



Digital Commons@

Loyola Marymount University
LMU Loyola Law School

Journal of Catholic Education

Volume 5 | Issue 1

Article 7

9-1-2001

Principals and Pastors Sharing School Leadership: Perspectives From Nebraska and New South Wales

Barbara L. Brock

Jennifer Fraser

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.lmu.edu/ce>

Recommended Citation

Brock, B. L., & Fraser, J. (2001). Principals and Pastors Sharing School Leadership: Perspectives From Nebraska and New South Wales. *Journal of Catholic Education*, 5(1). <http://dx.doi.org/10.15365/joce.0501072013>

This Focus Section Article is brought to you for free with open access by the School of Education at Digital Commons at Loyola Marymount University and Loyola Law School. It has been accepted for publication in *Journal of Catholic Education* by the journal's editorial board and has been published on the web by an authorized administrator of Digital Commons at Loyola Marymount University and Loyola Law School. For more information about Digital Commons, please contact digitalcommons@lmu.edu. To contact the editorial board of *Journal of Catholic Education*, please email JCE@nd.edu.

PRINCIPALS AND PASTORS SHARING SCHOOL LEADERSHIP: PERSPECTIVES FROM NEBRASKA AND NEW SOUTH WALES

BARBARA L. BROCK

Creighton University

JENNIFER FRASER

St. Michael's Primary School

This paper reports the results of a study of the roles and interactions of principals and pastors in Catholic elementary schools in New South Wales and Nebraska. Findings revealed the importance of clearly defined roles and frequent communications and established a profile of the components of successful principal-pastor working relationships.

The roles of pastor and principal in Catholic elementary schools are inherently complex and intertwined, providing an administrative structure with unique opportunities for shared leadership. Research on effective schools suggests that shared leadership and collegial interactions are fundamental to the development of strong community and subsequent attainment of school goals (Sergiovanni, 1995; Speck, 1999). Consequently, the development of complementary roles and supportive interactions between principal and pastor are important considerations.

The Catholic school is considered the Church's preferred means of educating its children. If the parish has an elementary school, the pastor is responsible for the successful operation of that school. According to Canon Law, the pastor is "to take special care for the Catholic education of children and young adults" (Canon Law Society of America, 1983, p. 201).

Pastors, whose educational preparation is usually in theology, delegate the operation of the school to principals (Wojcicki, 1983) and rely on the principal's professional competence in operating the school (Hall & Schneider, 1973). The pastor's role is to maintain an appropriate level of visibility and involvement in the school (Anderson, Boyle, Bray, & Clark, 1990) and to provide financial viability and parish support. Use of too much author-

ity interferes with the principal's role; however, too little involvement is perceived as not providing leadership (Wojcicki, 1983) or lacking interest in the school.

While the importance of studying the roles and relationships of principals and pastors has been suggested by prior research (Fraser, 1998; Wojcicki, 1983), few studies have been undertaken to explore the development of this phenomenon.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

School leadership requires vision, political acumen, and an environment in which leaders and followers work together for the good of the entire organization. Effective school leaders use a team approach to create a sense of ownership within the school community (Hughes, 1994; Seyfarth, 1999; Snowden & Gorton, 1998). According to Hughes, synergy rather than individual energy is paramount.

Leaders in Catholic schools are charged with creating school cultures that embrace the teachings and traditions of the Catholic Church, central to which is the importance of community. Subsequently, caring for the common good and creating a sense of community are embedded in a school leader's task (Groome, 1998). Their work is underscored by the need to build connections and harmony among and between people (Sergiovanni, 1995).

Given the shared leadership roles between principals and pastors in Catholic elementary schools, the researchers initiated a study to explore what factors are considered important to the establishment of successful working relationships. The intent of the authors was to increase awareness of the need for harmonious partnerships between pastors and principals and to discover the prerequisites for successful collaborations.

METHOD

PARTICIPANTS

Two dioceses, one in New South Wales and one in Nebraska, were selected for the study. The researchers' interest in examining Catholic school leadership issues on an international basis influenced the selection of locations in Australia and the United States. The two dioceses were selected for their geographic accessibility to the researchers and the practicality of conducting personal interviews.

