

News & Views

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Our Greatest Hopes in a Post-Covid World

Where the Christian Ethos of a school can make a difference



Revd Andrew Hutchinson (Hutch)

Chaplain at Monkton Combe School, Bath (and a TISCA Trustee) – guest editorial

What do we aspire for the children in our schools? What will it take for the young people in our care to embrace challenges, make wise decisions, to live happy, content and fulfilled lives? And what have we learnt from the last 18 months that can help facilitate this?

I imagine words like resilience, community, humility, wisdom and confidence all come to mind and I have no doubt that they lie at the heart of many schools' vision and mission statements. Importantly these words are not new buzz words of the moment, in fact they have been around for millennia. They are found in the Scriptures and at the heart of the Christian faith.

The role of the Christian ethos in a school can be huge. It can underpin values by giving fresh light to them, it can lead to community, perspective and hope in an ever changing world.

With the isolations that Covid-19 brought we have once again learnt the need for **community**. We all missed seeing friends and loved ones dearly, we looked out for those in our communities who were especially

lonely or housebound and helped as we could. Local WhatsApp groups, sharing essential shopping trips, Zoom quizzes and catch ups along with creative ways of seeing neighbours in Covid-friendly ways all became the norm. We became starkly aware that we needed one another, just as much as they needed us. Jesus once told the story of the Good Samaritan as a reminder of this need and what it means to love your neighbour. It was the unexpected person who helped the injured man and he did so in lavish ways. Our 'neighbour' is anyone →



Monkton Combe School chapel

Coming up in this edition

- Chaplains
- Heads
- Parents
- Staff
- Governors
- Pupils
- Supporters

- | | | | |
|--|---|---|--|
| <p>1 Editorial</p> <p>4 Educating for Hope and Aspiration</p> <p>5 Anxious times for Christian Teachers?</p> <p>6 As a Witness to the Light</p> <p>7 Being authentically Christian in schools today!</p> | <p>8 Purposeful and Soulful leadership – Reflections</p> <p>10 Free to Disagree?</p> <p>11 Lovewise Online</p> <p>12 Parenting for Faith</p> <p>14 Create a Psalm 23 garden in your school</p> <p>15 Telling a better story</p> | <p>16 Faithfulness and availability</p> <p>18 Reflections from a recently retired School Chaplain</p> <p>19 7 Characteristics of a Christian Teacher</p> <p>20 Dealing with death in school</p> <p>22 Teacher Training: What I Wish I'd Known</p> | <p>23 Easter 2020 from the perspective of a Bursar and Clerk to the Governors</p> <p>24 TNV Book Reviews</p> <p>26 A TISCA response to the REC on Worldviews</p> <p>28 TISCA News & Events</p> |
|--|---|---|--|

Our Greatest Hopes in a Post Covid World

continued

and everyone. We shouldn't be seeking to help one another a little but a great deal. Encouraging our young

people to see their fellow pupils as neighbours in this way helps break down cliques, squads and online groups where some are left out, it helps enable the older pupils look out for the younger years and be role models to them.

Loving your neighbour is other person centred. The Samaritan in the story could have ignored the



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injured man and cared for his own safety and wellbeing on a dangerous road but instead he stopped to help. Love in the Bible is spoken of as being patient, aware, thoughtful, forgiving and at times, takes great humility to do. Loving in this way can bring radical change to how our young people relate and care for one another; it helps them take their eyes off themselves and on to others and that can only be a good thing (especially in a world that is becoming increasingly self-obsessed!).

The second value that the Christian ethos in our schools can give is **perspective**. When the first Covid-19 lockdown came with most things shutting down; supermarket shelves being emptied, food rationed and the wellbeing of our nation in the balance, we quickly came to the realisation that much of what we take for granted has been greatly shaken (including loo roll supplies!). It was interesting to note that during this time, it seemed, the general mood was not one of blaming God for what we were enduring but rather

seeking where he might be in all of this. Questions of meaning, purpose and looking for something bigger were all very apparent and church attendance (online) went sky-high - one church in London noted a 700% increase on one Sunday with over 8,000 devices logging into their service. The Christian Ethos in our schools can point to the God who is in control of a world that seems to be spinning out of control. But this is not the only perspective, there is also one of value. More than ever before it seems our young people are looking for dignity, value and acceptance. In the Christian faith we find unconditional love from a God who accepts us as we are but doesn't leave us where we are. This gives something far greater than any identity or value that the world can offer.

