

Why a Lutheran School?

Education and Theology in Dialogue

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CHAPTER 2: AUSTRALIAN LUTHERAN SCHOOLS: THEIR DEVELOPMENT, AIMS AND PURPOSES

In order to provide the context for the consideration of the relationship of theology and education for Australian Lutheran school education, a brief overview of the development of Lutheran schools in Australia will be presented. This will look at the aims and purposes for the establishment of these schools, as well as some of the current issues which are facing them. Of particular concern will be the way in which Lutheran confessional theology has been influential in the development of the schools, and in the way in which it might now help to inform and shape the policy and practice of those schools. It will also be important to consider how such factors as the change in clientele in Australian Lutheran schools during the past two or three decades need to be taken into account in any examination of the implications of Lutheran theology for current Australian Lutheran school education.

The story of Lutheran schools in Australia could be divided into a number of different stages. However, the year 1966 provides a useful transition point into a new phase of development. The year 1966 was highly significant for Lutherans in Australia. For the first time since 1846, there was one Lutheran Church in Australia. During the intervening 120 years, a number of splits had occurred relating to differences in doctrines, attitudes and practices. With the formation of the Lutheran Church of Australia (LCA) in 1966, a more consolidated approach was developed in all areas of the work of the LCA, also in the area of Lutheran schooling. The 1960s also saw the beginning of a period of rapid growth in Lutheran schools and of changes in the church and society which would lead to new emphases and challenges for the schools and, therefore, to new understandings of the place of the Lutheran school in the ministry and mission of the Lutheran Church of Australia. It is these changed situations which will be examined in the light of Lutheran confessional theology.

1. THE FIRST PHASE - 1838-1966

An understanding of the first phase of the establishment, growth, decline and partial recovery of the Lutheran school movement in Australia prior to 1966 is crucial in appreciating the current approaches to Lutheran schools, their aims and purposes, and the theological presuppositions on which they operate. For this reason, an analysis of this first phase is important. There were, naturally, a number of different influences and variations within Lutheran schools during this time. However, there were also many common features which these schools demonstrated.

1. Historical background

The heritage of the Reformation

From the time of the Reformation, Lutheran churches had been concerned with education and schooling. Luther himself had emphasised the necessity of education for both boys and girls for the benefit of the church and the state. While in his writings such as his 'Sermon on keeping children in school' (LW 46: 219-258) Luther argued that the prime responsibility for education lay with parents, he also insisted on the necessity for 'the temporal authority to compel its subjects to keep their children in school' (LW 46: 256). Luther was particularly concerned with the provision of religious education, which he saw as the responsibility of the civil authorities (LW 45: 347-378), but he also argued for 'the establishment everywhere of the very best schools for both boys and girls' so that 'good and capable men and women' could be prepared for their responsibilities in 'the world' (LW 45: 368). Rather than 'spend such large sums every year on guns, roads, bridges, dams and countless similar items to ensure the temporal peace and prosperity of a city', Luther urged the spending of 'much more' for the provision of adequate education for the young (LW 45: 350).

Luther's approach to education was influenced by his view of the society of his day as a 'Christian' society and its rulers as 'Christian' rulers. He never tired of stressing the importance of education, both religious and 'secular' for all people and particularly for children. His writing of two catechisms (1529) and instructions for their use, reinforced his concern that people be instructed in the fundamental doctrines of their faith. In all this he was very ably assisted by Philip Melancthon, the so-called *praeceptor Germaniae*, 'teacher of Germany' (Grimm 1960: 75). Repeatedly in the early development of Lutheran schools in Australia, the appeal was made to Luther and his writings in support of the establishment and development of these schools. Many times Luther's high estimation of the office of teacher was quoted, both in an effort to attract people to teaching and also to urge reasonable payment for their services.

If I could leave the preaching office and my other duties, or had to do so, there is no other office I would rather have than that of schoolmaster or teacher of boys; for I know that next to that of preaching, this is the best, greatest, and most useful office there is. Indeed, I scarcely know which of the two is the better. For it is hard to make old dogs obedient and old rascals pious; yet that is the work at which the preacher must labor, and often in vain. Young saplings are more easily bent and trained, even though some may break in the process. It surely has to be one of the supreme virtues on earth faithfully to train other people's children: for there are very few people, in fact almost none, who will do this for their own (LW 46: 253).

The establishment of Lutheran schools in Australia

Within six months of the arrival in South Australia of the first group of German Lutherans in 1838, the *Southern Australian* of May 1, 1839 reported in a description of the migrants' village of Klemzig:

Not a soul is idle. Even the children who are too small to work, yet large enough to learn, will be found, in ordinary school hours, receiving the tuition of their excellent and indefatigable pastor (Schubert 198: 88).

Lutheran schools have been an integral part of the development of the Lutheran Church of Australia (Janetzki 1969: 193). This is not surprising, since one of the major factors in the decision by the more than 800 Lutheran settlers who left their Prussian homeland between 1838 and 1841 and who settled in South Australia, was their concern for the religious education of their children (Zweck 1988: 138). Unable to accept the enforced union of the Reformed and Lutheran churches which had been decreed by King Friedrich Wilhelm III of Prussia in 1830, the Lutheran 'separatists' chose emigration as the solution to their firm resolve to bring up their children in the teachings of confessional Lutheran theology. The newly-founded colony of South Australia presented an opportunity for worship and schooling in keeping with the dictates of their conscience and free from the persecution they had suffered in their Prussian villages. Thus, right from the beginning of Lutheran schools in Australia, a strong emphasis was placed on Lutheran confessional theology.

The Lutheran colonists also brought with them from their Prussian village background a high regard for education. Prussia had developed during the first decades of the nineteenth century

an effective scheme of compulsory schooling for the masses . . . Each parish, however small, was required by law to maintain at least one elementary school whose internal affairs were closely supervised by the pastor and other ecclesiastical members of the local committee of management (Zweck 1988: 135).

Within these schools, religious instruction was given as part of the curriculum - a cause of great distress for the Lutheran 'separatists' when this was provided by pastors of the united (Reformed and Lutheran) church.

Given this strong background of education and the concern for the religious education of their children in the strict Lutheran tradition, it was to be expected that schools would be established quickly in the colony by the new arrivals from Germany. Although several schools already existed in the colony of South Australia when the Lutherans landed late in 1838, their new schools were based on confessional principles.

By 1844, there were four Lutheran schools in operation in South Australia, and

the majority of Lutheran children between the ages of six and fourteen were receiving some schooling. In the remainder of the community, by comparison, there were less than 20 schools, catering for barely one-tenth of all children of school age (Zweck 1988: 139).