Principals and pastors of 36 randomly selected parishes with elementary schools in the Nebraska or New South Wales dioceses were mailed invitations to participate. Total respondents included 32 principals and 16 pastors: 17 principals and 8 pastors from New South Wales and 15 principals and 8 pastors from Nebraska. However, the purposive sampling procedures and small

number of participants decreased the ability to generalize the findings of the study.

ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURE

The schools, termed elementary (K-8) in the Nebraska diocese and primary (1-6) in the New South Wales diocese, were similar in terms of the shared leadership of principal and pastor. Each school was attached to a parish with the pastor and a principal forming the administrative team. At the diocesan level, however, differences occurred in administrative practices, hiring, and funding.

The Catholic elementary schools in New South Wales are established by the diocese and administered by the Catholic Education Office (CEO). They receive state and federal funding and require registration in order to operate. A panel formed by the CEO and consisting of a community representative, the pastor, a peer principal, and the school's consultant selects principals. While the pastor's input into the selection is important, the Catholic Education Office is considered the principals' employing authority. Principals are accountable to both the diocesan CEO and the local pastor.

Individual parishes with the permission of the diocesan bishop operate the Nebraska schools. Pastors retain ultimate authority and responsibility for the parish school. The Catholic School Office has the role of consultant in educational matters. Hiring is the responsibility of the pastor, usually in conjunction with a search committee comprised of board members and parents. While the committee makes recommendations, the pastor usually makes the final decision and is considered the employing authority.

The principals in both locations are responsible to the pastors and diocesan officials and are also subject to diocesan policies and state regulations regarding the operation of schools.

PROCEDURES

Principals and pastors who participated in the study were interviewed by the researchers or completed written narratives that were returned by mail. The interviews were tape recorded and transcribed by the researchers and reviewed for accuracy by participants. Narratives and interview transcriptions were coded for content and analyzed for themes. The qualitative methodology of member checks, multiple sources of information, and coding and reviewing data for verification enhanced the validity and reliability of data (Creswell, 1994; Frankel & Wallen, 1996).

Participants were given the choice of participating in a personal interview or responding to a questionnaire. Interview questions were identical to those on the questionnaire. The questionnaire, written by the researchers after a review of the literature, appears in the Appendix.

RESEARCHERS

The two researchers who conducted the study were experienced in the field of elementary school administration. One researcher was a principal of a Catholic primary school in New South Wales, while the other was a former principal of Catholic elementary schools in Nebraska and an associate professor of education. The study evolved from the researchers' interest in the administrative challenges shared by Catholic school leaders in Australia and the United States. In addition, both researchers viewed the principal-pastor relationship as key to the establishment of a successful Catholic elementary or primary school.

FINDINGS

DEMOGRAPHICS

The initial portion of the survey asked respondents to report gender, religious affiliation, professional experience, educational levels, size of parish or school, and funding source for the school. A summary of the group data follows. Of the 32 principals in the study, 11 were male and 21 were female. Three of the principals and three of the pastors belonged to religious orders. Although some pastors had no prior experience with a school, the majority of pastors had worked with several principals. The level of experience for principals ranged from first-year principal to experience in several schools. Parishes ranged in size from a parish of 150 families to another whose pastor reported 14,000 "nominal Catholics." The principals reported schools ranging in size from 167 to 800 students.

The educational levels of pastors were varied, ranging from Bachelor of Arts to Doctor of Divinity. All of the Nebraska principals possessed masters' degrees with endorsements in school administration, while the education of principals in New South Wales varied from a graduate diploma in religious education to masters' degrees in education.

Pastors and principals in New South Wales differed in what they reported about how the schools were funded. Pastors reported that the cost of operating the school was the responsibility of the employing authority (the Catholic Education Office). Principals suggested that the cost was shared between the school and employing authority. Principals and pastors in Nebraska schools agreed that the schools were financed through school tuition and contributions of parishioners and parents and that the pastor was responsible for the schools' financial viability.

The second portion of the study consisted of written or oral responses to a set of interview questions (see Appendix). Data are reported for the total group of respondents, unless specified otherwise.

EMERGING THEMES

The following themes emerged from the study:

- The pastor's familiarity with elementary schools
- The pastor's authority
- Interpersonal qualities deemed essential to harmony
- Role clarification of principal and pastor
- Importance of leadership transitions
- Advice for principals and pastors
- The importance of Catholic schools

Each of the themes will be further explored and discussed.