This perspective leads to **hope**, the third element of a Christian ethos in a school. A new urgency in looking for hope came about with Covid-19 and the Christian Ethos in our schools can help greatly in this. Peter begins his first letter to the churches with a great encouragement, "In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, and into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade. This inheritance is kept in heaven for you, ..." (1 Peter 1:3-4). When we allow ourselves to pause and reflect on this great truth, there is no greater, more meaningful or powerful hope than found in the resurrected Christ. Paul in his letter to the Philippians speaks of our citizenship being in heaven (Philippians 3:20). This is the great hope and home we have to hold up and to hold out to those around us.

Community, perspective and hope - three elements of a Christian Ethos in a school that can make a real difference for our young people and equip them for all that life will bring. ■



Pupils at Monkton Combe School



TISCA Annual Conference 2021

In June 2021, TISCA held its Annual Conference online. The theme was ‘Hope over anxiety in a post-COVID world’.

Dr Priscilla Chadwick, former Head and on our Council of Reference, writes: *The conference seemed to be highly valued and well received by those attending. Although being present in person is clearly preferable for catching up with friends and engaging with new colleagues working in similar fields, zoom certainly facilitated*

easier access and space for individual reflection.

The quality of the speakers was high: articulate and challenging presentations stimulated discussion and offered excellent resources to follow up. At a time of significant stress, hard-pressed teachers will have received vital reassurance that they were not alone in their distinctive Christian ministry in schools. Congratulations to the TISCA conference organisers.

Our first keynote speaker was Andy Wolfe, Executive Director of Education at the Church of England.

Educating for Hope and Aspiration

Chaplains

Heads

Parents

Staff

Governors

Pupils

Supporters



Andy Wolfe

Executive Director of Education at the Church of England

The Church of England Vision for Education, Deeply Christian, Serving the Common Good, was published in 2016, based around the John 10:10 promise of ‘life in all its fullness’.

This vision outlines four interlinking areas defining what we think we are educating for – defining our ‘why’, not just our ‘what’. One of this quartet is Educating for Hope and Aspiration, in which we explain – “In the drama of ongoing life, how we learn to approach the future is crucial. Good schools open up horizons of hope and aspiration, and guide pupils into ways of fulfilling them. They also cope wisely with things and people going wrong.”

The past 2 years have demonstrated daily the importance of holding onto a clear sense of hope in the drama of ongoing life – it’s been relentlessly demanding for all schools, and consistently unpredictable. Yet we have still had to become leaders who can lead our teams towards a future that does not yet exist. Where we place our hope is crucial – as Paul writes to the Corinthians – “Therefore since we have such a hope, we are very bold.” (2 Corinthians 3.12). This is a call to place our hope and confidence not just in our hard work, abilities or resources, but rather choosing to place it in Jesus and his promise of life in all its fullness.

For leaders hope is often about the sustaining of vision through a challenging season. While good leaders create vision, great leaders sustain it. Leaders demonstrate that hope is sticking around, providing consistency and dependability for the long term. Teams with sustained vision can still see where they are going in the dark times, and they grow through the difficulties they face together. Leaders show that resilience is not simply coping or working harder. Leaders are changed and transformed through adversity, as their skills and character are formed in the crucible of the challenge. Indeed, the story of the people of Israel in the Old Testament is one of sustaining vision – there are times of revelation, dedication and flourishing, and long periods of confusion, suffering, and patience. There are people who experience elation and success, and others who never get to see the future towards which they were leading.

As we move into this new term with all that lies ahead, may we be leaders who choose to place our hope in Jesus, and share a vision of the future that opens up horizons of hope to all staff and pupils in our schools. And may it be a time of a renewed boldness of following the call to sustain the vision to offer hope to the communities we are privileged to serve together. ■

Anxious times for Christian Teachers?

Equipping Christians in schools to face the future with confidence

Chaplains

Heads

Parents

Staff

Governors

Pupils

Supporters



Antony Spencer

CEO of Mill Hill School (and a TISCA Trustee)

As Christian teachers in this country, these increasingly feel like missionary times.

