

### **Educational**

What are some of the educational challenges inherent in being a competent REC? The role of the leader requires sufficient knowledge in the educational field in which the leader is leading. For the REC it is religious education in schools. Clearly the REC needs to be appropriately well-versed in scripture, fundamental theology, and liturgy to carry out the role. The REC also needs to have an understanding of religious education, as distinct from scripture and theology, and of such matters as the stages of religious development of the child and the pluses and minuses of the various approaches to religious education. To carry out the role at a competent level the REC will need to be first of all a credible teacher - that is a basic educational requirement.

### **Technical**

The REC also needs some competence in a range of sound management techniques which characterise good leadership, for example the capacity to plan, make decisions, delegate, organise and evaluate. A second technical requirement is to be a credible coordinator with a reasonable degree of organisational skill to ensure adequate programming and resourcing of the RE curriculum as well as sound management of these resources. Thirdly the REC needs sound communication skills since communication with fellow teachers, the principal, the parish priest and others with whom the REC has considerable contact is also key to the role. The people who depend on the REC have to experience that their trust is well placed.

### **Human**

In the human domain the REC should have the skill to be able to inspire other teachers and harness their talents and potential. Competence at the human level involves the ability to resolve conflicts which arise, to calm, encourage and reconcile people, not only within the RE team but other levels as well. The REC is required to build up the quality and morale of teachers of religious education by providing support, and by listening and challenging. Support includes identifying developmental needs of RE teachers and planning with them how they might be addressed. This responsibility is shared with the Principal, but it is a particular duty of the REC to keep these needs before the Principal and to suggest ways forward. Clearly, the human domain is a very, important one as far as the health and welfare of Catholic schools. both primary and secondary, are concerned.

Each of these domains can be, and hopefully is, carried out not only, to a competent, but indeed, to a superior degree. Even when one reaches the superior level in these three domains, there is, however, more to be said. These three domains underpin competent performance in Catholic school leadership. They are also essential building blocks in moving towards excellence.

In Catholic schools today, I believe leaders - and I think particularly of the Principal, Assistant Principal and REC - need to go beyond competent, or even excellent performance in these three domains. These three key leaders, both individually and collectively, must also exercise a high level of leadership in both the cultural and the religious domains. This is foundational to our identity and mission.

## **Cultural**

This is the domain which centres on the values, beliefs and practices which give the school a unique identity. Catholic school leaders are required to be able to articulate the purpose and mission of the school credibly. For example, with the others in the school leadership team, the REC celebrates the school's values using important occasions to tell the story, and develop the school's identity. Building up the Catholic culture of the school requires that all in a leadership position understand the "anatomy," of school culture, that is the component parts of a school culture. Equally important is it that the physiology of culture is also understood. This is the dynamic relationship between the component parts of the culture.

Culture is by nature dynamic whether we are talking of the way of life of people - culture in the cultural - anthropological sense - or using the term in a metaphorical sense as applied to organisations, as we are doing here.

The way, the REC engages in the role has a symbolic value that others interpret intuitively long before they can put words to it. Reflection on the life of Jesus is valuable here. **Jesus was his message**, in the sense that He lived his message. Jesus' disciples failed to grasp his message often but they did not, in the end, fail to understand who Jesus was. It is the same with those of us who provide religious leadership. For many of those we seek to lead, we are the message.

## **Religious**

The religious character of the Catholic school is a collaborative responsibility shared by the school's leaders and finally, in a very real way, by every teacher. That the religious character is foundational to our identity cannot be said often enough. Religious leadership is about seeing one's work in terms of the mission of Jesus - as people who both, individually, but also collectively, help bring God's dream for humankind to a reality.

*Extract from [http://203.10.46.30/mre/cdrom/the\\_religious\\_education\\_coordinator\\_as\\_leader.htm](http://203.10.46.30/mre/cdrom/the_religious_education_coordinator_as_leader.htm)*