The Pastors' Preparation

Although not mentioned by pastors, some principals reported a preference for working with pastors who have had experience or preparation in education. One principal observed, "It really helps if your pastor has a background in education and past experience having a school." A beginning principal said, "I'm a new principal so I was hoping for someone who could mentor me. Instead, I have a pastor with no school experience...it's been a learning experience for both of us."

One principal said, "I'm not sure that anywhere in their seminary training priests are equipped to run and operate schools. This is my pastor's first parish and he has a school to deal with...I get concerned.... It's a disservice to place pastors into situations like that because it's overwhelming."

Another principal reported a positive experience, "[My new pastor] has an education background; none of the other four pastors [with whom I worked] did. He understands the inner workings of a school...this is an ideal situation and I may never have it again."

Authority of the Pastor

The pastor's role as ultimately being in charge or being "the boss" and "the bottom line" was another issue mentioned by principals but not by pastors. One principal explained,

It is essential that the administrator get along with the pastor. The pastor [is] your boss, signs your check, and has veto power on everything that you do. That is his job and the buck stops there. You might not always agree, but we do have to let our staff know that we are both speaking the same message. [We need to] support him, as we would expect him to support us.

[It's important to know] his ideas, his philosophy,...his values, [so you know] the game plan...because he is the boss.

It's our place to get along with [the pastor]. Either get along with him or look elsewhere.

Communication

Respondents agreed that frequent communication between principal and pastor was essential. According to one pastor, the most important aspect is "good communication so both agree on what is to be done." Principals and pastors agreed that pastors must be kept informed of school events and reasons for curricular and pedagogical decisions. One principal gave this reason: "If you expect support [from the pastor], you have to educate him and give him the background." Another principal suggested meeting with the pastor to discuss the expectations of each and establish a process for communications and support for each other: "We meet once a week, look over our calendars, talk about school events, school goals, the things I'm focusing on, and how those things mesh with what he has going on in the parish." A pastor agreed with the importance of communication: "Her [the principal's] one professional strength that I most appreciate is the fact that she lets me know what happens every day."

When problems arise with students, parents, or staff, the pastor needs to be informed. As one principal explained, "No one likes surprises." Another stressed, "If there's a conflict between principal, parents, or staff, you've got to get to him first with your story."

Styles of communication varied. Some principals and pastors rely mainly on informal conversation, while others routinely schedule more formal meetings. Communication methods include newsletters, memos, letters, e-mail, phone calls, formal meetings, and informal conversations. As one pastor observed, "The principal sends me information every day. We also talk almost every day. Sometimes I'll give her a ring, maybe prompted by business and sometimes just a conversation." While the methods varied, respondents agreed on the importance of frequency. As one principal said,

The issue is one of making time. They're busy and you're busy. If you've got a pastor who's...too busy to come over to the school then you have to schedule time to go see him. You're making deposits every time you meet with your pastor...when you need to make a withdrawal, there's something there.

Support

Principals and pastors agreed on the importance of mutual support. "[Pastor and principal should] anticipate each other's [needs] and develop a trust in each other's...judgments." This includes the need for discussions behind closed doors and public agreement and support: "You have to meet behind closed doors and come out agreeing." One principal said her pastor refused to speak with parents who try to sidestep the principal. "We agreed not to meet

with a parent until they have met first with the teacher or principal." A pastor emphasized, "[the] pastor never can allow anyone to shortcut the chain of command. If there is a problem, a parent does not first come to the pastor."

Principals summarized the importance of the pastor's support: "One word from [the pastor] in support of the principal is worth a thousand." "Having his backing is [critical]. I never feel like I'm out there hanging in the wind...I always feel like I have [the pastor's] support for what is going on."

Principals also spoke of the need to support the pastor and, if he is newly assigned, to "get him in front of parents as soon as you can." Comments included:

Our new pastor replaced a priest who had been with us for many years and was loved by all. I knew that [the new pastor] was in a very difficult position...so at every opportunity I publicly praised and thanked him for something he had done for the school.

If you have a pastor who doesn't have an outgoing personality, doesn't relate to the congregation well, [then] create situations where the pastor can look good. Analyze [his] strengths and weaknesses, highlight the strengths—make him look good.