We can't rely upon background knowledge or implicit support as we seek to live out the gospel in our schools. Wisdom is more important than ever. But God has a purpose for us being in schools, and we perhaps need to re-connect with the responsibility that entails.

Our culture influences us, and it's marked by anxiety.

A couple of years ago, eco-anxiety led to school strikes. One pupil wanted to go on a protest and emailed me: *"I recognise that climate change is coming rapidly and preparation for the future will become worthless as we will not have one worth living."* Soon after, plastic face masks became the new disposable rubbish as other anxieties appeared.

There are many reasons Christian teachers may be anxious, from the normal daily demands of life, balancing work and home, to entire schools facing financial challenges. There are society pressures, making religious identity divisive, even at school gates. Social media's power, and the growing prominence of a cancel culture, can lead Christians to think they'd best stay quiet, in case an aggressively secular culture costs them their jobs.

We are privileged to live in a society with a rule of law, with many legal protections, but ultimately what we need is an attitude of hope.

Psalm 121 is clear where ultimate help comes from:

"...from the Lord, the maker of heaven and earth"

This isn't teacher therapy, but a reminder of true, everlasting hope.

1 Corinthians 13 concludes: *"...these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love"*

The Pauline triad reminds us that hope isn't in isolation, lest it becomes grim determination. Hope, faith and love are mutually reinforcing strands of the Christian life.

As Christians in schools, all we do should be grounded in our faith. Our faith is not to be hidden but by deed and word is to be evident: *"You are the salt of the*

earth." We should be distinctive, in the right way, for the right reasons. Let's speak and act the truth in love, free of appearing just objectionable.

Schools can be all-consuming. Time for our families, and for the family of church, ends up losing out and what follows is spiritual malnutrition. We fall into the super-hero trap of relying on our own strength, a particular temptation for school leaders who need an aura of authority that doesn't allow for an acceptance of weakness. Yet we are not called to walk the Christian life alone, as Hebrews 10.25 reminds us. An antidote to personal anxiety is to remember the needs of others, supporting our fellow Christians in education, in prayer and deed.

Secure in God's love, we are equipped to love the world. And our schools need love! Christian teachers should be the best teachers in their schools. Perhaps there are others with superior qualifications or experience, but what should mark us out is our attitude—one of selfless caring that walks the way of our Saviour. They don't teach that on a PGCE. So, Christian teachers: does the care you show for your pupils and colleagues reflect the gospel? In these anxious times, others should see a fundamental serenity in us—read 1 Peter 2.

As Christians, we have immense opportunities to live this out in our schools.

One day, our teaching career will come to an end. Some years after, we will leave this world. Revelation 21: *"There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away"*. That's our future confidence, free of all anxiety, because God's own Son took our place.

It's a future reality that should transform our today. ■



Mill Hill School

A new TISCA member school

As a Witness to the Light

Chaplains

Heads

Parents

Staff

Governors

Pupils

Supporters



Paul Vines

Principal, Chengelo School, Zambia

Chengelo was founded in 1988 in Zambia to meet the urgent need for a secondary school based on the fact that there had been a general decline in educational standards and key people in rural areas particularly did not have easy access to secondary education.

The cost of education overseas or in neighbouring countries was prohibitive and led to many leaving the country when their children reached secondary school age.

In the beginning Chengelo was established for children of farmers and people actively involved in Christian work and to be an outreach into the community, training potential church and national leaders. The School has grown significantly over the years. It opened with 50 students; we are now just over 500 from Pre-School all the way to Upper Sixth.

Although the School's demographic has changed over the recent years as we have welcomed more students from middle class Zambian backgrounds, the original vision remains today. We are a school that has high academic standards and gives the opportunity for young people to develop fully their God-given abilities in all spheres by including a range of practical and outdoor activities. Our aim is that they will go into the world and make a difference 'As a witness to the light' be it here in Zambia or further afield.