This emphasis on schooling was not without considerable sacrifice for the families, most of whom were farmers and laborers. The financial burden of providing money for the building of a church and school and for the modest salary of the pastor and teacher was very severe for many families, and some contributions were enforced with the threat of church discipline.

As each new village was established, 'a school was opened as soon as practicable after the commencement of settlement' (Zweck 1988: 139). This process continued to the extent that by 1875, at least 49 Lutheran schools had been, or were still in operation in South Australia (Zweck 1971). Schools were also begun during this time in Queensland and Victoria (Hauser 1990; Zweck 1971). One report suggests that around 1900 there were about 40 Lutheran schools in southern Queensland (Lodewyckx 1932: 192). Many of these schools seem to have operated on an intermittent basis and only a few were five-day a week schools (Hauser 1990: 17). Lodewyckx also reported (1932: 191) that by 1900 in South Australia there were 46 schools with 1600 students. The curriculum for these schools generally paralleled that of the government schools (Hayes 1978: 190), with the majority of instruction by the turn of the century being in English.

Lutheran post-elementary education began as early as 1842 with pastors Kavel and Fritzsche 'tackling the problem of instructing prospective pastors' (Hayes 1978: 196). The provision of instruction for confirmation and the training of pastors and teachers was to be the prime motivation for the operation of colleges at Lobethal, Hahndorf and Point Pass in South Australia and Murtoa in Victoria during the latter part of the nineteenth century. The college begun in 1890 at Murtoa was later to become Concordia College and move to Adelaide in 1905. The college opened in 1895 at Point Pass became known as Immanuel College and was relocated in Adelaide in 1923.

By the beginning of the twentieth century, support for Lutheran schools had begun to wane in many areas. New groups of German settlers who arrived in Australia after the initial shiploads which settled in South Australia often did not share the strong religious motivation of the earlier settlers. Many were very ready to use the government schools which had now developed and were not prepared to support financially the small Lutheran schools. There was also the continuing problem of the supply of suitable teachers willing to work for the meagre salary and who were fluent in both English and German.

The effects of World War 1

It was the outbreak of the first World War with its anti-German feeling which was to provide the most serious threat to the Lutheran schools. While the Lutheran schools in

Queensland had faded out of existence by 1914 and the schools in Victoria had submitted to inspection and registration of teachers as required by the government authorities (Hayes 1978: 195), the schools in South Australia were seen by the government as a threat, principally because of their retention of the German language for some instruction (Volk 1962). Since the Lutheran German population amounted to seven per cent of the total South Australian population (Hayes 1978: 195), this section was too large to be ignored in the anti-German war hysteria, particularly because the Lutheran population was clearly concentrated in particular areas. Under legislation passed by the South Australian parliament in November 1916, all of the 49 primary schools (except for the Koonibba school for aboriginal students) were closed, affecting more than 1600 students (Volk 1962: 40). The two secondary colleges were allowed to remain open.

Although in 1924 legislation was passed allowing Lutheran schools to reopen, the response by Lutheran congregations was very slow. By 1930, there were six schools (including Koonibba) open, catering for about 300 students (Volk 1962: 41). Further investigation will need to be made to determine why congregations were reluctant to involve themselves in schools once again. Hayes (1978: 201-202) suggests that a change in attitude towards religious instruction in government schools, as well as the development of Saturday and Sunday schools particularly for the teaching of religious education were significant factors in this tendency.

World War 2 and subsequent developments

The period of the Second World War again saw opposition to the Lutheran schools, but nothing like the severity of the earlier war experiences (Hayes 1978: 207). Immediately following the end of the War, new secondary colleges were established in Queensland (St Peters, Brisbane, 1945, and Concordia, Toowoomba, 1946) and New South Wales (St Pauls, Walla Walla, 1948). However, the problem of teacher shortage was still acute at both the primary and secondary school level and was one of the factors delaying further school expansion (Hayes 1978: 212).

In 1966 the Lutheran Church of Australia was formed by the amalgamation of the two major 'synods' which had resulted in the 1920's from the various factions which had developed in the Lutheran congregations after 1846. By this time, the number of Lutheran schools had grown only marginally since the end of World War two. Statistics collated in 1970, in the Official Report to the Convention of the Third General Synod of the Lutheran Church of Australia, list 24 Lutheran primary schools with an enrolment of 2,200 students and six secondary colleges with 2,225 students. While the primary student statistics do not include information on denominational affiliation, it can be assumed that the non-Lutheran component was quite small. However, 38 per cent of the secondary students were listed as non-Lutheran.

Suggestions have been made (Hauser 1990: 4) that the two 'synods' which amalgamated in 1966 had somewhat different approaches to Lutheran schooling. Further investigations will be necessary to test this hypothesis. However, the schools which were established

during this first phase shared common aims and purposes. It is these which will now be considered.

2. Original aims and purposes for Lutheran schools in Australia

The determination with which the first Lutheran groups to arrive in South Australia set up their schools, and the sacrifices which not only parents, but the whole village made to ensure schooling continued as effectively as possible, must not be underestimated. While theological presuppositions motivated some of the aims and purposes for these early Lutheran schools, there were other factors, such as tradition and necessity, which were important as well.

Nurture of the faith of children of the congregation

As indicated earlier, one of the motivating factors for the migration of the first ship-loads of German Lutherans to South Australia was their desire to provide Christian education for their children according to confessional Lutheran principles (Zweck 1973: 2). The schools were looked upon as 'nurseries of the church' (Zweck 1973:15), and they were seen to support parents in their God-given responsibility of bringing up their children 'in the discipline and instruction of the Lord' (Eph 6: 4). Congregations saw themselves as sharing in this responsibility with parents through the provision of the schools. The theological presuppositions for these attitudes will be considered further later, but this concern for nurture in the faith according to the Lutheran tradition for the children of the congregation continued to be fundamental in the thinking of congregations in the provision of Lutheran schools. In fact, concern has been raised by some writers (Albinger 1990), that too narrow a focus on this purpose for Lutheran schools has led to missed opportunities for developing other possible roles for the schools.

While this aim for Lutheran schools was stated positively in terms of nurture of the children of the congregation, it could also be seen in terms of a 'protective impulse' (Marty 1994: 66), 'protecting' the child through the church and its schools from the 'evil' of the world (cf. Janetzki 1969: 194, 198). A false antithesis of the 'world' as 'evil' and the 'church' as 'holy' led to this separatist thinking in the Australian scene as it did in the closely parallel North American scenario which Marty is describing. Often this was the result of confusion in the understanding of the doctrine of the 'two kingdoms' - an issue which will be considered more fully later.