The pastor has many other things to worry about...we have to remember we aren't the most important thing even though we are spending the most money.

A pastor confirmed the importance of support from the principal: "I joke that she wrote the book on the care and feeding of pastors. She is so affirming to me personally. I think she is the most positive person I've ever met."

Trust

Respondents reported that trust develops when honest communication and support occur between principal and pastor. One principal described the importance of trust:

Trust occurs when you feel that they [pastors] are backing you and you're backing them. The level of trust becomes a point where you don't have to worry about it. Right now my pastor and I trust each other, but I've had situations with other pastors where the control and power issues created an atmosphere of [distrust].

Another principal said, "[My pastor] told me that he trusts my judgment and that means a lot to me." A pastor described his principal, "She [the principal] is a wonderful information source and I can trust her. She is completely trustworthy."

Role Clarification: The Pastor

Pastors and principals agreed that a clarification of roles is necessary for productive working relationships. According to one principal, "[The role of the pastor] is an issue because no one has really clarified it." A pastor explained, "in successful schools the pastor and principal jobs have been pretty well defined or, if not defined, at least mutually understood."

Principals and pastors expressed agreement on the basic role of the pastor in the school. Principals referred to the pastor as the overall leader of the parish and school with the responsibility to represent the parish interests in the school, to monitor the school's effectiveness, and to be its primary advocate.

According to principals, the role of the pastor is to:

Be shepherd...leader...the bottom line. He oversees the entire parish and the school is part of the parish...so he should be the person who does oversee what goes on as far as the running of the school.

Make sure the school is meeting the needs that it was designed to meet...preparing the next generation, cooperating with parents, as well as offering a good, solid academic performance.

Represent the parish interests in the school.

Make sure the school is being a good steward of the resources [of the] parish.

Be involved in the financial aspects of the school, as the school can be a constraint on the parish budget.

Constantly encourage the school to get better, to be knowledgeable about what's happening, to be...the cheerleader, morale builder. Nothing makes teachers happier than to have the pastor call them by name and acknowledge the contributions that they've made.... They [pastors] can be tremendous morale builders when they want to be.

Be the hiring agent although he [can delegate] the responsibility to hire and terminate.

Support [the school], but interfere if there's a problem.

One principal summarized the role distinction by using a theatre metaphor, "I'm the director and he's the producer."

Pastors said their role is to provide support, direction, leadership, guidance, and encouragement. Some pastors described themselves as "the silent leader" and a "presence in the school." They said their role is to:

Oversee overall activities, lead the direction, and guide the principal, teachers, and students.

Help the principal oversee the direction and best interests of the school and children enrolled.

Secure the future financially.

See to it that faith is instilled, witnessed, and taught.

One principal summarized the roles of pastor and principal as, “[the pastor] is the one who sets the tone, asks the questions; the [principal] is the one who gets it done.”

Role Clarification: The Principal

Principals and pastors agreed that the daily operation of the school is the primary role of the principal. One principal said,

It feels like you're the superintendent when you're running a Catholic school because it all comes across your desk...curriculum, hiring, terminations, observations, evaluations, disciplining the children,...the lunch program, the custodial staff...the nuts and bolts of running the place. If [the pastor] is the supervisor, I'm the manager because I've got to make things work every day in that building.

Pastors were in agreement; stating that the principal's role is to:

Insure the efficient and orderly administration of the school.

Oversee the day-to-day functioning.

One pastor praised his principal:

She is so competent...she's got confidence and poise...she always makes me look good. I can count on her for a balanced perspective...[when I approach things] from male, priest, pastor, boss, [perspectives] she [says], now look at it if you were a parent or...and she does it so naturally....

Role Clarification: Division of Duties

Principals and pastors did not feel that pastors should become involved directly in curriculum decisions. The only area of exception was the curriculum for teaching religion. One principal said, “I would have him involved [in the religion curriculum] because I've got to match up to our parish mission statement and make sure we're not veering away from that.”

Respondents also agreed that pastors should be involved in the school budget. As one pastor explained, “[The budget] is a major role of the pastor.” Principals want the pastor to attend personally to financial issues. As one explained, “[The pastor] needs to be [involved in the budget] as much as possible. Some of these [finance committee] members...are good people but don’t necessarily have a business background...we need to be watching what we’re doing.”