Chengelo is in a rural location and as such we are able to make the most of the beautiful environment



Chengelo

where we live. Naturally we have plenty of space for sport but we also have our own Outdoor Centre, Ndubaluba, as well as a farm. We seek not only to provide our students with a rigorous academic education that will open doors to opportunities in the future but also to nurture in them Christ-like character that means they will make a difference when they are there. We believe that getting outside into creation and working alongside others nurtures and develops character in a way that sitting in a classroom does not.

Please do have a look at our website www.chengeloschool.org or get in touch with me on principal@chengeloschool.org. We are especially keen to establish a close link with one or more UK schools to facilitate staff exchanges! ■

The Association of Christian Teachers

Being authentically Christian in schools today!

Chaplains

Heads

Parents

Staff

Governors

Pupils

Supporters



Lizzie Harewood
Executive Officer of ACT

In an increasingly secularised context, Christians in Education can often feel isolated and lonely.

Although belonging to a Church family is essential for Christian discipleship, being united with likeminded Christ-following professionals is a blessing that offers particular encouragement in the unique environment of Education.

The Association of Christian Teachers was launched in 1971 as a membership organisation to provide professional and spiritual support to Christians engaged in Education. Although our activities have evolved and adapted to changing times, over the years, ACT has remained passionate about uniting Christian staff and inspiring them to be 'salt and light' in their place of work.

As a 'holy nation' and a 'people who belong to God', Christians in Education can sometimes struggle as they work out how to 'declare the praises of Him who called us out of darkness' (1 Peter 2:9). In a setting where explicit evangelism is prohibited, many educators ask if it is still possible to be authentically Christian, and defend Biblical values?

Well, we believe it is! ACT's vision is three pronged: to serve, equip and inspire our members. Pastorally, we serve through local networks, corporate prayer and providing professional support. We seek to equip by running seminars, conferences and sharing resources tailored precisely for the Christian educator. And we inspire by providing Biblical and spiritual encouragement

as well as offering a distinctively Christian voice on education issues in the public arena. We also pray for and support teachers further afield through the work of our overseas committee.

ACT wants to see teachers and other staff committed to living out their faith day by day, positively influencing the culture, values and spiritual environment in the education setting. For this reason, we partner with Christian organisations such as CCfE (Christian Coalition for Education), Pray for Schools, The Christian Institute and Christian Concern to promote a faithful Christian voice in education.

We want to grow our base and realise our vision to see more Christians in Education linked up, prayerfully supported and empowered to be vehicles of blessing to children they teach, and colleagues they work alongside.

Our work in schools contributes toward God's purposes, aids human flourishing, and towards care of his creation. It really does matter! Find out more about ACT, and discover how you can be part of a growing network of Christian Educators at ACT (christian-teachers.org.uk).

STOP PRESS! ACT and TISCA are running a joint conference for Christian staff and governors on Saturday, 5th March 2022, in London. Theme: 'Renewing our identity in Christ: a Biblical response to issues of identity in education'. Save the date! ■

ACT

Association of Christian Teachers

In March 2021, ACT and TISCA organised an online Keynote Conference on 'Purposeful and Soulful leadership'. We asked three participants to share their reflections on the conference.



Reflection 1 from Pete Last, former Head of Kingsley School and now of Pete Last Coaching.

Session 1

Laura & James Mears: Salmon Swimming

Focus on using the 5 Voices tool: [5 Voices: How to Communicate Effectively with Everyone You Lead - 5 Voices](#).

- **Nurturer**: people, relational, values-driven
- **Creative**: future ideas, innovation, organisational integrity
- **Guardian**: due diligence, resources, efficient systems & processes
- **Connector**: relational networks, internal collaboration, effective communication
- **Pioneer**: strategic vision, results focus, problem solving

Results from my test: **creative-connector-nurturer**

Session 2

Alistair Bullen: the central importance of Godly values

- Has worked with OASIS and AET

- We have a huge opportunity to embed Christian values within organisations.
- Vision-values-culture (the Power of Three, like the Trinity!)
- Uses the concept of a culture wheel to focus on vision & values, which drive our mission, culture and behaviours
- Importance of vulnerability for leaders

Seminar

C-Me Profiling

Imago Dei:

- Gen 1: 31 "it was very good". We are created with infinite **value**
- Gen 2:7 "the Lord God formed..." We are created to be **creative**
- Gen 1:26 "in our image" We are created to be **relational**
- Gen 1:29 "I give you" We are created to be **dependent** ■



Reflection 2 on the ACT/TISCA Keynote conference – by Sharon Condy, Head of RS and Housemistress of Elizabeth House at King Edward's School, Witley, Godalming.