Preservation of German language and culture

It was natural for the newly arrived German families to be concerned that their language and culture would be passed on to their children in their new home land (Janetzki 1969: 196). Of the first group of Germans to arrive in South Australia, only Pastor Kavel spoke English with any fluency (Hayes 1978: 192), and the continual arrival of new groups from Germany delayed the process of assimilation into the English speaking communities.

Since many of the German Lutherans were farmers living in small communities, this also perpetuated the German culture and language even though the Lutherans clearly wished to be seen as loyal citizens of Australia (Hayes 1978: 192). The Lutheran schools were seen as vital in ensuring that children were proficient in the German language even though more and more of the curriculum was taught in English. Zweck (1973: 15) points out that a crucial factor in this matter of language was the difficulty many Lutherans had of conceiving of an English-speaking Lutheran Church (cf. Hauser 1990: 25). This conceptual difficulty

was undoubtedly one of the chief reasons why towards the end of the century both synods insisted, almost to the point of hysteria, that the Lutheran Church would not survive in Australia if its schools ceased to exist (Zweck 1973: 15).

The effect of this retention of the German language on the attitude towards Lutheran schools at the time of World War One has already been mentioned (Volk 1962). Had the change to a fully English curriculum been made prior to 1914, the history of Lutheran schools may well have been somewhat different.

The need for basic schooling

Since government schools were not available to students in all areas of Australia, Lutheran schools helped to meet the need for general education through local primary schools and boarding facilities for country students at the secondary colleges. Even though there were difficulties in obtaining suitable teachers for the schools, and many schools closed, especially in Queensland, because of this, some of the teachers were skilled practitioners who provided a good general education similar in content to the curriculum used in government schools at the time. Zweck quotes Pastor Fritzsche, the second pastor to arrive in South Australia and a competent educator, as being concerned for the moulding of character, the development of ethics and morals in the students and 'informing and developing the mind and intellect' in order to produce 'good citizens' (1988: 140). While the religious concerns remained uppermost particularly as government schools developed and were viewed as a threat because of their secular nature, there was, however, a genuine concern in Lutheran schools for the total education of their students. This was also a major issue for the secondary colleges where competent teachers were particularly difficult to find (Hansen and Hansen 1995).

Preparation of pastors and teachers

For the small Lutheran church in Australia, separated from its homeland by months of sea travel, the supply of pastors and teachers to lead the work of the congregations and schools was critical. This was complicated by the scattered nature of the Lutheran settlements in Australia. It was the need to begin the preparation of pastors and teachers which Kavel used to urge Fritzsche to migrate to Australia (Zweck 1988: 142). Despite other pressing duties, Fritzsche began work at Lobethal in 1842 with a class of six students who desired to prepare for pastoral ministry (Zweck 1988: 143). Hayes comments (1978: 196):

This beginning underlines the major aim of Lutheran education beyond the day [primary] school. Lutheran secondary and tertiary educational institutions were regarded as the makers of church personnel, and worked closely together to achieve this purpose. Thus they were essentially institutions for confirmation, and the training of pastors, teachers and deaconesses.

As Hayes also points out (1978: 196), it was only in 1958 that Concordia College and Seminary in Adelaide began to operate with separate teaching staff for the two institutions.

While the preparation of pastors and teachers was the major concern, there was also the more general aim 'to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up' (Eph 4: 12 NIV). Just how far this extended into involvement by graduates of the Lutheran schools beyond their immediate communities is a matter for further investigation. However, the language problem which in some cases restricted students from proceeding to further studies in state institutions and the regular practice of students returning to the family farm or local business venture, would suggest that it was not widespread.

2. THE SECOND GROWTH PHASE - 1966-1996

The past 30 years have been characterised by rapid growth and change for Lutheran schools. Changes have occurred within the schools themselves as they have grown and as new schools have been established. Changes have occurred within the context in which the schools operate. Changes can also be seen in the way in which the aims and purposes of the schools are expressed. There have also been changes which raise questions as to whether some Lutheran schools still see themselves related closely to Lutheran confessional theology.

Lutheran schools find themselves facing crucial and fundamental questions as they attempt to relate to this context of expansion and change. The perceived lack of a 'clear philosophical vision' (Hauser 1990: 103) for these schools further complicates the issue. However, faced with pressure to meet these new circumstances, Lutheran schools need to guard against inappropriate responses, impulsive reactions, or changes which are merely superficial. It is vital that those factors which characterise a Lutheran approach to schooling are identified and retained, and, if possible, enhanced as attempts are made to meet these challenges of change. This applies also to the theological presuppositions on which Lutheran schools have been traditionally based.

1. Lutheran school growth and its impact

In order to indicate the extent of the growth of Lutheran schools in the 25 years from 1970 to 1995, a comparison of the number of schools and student enrolment statistics is instructive. In 1970, there were 24 Lutheran primary schools with an enrolment of 2,200 students and six secondary colleges with 2,225 students (LCA Report 1970). In 1995, official statistics from the Office of the National Director for Lutheran Schools indicated that there were 54 primary schools, 12 secondary schools and six schools enrolling students from pre-school to year 12. More than 20,000 students attended these schools. This represents an increase of more than 450 per cent from the student enrolment of 4,425 in 1970. It should also be pointed out that the membership of the Lutheran Church of Australia in 1995 was approximately 100,000 - only about 5 times the student population in Lutheran schools.

The growth of Lutheran schools

The major expansion of Lutheran schools since 1966 has occurred in the south-eastern area of Queensland. Lutheran schools have opened rapidly to help to meet a growing demand for school places in growth areas in the community (Hauser 1990: 92). In 1966 there were only two secondary colleges and one primary school in Queensland (Hauser 1990: Appendix B). Today, approximately half of the total Lutheran student population is in Queensland. A number of the newer schools have been planned as combined primary and secondary schools - a departure from the previous practice of separate institutions. The demand from parents for this type of schooling has been important in leading to this change.

New schools have also opened in the other states of Australia and existing ones have expanded. A number of these schools have become P-12 schools, combining primary and secondary schooling on the one campus. In some instances, a middle school has evolved. A Lutheran school which opened in Western Australia in 1997, completed the coverage of all states of Australia. Several small rural schools in western Victoria have recently closed with the students being absorbed into larger near-by Lutheran schools.