Principals and pastors generally agreed that the pastor should not be involved directly in hiring staff. One principal remarked, “I don’t know how principals can stand it when the pastors interview and do their hiring.” However, principals agreed that the pastor should be kept informed and have input into the qualifications of the person selected. Another principal said, “If I’ve got a pastor who’s going into classrooms and criticizing teachers (and unfortunately some pastors do), then I’m going to involve the pastor so he has some investment in the people I’m hiring.”

Regarding terminations, principals and pastors agreed that it is important to keep the pastor involved in non-renewals and terminations due to the potential for public relations and legal issues. As one principal said, “If you’re going to terminate or non-renew a teacher, the first time the pastor hears about it shouldn’t be at contract time.”

Principals and pastors agreed that pastors should not interfere in conflicts between parents and school personnel. Both supported the adherence to a procedure for handling conflicts in which the pastor may intervene “rarely” and only as a facilitator “of last resort.”

Most principals welcomed pastors’ attendance at meetings involving parent groups. However, principals did not feel that the pastor should feel obligated to attend given the expectation for pastors’ attendance at so many parish meetings and functions. Pastors were somewhat mixed in their responses with some thinking it was “very important” to attend while others believed that “minimal” attendance was needed.

When Relationships Break Down

Pastors suggested that relationships fail when there is a lack of communication, trust, support, and understanding of each other’s roles, which results in the pastor not being involved in the school. One pastor mentioned that a lack of shared faith could create problems: “The principal needs a Catholic sense...a strong Catholic foundation.” Pastors agreed that conflict is generally the result of “a lack of common understanding of roles,” and “a lack of effective communication.” They said conflict is created specifically when pastors “attempt to run the school,” “ignore the school,” and “fail to provide the principal with a sense of support.”

Principals agreed that lack of communication, misunderstood roles, and lack of the pastors’ involvement in the school cause relationships to break

down. In addition, they mentioned differences in personalities, management styles, and expectations; loss of focus on goals; and excessive financial constraints as conflict producing. One principal mentioned "arrogance or pompousness" of the pastor as a factor. Their comments included

I've had [some pastors] where it was difficult to get along and a couple of times when [I'd] want to kick 'em in the shins....

We both have different management styles and that becomes a challenge sometimes. His style is more direct, authoritative than mine...but that could be because he hasn't had that much [administrative] experience.

When it doesn't work it's because somebody thinks the other [person should be] doing this or that or whatever.

The toughest thing is when the pastor doesn't make time for...or doesn't want to be bothered with the school or when they get so concerned with money that they put [too many] constraints on the school [and] it takes away [from the] real focus.

Another deadly experience is...[the] pastors who think they need to let people vent their frustrations with the principal or the school...principals feel unsupported...there's a thin line there.... A lot of times pastors think they're being supportive and principals misunderstand that support or don't recognize it.

Both [pastor and principal need] to delegate a lot of peripheral responsibilities to others so they have time to take care of the basics. Sometimes you get a principal or a pastor that gets involved in details and then neglects the stuff that's really important.

Leadership Transitions

Respondents reported that a change of either the pastor or principal requires adjustments. They suggested using this transition period to establish a dialogue on the following issues:

- Educational philosophy
- Vision for the school
- Division of duties
- Expectations for each other
- Procedures for handling problems

Pastors were emphatic in their comments about the importance of sharing a "common set of goals," "a common vision," and "a like philosophy." One pastor suggested using the same method of dialogue used in marriage

encounters: "I would suggest that the pastor and the principal talk 10 minutes every school day for 90 days. By then they'll know what side of the tracks they are on...or where on the tracks they are."

Pastors additionally advised principals to be aware of the pastor's role in the larger context of the parish. One pastor said, "Remember that the pastor has a larger role to play outside the school. Do not just dump things on him expecting instant answers or solutions."

Principals suggested that candidates seeking positions as principals learn as much as possible about the pastor's views prior to accepting a job. One principal advised,

Look for somebody that you feel you can converse with...ask some questions, like "what do you expect from a principal," "how do you expect to handle misunderstanding," [if I disagree with a decision you make] "how should I approach you." [Determine] if this is the kind of person that you'd be able to work with...because [the pastor] is absolutely critical to your success and...you serve at his pleasure. You'd better be able to talk to [him].

