals; thus, he indicated that becoming a servant-leader begins within the servant and not within society. Autry (2001) observed that initiating the process of servanthood within a person demands a strong foundation of beliefs, values, and ethics, while role modeling of servant-leadership behavior encourages group functioning at a higher level.

In sum, servant-leadership is not a quick “fix approach” and should not be construed as something that can quickly be instilled within an institution or person (Spears, 1998). According to Spears, servant-leadership, at its core, is a long term transformational attitude to life and work and is essentially a way of being that creates the capacity for bringing about positive change throughout society. In transformational leadership, the leader’s primary focus is on organizational objectives. As indicated in servant-leadership, the focus is on followers, because leaders trust them to undertake actions that are in the best interest of the organization (Stone, Russell & Patterson, 2004).

Daft (2005) explained, “servant-leadership is leadership upside-down” (p. 230). This is because the leader does not seek to promote his/her self interest, but rather ardently desires to encourage followers to grow as persons and become leaders themselves. According to Daft, leadership flows out of service as it enables followers to grow and become what they are capable of being. Power is not the primary aim of the leader, but is shared with constituents. The servant-leader’s first responsibilities are to relationships and people. But what do these ideals look like in the context of “highly peopled communities,” such as Catholic high schools?