Government financial support

A very significant factor for the development of Lutheran schools was the promise by Sir Robert Menzies in his 1963 election policy speech of the introduction of federal government money for non-government schools in the form of grants for science laboratories and apparatus (Smart 1978: 73), a scheme extended to library buildings, materials and equipment and the training of librarians in 1968 (Smart 1978: 75). Together with money for non-government schools from state governments, the increased availability of commonwealth government money from 1963 allowed for more rapid expansion of Lutheran schools (Hauser 1990: 93). In fact, before long, the money provided by state and federal governments constituted the largest single source of revenue for recurrent funding for Lutheran schools, as well as contributing substantially to the capital costs of developing new schools.

While during the early years of Lutheran schooling in Australia there was a reluctance to accept government funding because of the fear of loss of independence through increased government control of schools which accepted government financial support (Zweck 1971), there was little hesitation in accepting government funding during the 1960s. However, in this regard, it is interesting to note the caution in the 1972 Lutheran Church of Australia Policy on Christian Education (Appendix A):

Where government aid is given without conditions affecting the basic purpose of the Christian school, it may be received with both good conscience and gratitude. However, the church must be alive to the possibilities of increased government control with increased financial dependence upon the government. An independent spirit must go hand in hand with the desire to maintain an independent church school, so that, in principle, the Christian school should be prepared to 'go it alone'.

Whether the option to 'go it alone' would, in fact, be a possible or viable one, would have to be tested. A number of the smaller Lutheran schools in particular experience financial difficulties even with the current levels of government support. The more recent (1997) LCA statement on Lutheran schools (Appendix C) recognises the present situation as follows:

The Lutheran Church of Australia will continue to accept financial assistance from the government under conditions determined by the government from time to time, provided that the confessional position of the church is in no way or at any time compromised.

Of particular interest for the consideration of Lutheran confessional theology and its relationship to education, is the concern expressed in this statement for the 'confessional position' of the Lutheran church and its schools.

Organisational changes relating to Lutheran schools in Australia

The formation of the Lutheran Church of Australia (LCA) in 1966 provided the opportunity to consolidate the agencies serving Lutheran schools and to re-evaluate the role of schools in the educational ministry of the LCA. The Board for Lutheran Schools with responsibility for all of the schools of the Lutheran Church of Australia was formed by combining committees which had previously worked separately in the primary and secondary scenes. This allowed for a much more coherent approach to the planning and development of Lutheran schools. With the provision of full time national and district Directors for Lutheran Schools from the beginning of the 1980s, more resources were available to try to draw the individual schools into a closer system. Not all schools and their supporting congregations have viewed this development positively, however. It would be true to say that strong systemic consciousness is still developing.

The Board for Lutheran Schools working together with the Directors has also developed policy statements and administrative procedures for the schools. This has also provided an opportunity for some reflection on the aims and purposes of Lutheran schools as a system and as part of the mission and ministry of the Lutheran Church of Australia, demonstrated by policy statements included in the Appendix.

The rural to urban shift of Lutheran schooling

As new Lutheran schools have been opened during the past years, there has been an increasing shift from a rural environment to an urban setting. Almost all of the newer schools are in city or suburban locations. Schools have, in fact, been at the forefront of the movement by the Lutheran Church of Australia from its rural roots into the urban environment. However, even though the student population is now heavily urban, most rural schools are maintaining enrolments with some actually increasing in size.

A significant change has occurred in the secondary scene where the newer colleges are seen as relating to the local community rather than being predominantly boarding institutions catering for the wider Lutheran community. The role of boarding in those colleges which still retain it is a situation under regular discussion.

Changes in student population in Lutheran schools

Lutheran schools are now catering for a new clientele. No longer are students in Lutheran schools predominantly from Lutheran families. Even among the so-called 'Lutheran' component, there would be students who are merely nominally Lutheran, particularly where a fee discount applies in the school for 'Lutheran' students. Some new schools have begun with a very small component of Lutherans in the student population (Hauser 1990). The new school begun at Redcliffe in 1971, had no Lutheran student at all in its first year of operation (Hauser 1990: 101). The provision of schooling for large numbers of non-Lutheran students has sometimes occurred in response to the request of parents in the community for such educational opportunities. At other times, a planned outreach strategy has been in place (Hauser 1990) to try to involve families in Christian outreach through the school and a congregation has been formed around the school. Current enrolment statistics indicate that in the Lutheran primary schools, about 38 per cent of the students are 'Lutheran' while in the secondary schools, about 32 per cent of the students are classified 'Lutheran'. In Queensland, where, through the recent expansion of Lutheran schools almost half of the Lutheran school population is situated, the percentages are about 26 per cent and 22 per cent respectively for primary and secondary students.

These changes have meant that the Lutheran school has moved from being somewhat separatist in outlook, with a German-Lutheran religious, cultural, linguistic and social background, to being mainstream and middle class. Together with the increase in the size of many of the schools, this has meant a loss of the close-knit 'family' ethos of many of the smaller rural schools. Fears have been expressed (Koch 1990: 54) that some of the larger primary schools and secondary schools appear to be moving away from a Lutheran school model towards an 'independent school' model. There has been the perception by some in

the church of a growing 'gap' between the church and many of its schools with the schools becoming more and more independent of the church. In this regard, the impact of increasing school fees also needs closer investigation, even though many Lutheran schools do offer a discounted fee for students from Lutheran families. Research is needed to try to determine what the enrolment patterns are for Lutheran schools and what use Lutheran families actually make of the opportunities available to them for the education of their children through Lutheran schools.

Preparation of teachers for Australian Lutheran schools

In 1968, Lutheran Teachers College was established to provide theological education for teachers. This theological preparation had previously been done through programs attached to the former two seminaries for the training of pastors. By providing this institution, the Lutheran Church aimed to increase the number of theologically qualified teachers available for Lutheran schools and so to alleviate to some extent the teacher shortage. The program developed by Lutheran Teachers College was a one year full time theological course which was normally undertaken once students had completed their teacher education at a state university. The program is also available through a distance education mode for teachers already in schools.

The rapid growth of Lutheran schools has maintained the shortage of teachers who have completed some form of theological study. Currently about 60 per cent of primary school teachers have completed the theological studies required for Lutheran Teacher Accreditation as set down by the Board for Lutheran Schools. However, less than 10 per cent of secondary teachers have done so. A theological orientation program is going some way towards remedying this situation, as is a new staffing policy which sets out conditions of employment for teachers, including required theological studies.

Of particular concern with the opening of new schools has been the shortage of suitably qualified and experienced administrators for Lutheran schools. Efforts are being made to address this for the future, particularly through a Master of Education program at Lutheran Teachers College. The gender imbalance in leadership in Lutheran schools is an issue which also requires urgent attention.