Principals also talked about the authority of the pastor, and, when differences occurred, the need for the principal to adjust to the pastor's views.

One principal said, "you [the principal] have to readjust if the pastor has different priorities...or a different style. Expectations of the principal might be different...so you really need to spend some time and work those things out...if it doesn't work, one of you has got to change and it's usually going to be the principal.

On the other hand, pastors noted the importance of "respecting the expertise of the principal," "allowing the principal to do the job for which she/he was hired," "trusting the principal's ability," and "respecting each others' roles."

One pastor summarized the components of a successful relationship:

When both the pastor and principal have a good idea of the balance between the parish needs and the school's needs and both of them recognize that both components need to be addressed, then I think it works well. In other words, trust, making time for one another, and mutually agreed-upon goals.

Advice

Respondents offered the following advice for principals and pastors.

- Pastors should be knowledgeable about the operations of elementary schools.
- Roles of pastor and principal must be clearly defined.
- Interviews should be considered two-way opportunities for pastor and candidate to become acquainted and determine compatibility.

- Pastor and principal should
 - Share common educational philosophies and visions.
 - Respect each other's roles.
 - Be mutually supportive.
 - Communicate frequently.
 - Trust one another.
 - Affirm one another.

Importance of the Catholic School

Respondents agreed that the Catholic school is critical to the Church's mission of evangelization, fundamental to the future success of the Church, and the best assistance available to parents in passing on the faith to their children. One principal said, "The schools are the future of the Church." Some pastors reported that the school provides a link to parents, noting that some individuals are more comfortable approaching the principal than the pastor.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

The findings of the study are summarized as follows:

- Principals prefer working with pastors with experience or preparation in education.
- Principals should be cognizant of the pastor's final authority in school matters.
- Clarification of roles is essential to productive working relationships.
- The pastor's primary role is to oversee the operation of the school in the context of the parish.
- The principal's primary role is to direct the daily operation of the school.
- Pastors should be directly involved in religious and spiritual aspects of the school, kept informed of hiring and termination issues, invited to parent group meetings, but not involved in conflicts between parents and school personnel.
- The transition period during leadership change is an opportune time to establish mutual understandings between principal and pastor.
- Relationships fail when there is a lack of communication, trust, and support; misunderstanding of each other's roles; and noninvolvement of the pastor in the school.
- Catholic schools are perceived as critical to the mission and future of the Church.

DISCUSSION

The goals of a school provide the basis for collective decisions, actions, and benchmarks of the school's effectiveness (Sergiovanni, 1995). A goal that is shared by many Catholic schools is the establishment of a sense of community. While the words are easy to write, accomplishing the goal is a complex process that involves developing a shared consensus and bonding people

together in a common cause, defining them as a community while allowing self-expression. The presence of leaders who are comfortable sharing leadership is a prerequisite (Sergiovanni, 1995). This sharing, however, requires more than a mere desire to "get along." Rather, the individuals involved need to be committed to shared goals, possess fundamental knowledge of the task, have clearly defined roles, and agree on established procedures. While participants in the study expressed a commitment to Catholic education, they struggled with issues related to their roles and responsibilities.

One concern that surfaced in the study was the absence of shared knowledge between pastors and principals. When the pastor does not possess a knowledge of the educational process, the situation becomes difficult for both the principal and pastor. The pastor is placed at a disadvantage and is unable to provide necessary support for the principal. The likelihood for misunderstandings and conflict increases. One solution would be providing preparation in the education process for pastors prior to their assignments in schools with parishes.

Role clarification for pastors and principals surfaced as an additional need. A study by Wojcicki (1983) supports role clarification as a means of preventing potential problems. While the presence of the pastor in school and his unwavering support of the principal are critical, a fine line exists between a pastor who meddles and one whose lack of presence is perceived as uncaring. The suggestions of participants in this study provide a model of appropriate roles. Some dioceses, such as Parramatta, NSW, have already adopted criteria to clarify the role of principal and pastors (Anderson et al., 1990).

The transition period during leadership change is an optimal time for pastors and principals to establish the communication process, clarify their visions, and establish operating procedures. This is consistent with research on leadership succession (Brock & Grady, 1995; Fraser, 1998).

Problems can be avoided if pastors and principals determine compatibility during the interview period before contracts are offered and signed. Important issues to discuss include educational philosophies, visions for the school, role clarification, division of duties, procedures for handling problems and conflicts, and expectations for each other (Brock & Grady, 1995). Equally important is the continuation of the dialogue throughout the length of the working relationship.

Several factors limited the findings of this study. First, data were collected from a relatively small sample of principals and pastors. Additional participants would be needed to saturate the data and develop additional support for the themes identified. Second, the data gathered were based on the objectivity and reliability of the researchers. Typical of interview and narrative data gathering, informant integrity becomes an issue of rigor. Finally, the researchers were confined to two locations, limiting the generalization of results.

Despite these limitations, the results of the study revealed the characteristics of successful principal-pastor partnerships in Catholic elementary (primary) schools. The data are not presented as an infallible solution but rather as a basis for further inquiry and discussion. The paucity of research on the administrative relationship required of principals and pastors and the significance of their interactive role in Catholic elementary schools suggest a need for additional research on this topic.

REFERENCES

- Anderson, R., Boyle, J., Bray, R., & Clark, A. D. (1990). *The role of the pastor in Catholic systemic schools in the diocese of Parramatta*. Parramatta, NSW: Catholic Education Office.
- Brock, B. L., & Grady, M. L. (1995). *Principals in transition: Tips for surviving succession*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.
- Canon Law Society of America. (1983). *Code of canon law*. Washington, DC: Author.
- Creswell, J. (1994). *Research design: Qualitative and quantitative approaches*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications.
- Frankel, J. R., & Wallen, N. W. (1996). *How to design and evaluate research in education* (3rd ed.). New York: McGraw-Hill.
- Fraser, J. M. (1998). *Principal succession in Catholic primary schools in New South Wales: A participant perspective*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Sydney, NSW.
- Groome, T. (1998). *Educating for life*. Allen, TX: Thomas More.
- Hall, D. T., & Schneider, B. (1973). *Organizational climates and careers: The work lives of priests*. New York: Seminar Press.
- Hughes, L. W. (1994). *The principal as leader*. New York: Merrill.
- Sergiovanni, T. J. (1995). *The principalship: A reflective practice perspective* (3rd ed.). Boston: Allyn & Bacon.
- Seyfarth, J. T. (1999). *The principal: New leadership for new challenges*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Merrill.
- Snowden, P. E., & Gorton, R. A. (1998). *School leadership & administration: Important concepts, case studies and simulations* (5th ed.). New York: McGraw-Hill.
- Speck, M. (1999). *The principalship: Building a learning community*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Merrill.
- Wojcicki, T. L. (1983). *Role perceptions and role expectations of pastors in Catholic parish elementary schools as perceived by pastors, principals, and teachers*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of San Francisco.

Dr. Barbara Brock is an associate professor in the education department at Creighton University. Dr. Jennifer Fraser is principal of St. Michael's Primary School in Baulkham Heights, New South Wales. Correspondence concerning this article should be addressed to Barbara L. Brock, Ed.D., Education Department, Creighton University, 2500 California Plaza, Omaha, NE 68178.

APPENDIX

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. What factors ensure a successful working relationship between principal and pastor?
2. What are the main areas of concern in the professional relationship between principal and pastor?

3. What are the main items in formal communication between principal and pastor? between pastor and principal?
4. What advice would you give to principals that would assist them in establishing and maintaining a good principal and pastor relationship?
5. What advice would you give to pastors that would assist them in establishing and maintaining a good pastor and principal relationship?
6. What is the major role of the pastor within the elementary or primary school structure?
7. What is the major role of the principal in the elementary or primary school structure?
8. In which of the following areas should there be involvement from the pastor: conflicts between parents and staff, employment of staff, termination of staff, involvement in curriculum, school budget, and parent-teacher associations?
9. What are the major causes of breakdown in relationships that would assist them in establishing and maintaining a good principal and pastor relationship?
10. How important is the elementary (primary) school in the Church's mission?

Copyright of *Catholic Education: A Journal of Inquiry & Practice* is the property of Catholic Education: A Journal of Inquiry & Practice and its content may not be copied or emailed to multiple sites or posted to a listserv without the copyright holder's express written permission. However, users may print, download, or email articles for individual use.