2. The context of social and cultural change for Australian Lutheran schools

Not only have changes occurred within Lutheran schools themselves. The schools have also had to respond to challenges which have come to them from changes in the context in which they operate, particularly from social and cultural changes.

Pluralism

In evaluating schooling in the current pluralistic, postmodern, western world, Hargreaves (1994: 58) writes:

One of the greatest educational crises of the postmodern age is the collapse of the common school; a school tied to its community and having a clear sense of the social and moral values it should instil (Hargreaves 1994: 58).

While this general evaluation of schooling applies also to Australian schools, the Lutheran school still attempts to remain 'tied to its community', and to reflect the values of that community. But given the changes which have happened in society, as well as, more specifically, in Lutheran school enrolments, the Lutheran school has to accept that the community to which it now relates has become much more diverse and pluralistic.

Surveying the general Australian scene, the Catholic writer Tony Kelly argues (1993: 29):

For some time now, it has been a lament of even the most critical thinkers that the increasing pluralism of our culture no longer permits a meeting of minds and hearts on the discussion of even the deepest moral issues. The reason for such polarization is the lack of any shared story.

What beliefs and values are still common? Has even humanism run its course as John Carroll suggests when he postulates (1993: 232) that 'humanism is dead' and 'has been so since the late nineteenth century, and it is about time to quit it'? What point of reference still remains as a basis for education? Where is the common ground or the 'shared story'?

Specifically for today's Lutheran schools, what base is there left to build on for students? As Hill points out (1989: 4), it is no longer possible (if indeed it ever was) to teach as if there is only one 'right view': multi-ethnic and multi-faith societies mean that students 'are obliged to live with the evidence that their most fundamental beliefs about reality are contested and contestable.' In this regard, however, the attempt by the National Professional Development Program in Western Australia through its Cross-Sectoral Consortium to produce an agreed minimum values framework for Islamic, Christian and Jewish schools and relate these to Student Outcome Statements for Australian state schools, is an interesting development (cf. Hill 1996).

Pluralism can also slide into relativism. This is particularly so if 'there is no means to discover any universal truth' and, therefore, 'equal weight [must be given] to all individual preferences, whatever they are, so long as they do not interfere with the preferences of others' (Gascoigne 1991:18). Gascoigne points out that in order to prevent this from happening, there is the necessity 'to present the truth claims of one's own tradition while at the same time respecting the integrity of other traditions' (1991: 20). He suggests against the background of Australian Catholic schools and the traditions and value system which these schools represent, that this must be done 'from a standpoint of commitment to one's own tradition and of respect for 'what is true and holy' in other traditions' (1991: 20).

Secularisation

Speaking from a United States, Roman Catholic background, but with validity also for students in Australian Lutheran schools, Michael Warren argues (1992b: 248):

"Those striving for a living discipleship . . . dwell in two cultures: the wider social culture and economic system of our nation, and the narrower religious culture that exists within that wider "secular" culture. An important difference separates these two cultures.

It is the recognition of this difference between these 'two cultures' which is crucial for Lutheran schools. It is particularly so because, as Warren goes on to point out (1994: 9), 'the social context in which faith is being lived today and which is shaping the spirits of Christian people tends to function outside their awareness'. For this reason, the structure shaping our spirits needs to be brought 'from the wings, where unseen it directs our actions, to the front of stage, where it may stand disclosed in full light' (1994: 7).

Warren warns against the insidious nature of this influence of the dominant secular culture in the formation of children when he argues:

both religion and the wider culture claim that the meanings they propose are the ultimate ones. The wider culture . . . makes its claims to ultimacy *covertly*; a religious system makes its claims overtly. The problem is that the covert claims can be more powerful because, never explicitly made, they are harder to identify and resist . . . The wider culture forms us, creates in us "habits of the heart" and dispositions needed by the economic system, and we tend not just to overlook what is happening, but to be unable to notice (1989: 33).

It is important in this regard, to recognise the impact which secular humanism has exerted on the whole understanding of education, also in Lutheran schools. In spite of theological presuppositions which stress the interdependence of people in community, the value of each individual as a created and redeemed person, the influence of original sin in the lives of people, and so on, Lutheran schools have also become contaminated with individualism, competition, a 'success ethic', and the tendency to see education in economic rationalist terms. Lutheran schools have been in danger of following, more or less unquestioningly, the current educational theory and practice of the state system.

Over against this emphasis on secularisation, we have the observations of Michael Trainor in relation to youth in Australia (1990: 7), that 'Australians are . . . tantalized by the religious'. Whether the phenomenon Trainor identifies is better described as 'the spiritual' rather than 'the religious' could be debated. However, Trainor continues (1990:7):

The reason for this fascination comes from an implicit search for something more in life - and this search is ultimately a search for God. From this viewpoint, one can read the predicament facing our youth as an implicit

search for ultimate meaning in life. The deviant, delinquent, and self-destructive tendencies in our young people reflect the search for ultimate truth and being.

Working from the perspective of religious education in Catholic schools, Cyril Hally asks the very general question (1990:13): 'How can we introduce the transcendent God to the secular mind of our contemporaries?' He then provides his own answer:

Given the calling into question of the secular ideologies, there is an opening for the recognition of the limitations of immanence and for the necessity of the transcendent and hence for the creation of a new and functional plausibility for faith.

As well as raising issues such as these, the impact of secularism in society has also thrown a sharper focus on the church and its schools. In particular, the role of the church in providing a critique of society and its values has been highlighted more sharply. Although Richard Osmer is writing about the results of research conducted by Search Institute in the United States of America, his comments are very appropriate for the Australian scene as well (Schuller 1993: 132-133).

First, churches can no longer assume that other institutions, like the media or school, will reinforce the values and beliefs that church are trying to teach. Second, congregations must begin to view themselves as a cognitive minority within the larger social order. This shift would mean developing new and more aggressive strategies of handing on and maintaining their values and beliefs over against the surrounding culture . . . What is truly shocking is churches' failure to acknowledge their past confusion of church and culture, to accept the judgment that currently is falling upon them, and to move to a new understanding of their role in American society . . . What is needed is repentance of the underlying ecclesiology that made these churches so dependent on cultural institutions that are no longer willing to do churches' work for them and, often, are actively hostile to values and beliefs that they espouse.

The impact of secularisation raises a number of key issues to be faced by Lutheran schools. Among the questions to be addressed is the strategy the church can adopt to play a more active role in witnessing to its beliefs and values in the face of increasing secularisation. Lutheran schools will also be challenged to be involved more fully in the critique of society and in the promotion of a Christian world view. The role of Lutheran confessional theology in helping to provide insights for issues such as these will be considered more fully later.

Privatisation of religion

Related to the increased secularisation of the Australian society is the growing inclination towards the 'privatisation' of religion. With the tendency to separate the 'sacred' and the 'secular' and increasing emphasis on individualism, God seems to have less and less to do with the 'things that matter' in the life of the individual and the community (cf. Crawford and Rossiter 1993b: 3-5). The challenge to live out the implications of faith in Jesus Christ in daily living is often unheeded. Religious affiliation and its impact on life is regarded as a private matter. As Cooper found in relation to her research with parents of children in Lutheran schools (1994: 74):

The contemporary adult, while often harbouring a deep longing for community, is largely a private person. This is manifest in their reserving the right to disclose or not their personal values and meanings in a given social setting . . . When asked whether they would value opportunities to share their religiousness with others, most were sure that this was not something they were looking for.

One aspect of this issue is illustrated in a decrease in denominational loyalty among Protestant church attenders. The recent 'National Church Life Survey' of Protestant churches in Australia (Kaldor et al. 1994: 225-227) gathered data which clearly indicated that 'denominational barriers are becoming increasingly permeable. Some attenders, in particular younger ones, see the Protestant church as a supermarket - they shop around for the right congregation in which they can feel comfortable'. 'The mobility of society' and 'the apparent decline in denominational loyalty' are important factors which act 'as a catalyst for people changing congregations'. It would appear that individual choice and personal preference are more important here than denominational loyalty, adding to the perception of religion as 'my own thing'. The role of a Lutheran school as a denominationally based institution, needs evaluation in the light of these findings.

Changes in Australian family structures

Although the important role of the family in relation to the education of children will be considered more fully later, some comment is also necessary on changes which the family as a social unit in Australian society is experiencing.

From his research, Hugh Mackay has concluded that (1993: 55-56) a 'family consisting of a breadwinning father, a stay-at-home mother and a couple of dependent children is now a small minority, accounting for less than one quarter of all families'. Contributing to this are factors such as '60 per cent of all mothers of dependent children now [having] paid employment outside the home', and also 'new patterns of marriage and divorce'.

While it may be true, as Mackay suggests (1993: 227), that there is 'a genuine desire on the part of many Australians to recapture some of the values which have been traditionally associated with family life', there can no longer be the assumption that the family,

including the Christian family, is the solid, stable, simple unit which it once appeared to be.

As Lutheran schools relate to the parent, parents, or primary carers of the students in their care, more attention will need to be paid to the actual home situation from which the children come. Issues such as parental involvement in school activities will require reassessment. The provision of positive male role models as early as possible in the primary school has become a matter of urgency. The concept of 'family' will need to be handled more sensitively, as will issues of divorce and remarriage, 'blended' families and new parent figures, and the effect of these on children.

Schools will also have to assess how far they can go in functioning as a support agency for children and adults with family related problems, particularly with growing 'intensification . . . in teachers' work as time and space are increasingly compressed in the postmodern world' (Hargreaves 1994: 138). As schools take on more and more functions which were once part of the role of the extended family, how will teachers handle their 'commitment to care' (Hargreaves 1994: 145), particularly as they also face possible difficulties within their own family relationships and as they struggle to handle the situation which Hargreaves portrays (1994: 150) as becoming 'trapped in having to construct and maintain a persona of perfectionism'?

Changes in schooling

Schools have sometimes been depicted as pendulums swinging back and forth between educational fads and fancies. But it is not always educational theory or well researched educational decision making which gives the impulse to the pendulum. It may be little more than a politically motivated 'viewpoint of economic rationality' which promotes "'efficiency, effectiveness, equity and (market) excellence" as the four Es of education' (Beare and Slaughter 1993: 36). Pressure is also exerted from 'the marketplace of parental choice' and 'the cafeteria curriculum of widened course choices' (Hargreaves 1994: 58-59) in response to the concerns of various pressure groups.

Hargreaves (1994: 3) characterises the current 'postindustrial, postmodern' context of schooling as one of

accelerating change, intense compression of time and space, cultural diversity, technological complexity, national insecurity and scientific uncertainty. Against this stands a modernistic, monolithic school system that continues to pursue deeply anachronistic purposes within opaque and inflexible structures.

From an Australian perspective, Beare and Slaughter (1993: 15) argue similarly when they write:

schools are in difficulty now not simply because of immediate, pragmatic issues, important as these may appear to be. Rather it is because within the

present context - a context of compulsive technological dynamism, competitive individualism and a radical loss of meaning and purpose - schools are put in an impossible position. They stand at the crucial interface between past and future, charged both with the conservation of culture and with its radical renewal. . . . No one could doubt that these are demanding times.

As schools attempt to respond to this situation, a common vision built on shared beliefs and values becomes particularly crucial. Australian Lutheran schools will also have to face these new emphases which are emerging in schools and attempt to come to grips with the challenges placed before them, and in doing so, continue to reflect their Lutheran theological tradition.

3. New emphases in Lutheran schooling

In response to the situation of growth and change, new emphases have emerged in the aims and purposes for Lutheran schools and in the ways in which the schools seek to implement their programs. While some of these simply extend previous aims and purposes, others highlight areas of concern for further investigation. Aspects of these new developments will be identified briefly so that theological issues related to them can be examined in the following chapters.

The 'nurture-outreach' debate

One major issue related to the change of student population has been the ongoing discussion as to whether the prime purpose of Lutheran schools is the nurture of the Christian faith and life of the students, or outreach through the school to children of non-churched families (Albinger 1990). Debate has arisen, which has often generated much more heat than light, concerning the way in which the nurture and outreach functions of the Lutheran school are related. The attempt in Lutheran circles to characterise certain schools as operating on a 'nurture model' (often with the implication that this is a more traditional and less valid approach) while other schools demonstrate an 'outreach model', has obscured the important reality that, under the power of the Holy Spirit, the potential for both nurture and evangelism exists within all schools. From the perspective of Lutheran theology, Lutheran schools recognise that the way in which the word of God relates to each individual student depends on a number of factors, particularly the previous faith commitment of that student. Only the Holy Spirit knows whether the student is hearing the word of God as a call to faith or as a challenge to grow in faith: the role of the Lutheran school is to bring the student and the word of God together so that the Holy Spirit can do the Spirit's work. In doing this, the Lutheran school holds to the promise that God's word will always achieve the purposes for which God has sent it (Isa 55:11).

Part of the nature of the Christian community is to witness to the faith which has formed that community. That witness will show in the life and work of the Lutheran school

through committed staff and students. There will, therefore, be an impact on the non-Christian student in the school. Non-Christian students and their parents need to be informed clearly at the time of enrolment of the nature of the Christian school community. The Lutheran school can in this way be a bridge between the home and the church and a point of contact for the congregation with the family.

The purpose of religious education in Lutheran schools

A key area related to the nurture-outreach debate is the approach to religious education in Lutheran schools. For the purposes of appropriate and relevant religious education, the diversity of religious experience and commitment of the students needs careful and sensitive consideration. It is also important for Lutheran schools to be realistic about both the possibilities and the limitations of the religious education classroom. As Rossiter points out in respect to teachers in Catholic schools (1998: 20-26), teachers in Lutheran schools also use terms such as 'faith development' and 'faith formation' in ways which might suggest that the outcome of religious education depends more on the role of the teachers than the work of the Holy Spirit in the lives of the students. The distinctions which are sometimes made between terms such as 'religious information', 'transformation' and even 'indoctrination' can tend to confuse the understanding of what is happening in the lives of students through their religious education classes.

Instructive in this regard is the discussion which has occurred in the Catholic schools of the history of 'catechesis' and its relationship to religious education. Here writers such as Rummery (1975), Warren (1981, 1989), Rossiter (1982), Purnell (1985), and Crawford and Rossiter (1985, 1988) have considered the distinction which needs to be made by teachers and schools between 'catechesis' and religious education which is part of the school program. Catechesis is seen as part of the total educational ministry of the church to its committed members. Religious education, on the other hand, is part of the program of the church school for the total student population, taking into consideration the whole spectrum of faith commitment and life experiences of students in the school.

Brian Hill (1971a, 1978, 1990a) also argues strongly for sensitivity and care in programs of nurture and evangelism in all church schools. He reminds schools (1971a: 48) that 'when Christians teach in order to proselytise or disciple, they are acting specifically and overtly as "church".' He is particularly concerned that teachers do not abuse their position in schools by trying to coerce faith responses from children, and he also warns against 'indoctrination' (1990a: 72) as an attack on the autonomy of children and young people. The work of Cooper (1994) in researching the role of non-Lutheran parents in the religious education of their children in Lutheran primary schools has also indicated the necessity of care in developing a partnership with non-Lutheran parents, both parents who are active in another denomination, and those parents who are not members of any Christian congregation.

In considering the responses of students to the religious education program of the Lutheran school, Lutheran teachers will also be conscious of the warning of Christ himself in

numerous parables (e.g. the sower, the wedding banquet, the ten girls) that there will be various responses to the message of the gospel. Some students will be confirmed in their faith and will grow in their commitment to it; some students will receive the content of religious education merely as religious information; some students may reject it altogether. Even though it is not the response which is 'hoped for' (Rossiter 1998:21), the response of rejection must also be expected and accepted in the Lutheran school. In this way the integrity of the individual student can be respected, and the importance of faith commitment emphasised. As Hill argues (1989: 5):

Our approach to religious studies will be inadequate unless it presupposes a view of human beings as creatures capable of conscious reflection and choice, which is stoutly maintained throughout the Bible . . . Jesus had an embarrassingly high respect for the right of individuals to know what they were getting into. Those who clamoured to follow him were told to count the cost carefully before doing so, and he put things so plainly that many people were in fact deterred and decided not to follow him.

While these cautions need to be heard clearly, there is also the necessity for some understanding by all students of the denominational heritage and traditions which the Lutheran school represents. Even though the religious education classroom may not be an appropriate situation for detailed instruction in Christian doctrine in general and the doctrines of the Lutheran church in particular, yet religious education has to move beyond approaches that are simply personal development or moral education. Even though, as Crawford and Rossiter point out (1995b: 3), 'the very idea of 'handing on' tradition and identity has now become problematic', students, particularly at the senior secondary level, have to begin to grapple with what Trainor (1990: 10) calls 'a relevant dialectic between our Christian heritage (the Tradition) and our Australian society'. However, while students may be looking to develop a religious identity, they may not be ready to align themselves with the identity of any particular religious or Christian tradition. As Crawford and Rossiter observe (1993: 2), 'they tend to locate *formal religion* in one corner of their lives and their *search for a spirituality* in another . . . they are choosing to seek out a spirituality more independent of their traditional religion'.

The Lutheran school looks for, hopes for and prays for faith and commitment from its students. The call of Jesus Christ to a relationship of faith and discipleship is central for the life and work of the Lutheran school. But the school is also aware that the influence of the religious education program may be in the area of pre-evangelism - helping students become more aware of the spiritual dimension and the relevance of religious belief in their daily lives. In biblical terms, the school may be involved in a sowing ministry rather than a reaping ministry or even a nurturing ministry.

One of the difficulties in religious education for Australian Lutheran schools has been the lack of a common curriculum for these schools. Schools, and individual teachers, have often 'done their own thing' in relation to religious education, with mixed results. Work

has been undertaken to produce materials for an Australian Lutheran curriculum for Christian Studies. It is anticipated that the wide spectrum of prior religious experience which is now represented by students in Lutheran schools will be addressed through the new materials.

The committed Christian students in Lutheran schools

A challenge which has emerged, particularly at the upper primary and secondary school level, is how to provide support for the strongly committed students, both Lutheran students and students of other Christian denominations. Although research needs to be done to document the area, anecdotal evidence suggests that it is just these students who sometimes feel most discriminated against in some of the Lutheran schools. There are also reports of expressions of disillusionment on the part of these students in relation to what the school claims to be as a Christian community and the reality which some of these students experience.

While committed Christian students will benefit from the total religious program of the school, they will also require additional opportunities to 'clarify values, strengthen their faith and deepen their prayer life' (Malone 1984: 11). Further consideration of these issues will be taken up in chapter five, when dealing with the purpose and practice of religious education in Lutheran schools.

School worship in Lutheran schools

The Lutheran school is an educational community and a worshipping community. Communal worship has always been regarded as a fundamental component of the daily activity of the Lutheran school. According to Lutheran theological understanding, it is in worship that Christ comes most clearly and directly to his people to serve them through word and sacrament, uniting them with himself and with each other and empowering them through the Holy Spirit to respond to him in confession, praise, thanksgiving, prayer and service.

Former Lutheran school chaplain, John Kleinig (1977: 6) argues:

Worship is . . . the one indispensable activity in our schools. Unless we let God's Word be right at the centre of every school day our schools will only be theoretically based on Christ and His Word. When we worship we acknowledge Him as Lord and let Him exercise His Lordship in our schools.

While worship is crucial and central for Lutheran schools, worship has also become one of the most difficult areas for the schools to handle. Of particular concern is the issue that within the school community, there are students who, as believing Christians, are seen by Lutheran theology as belonging to the body of Christ (the church catholic) while other students do not. For the believing students, worship can 'complement the formal teaching of religion' and can give students 'experiences of prayer and liturgy which can help them to

recover a sense of awe and belonging and to feel exuberance and enjoyment in the rituals and ceremonies of their faith' (Crawford and Rossiter 1989: 20). For the non-believing students, it remains an issue as to what level of participation is possible in worship and what forms of worship are culturally appropriate for members of the school community who are not yet committed to the Christian faith.

Lutheran schools are challenged by this situation as they try to maintain the centrality of worship in the life of the school. That worship is an integral and vital part of the life of the community which they have chosen to join, is an issue for careful discussion with staff at the time of their employment, and with students (or parents on behalf of their children) at the time of enrolment.

On the other hand, the Lutheran school is also challenged to ensure that worship does not become so innocuous and bland that it becomes little more than a nice, pious way to start the day. The end result of this is that worship becomes little more than entertainment. Lutheran schools need to devote resources and time to ensure that relevant and appropriate forms of worship are developed for the school community. In this way, students can be helped to appreciate the mystery of worship and Lutheran school worship can draw on the heritage of liturgical worship and the rites and practices which have become part of the Christian tradition. Lutheran schools have an important role here in initiating students into Lutheran communal worship practices.

In addition to communal worship, Lutheran schools are also concerned to foster the spirituality and prayer life of individuals and small groups within the school community. One important avenue for this is to ensure that prayer is seen to be a vital aspect of all which happens in the school, the teaching and learning, discipline and counselling, administration and all interpersonal relationships. The development of intercessory prayer in particular is important for Lutheran schools.

The demand for quality education

Since their founding, Lutheran schools have been concerned to provide the best educational environment possible. However, two related factors, the lack of qualified Lutheran teachers and the shortage of finance for teachers' salaries and for teaching resources, meant that the standard of education was not always as high as intended (cf. Hansen and Hansen 1995). Although teachers worked faithfully and conscientiously, often for very meagre salaries, their lack of formal training and experience led, at times, to less than favourable results for the students (Hansen and Hansen 1995: 214).

The availability of recurrent funding from the state and federal governments for non-government schools during the past three decades has played an important role in changing this situation. Lutheran schools are now well staffed and resourced and offer a high standard of education, a factor which attracts non-Lutheran parents to Lutheran schools. In fact, some writers (Koch 1990: 60) now suggest that the pendulum has swung in the opposite direction to the extent that during recent years the

[academic] achievement was at the expense of adequate attention to the spiritual development in pupils. The emphasis on the spiritual was still there, but in comparison to the emphasis on academic development seen in expenditure of resources and time, it ran a poor second.

Lutheran schools have claimed that their aim is to provide a quality education that caters for the whole person (Appendix C): this would imply a continuing vigilance for the schools and their administrators. A critical question in this regard could be that an emphasis on 'success' and 'excellence' may be replacing a concern for 'service'. Fundamental theological considerations related to issues such as these will be examined in the next chapter.

Church/school relationships for Lutheran schools

Some issues affecting the relationship between church and school have already been identified, particularly in the discussion of the 'nurture-outreach debate'. However, recent developments in both Lutheran schools and congregations have raised important questions on how this relationship is to be understood. Again here there are major theological considerations which will need to be examined later.

One area of concern is what Stolz (1995: 4) identifies as the 'institutional gap' and the 'communication gap' between the Lutheran church and the Lutheran school. Stolz maintains (1995: 3): 'that the institution of the church and the institution of the school in the vast majority of cases no longer interrelate with one another in an informed and informing way'. Koch (1990: 54) warns that schools can begin to develop a life of their own as institutions and so lose their character as 'expressions of the body of Christ at work in a particular locality'. The concern for 'self-perpetuation and propagation' may 'militate against' the role of the school as an agency 'to convey the word of God'. Although recognising the importance of the opportunities for ministry which Lutheran schools can provide, Koch also cautions against the possibility of regarding schools as 'indispensable to the life of the church' or as 'the optimal educational agency for bringing the gospel to young people in all situations' rather than as 'important, significant, but optional' (1990: 56).

Another critical area presently under discussion concerns the practice of worship in the school and the way in which that relates to worship in the local congregation or group of congregations. Traditionally the view has been that the school provides the bridge between the children and their parents and the congregation. The worshipping community to which the children and parents were expected to relate for word and sacrament ministry was the local congregation. However, as has been mentioned already in relation to the expansion of Lutheran schools in south eastern Queensland, some schools were established particularly to provide a focus around which a worshipping congregation might be established (Hauser 1990). The question which has now arisen is whether the Lutheran school is a bridge to the worshipping congregation or whether the school in fact forms a worshipping congregation. For many families, the only regular worship in which they

participate (both children and parents) is worship within the school. For the church there is the need to consider whether to try to serve the people where they are in the school, rather than attempt to move them into the less familiar, and therefore less comfortable, environment of the congregation.

The Lutheran church, at the national level through the Board for Lutheran Schools and at the local level through school boards and committees, and the schools themselves are anxious to address issues such as these. Fundamental for such discussion will be some of the theological issues to be raised in the next chapters.

Perceived teacher commitment in Lutheran schools

Concern has been expressed, also by some teachers themselves, about changes in the way teachers in Lutheran schools perceive their vocation. An important factor here has been the change during the past two or three decades as teachers in Lutheran schools have moved from salaries and conditions related to other 'Church Workers' in the Lutheran Church of Australia to conditions laid down in state awards. With increases in salary and with greater demand for teacher accountability, there has been a lamenting of a perceived lowering of the sense of 'ministry' in teachers of Lutheran schools. A tension seems to have developed between what might be termed 'piety' and 'professionalism'. In this regard, a number of issues present themselves for further investigation. One of these is whether the level of commitment of Lutheran teachers has really declined or whether the way in which it is demonstrated in the life and work of the school and the local congregation has changed. Another issue is whether teachers can be expected to fill the large number of roles in the local congregation (such as Sunday School teacher, organist, congregational secretary or treasurer, lay reader, even grave digger) which were once expected of Lutheran teachers. How much this loss of commitment is actually the case, and how much it is a difficulty in coming to terms with new situations, requires closer analysis.

An interesting side issue has been the discussion by some teachers of the possible formation of a 'teaching order' within the Lutheran school system. Single women teachers in particular, who see a life-long vocation in teaching, have suggested that such an 'order' might provide considerable support for them in their teaching ministry. In considering this option, important theological issues related to vocation would have to be investigated.