The Bible promises in Matthew, "that where one or two are gathered in my name, there I am with them". That was certainly my experience when the ACT and TISCA met on zoom for the conference on 'purposeful and soulful leadership'.

The time together was encouraging as you become acutely aware that you are not running the race within the workplace alone. Spending the day talking about all things school with Christ at the very centre was revitalising. The series of speakers and seminars challenged me to reengage with my original God-given desire to work in Education. It is so easy to follow the trends of the staff room but to have that space where I

was once again challenged to continue to discern God's calling was invaluable. The main sessions of the day were a way to consider what 'voices' we are naturally inclined to bring into our leadership styles and how knowing others' styles will help us relate to our teams much more effectively. From that point we were clearly challenged to pray about and determine our purpose for the work we do and the values that we hold. These are values that cost us everything. From that point we considered together how God specifically designed all teachers and students alike before thinking about how we can radiate that truth in our own arena.

I am so thankful to have met, be held accountable and challenged by others who also wish to serve Jesus within the context of education. ■



I wanted to say 'thank you TISCA and ACT' for the Values Leadership Conference you hosted. It was an inspiring day which unearthed many personal and organisational pieces of gold in the process.

Personality in Leadership

The session on 'Leadership 5 Voices' by Laura and James Mears of 'Salmon Swimming' outlined the difference that personality has on the working culture in an organisation. We looked at the types and impact of pioneers, creatives, connectors, nurturers and guardians - all important components of world class teams.

One reflection I had during the session is that we are fearfully and wonderfully made. God has enabled us to have diverse personality types, skills and gifts so that we can work together. It is not good for man to be alone and these types of tools always speak of the need for us to be united with others, co-workers and part of the body of Christ; working with Him as the head.

1 Corinthians 12:18-20 says: *¹⁸But in fact God has placed the parts in the body, every one of them, just as he wanted them to be. ¹⁹If they were all one part, where would the body be? ²⁰As it is, there are many parts, but one body.*"

Organisational Vision, Mission and Values

In regard to organisational values we addressed the importance of knowing your personal and organisational **Vision** (what your promised land is and the yearning of your heart); **Mission** (the major building blocks of your journey); and **Values** (that bring your work to life and must take time to breathe). This is so important enabling cohesive leadership and creating an environment to grow.

I am convinced that for an organisation to succeed and to grow it must have clear, understood and shared mission, vision and values. From recruitment, through to performance management what is required, not only *what* staff do, but crucially *how* they operate is fundamental.

We realised that for KICK, where I am CEO, to hold on to what is most crucial it is key that it has a strong ethos as its anchor, articulated values that we hold to

and clearly defined behaviours for the work that it is determined to do. Completing an exercise where we involved all staff and trustees we sought to find our heart (ethos), our core (values) and what we visibly expect to see from all our staff (behaviours). Therefore, relating the teaching from the conference,

Our Ethos – What is our motivation for how we operate?

To follow the example of Jesus who was committed to demonstrating God's love in a relevant way; to bring transformation to our young people and their communities.

Our Values – How we do what we do?

We aim to transform young people's lives by being:

- **Aspirational** on behalf of our young people, being ambitious for their progress and in our desire to reach more young people
- **Compassionate** toward our young people, showing humbleness, being inclusive and making our approach flexible to suit their needs
- **Excellent** in our performance, innovating with continuous improvement for the best outcomes for our young people
- **Intentional** in our relationships with young people, schools, churches, partners, funders and each other to building a family together at Kick London
- **Integral** in our decision making, in our relationships with each other and in our partnerships

KICK's mission is to transform young people's lives, with God's love, through sport and support. KICK aspire to see a generation of young people who will reach their God given potential; where communities have been socially impacted; and where spiritual change has transformed a nation. KICK do this through values-driven physical education, street dance, mentoring, chaplaincy in schools and church-based KICK Academies to impact young people. KICK are committed to seeing young people experience a hope for the future and joy in the present. ■

Free to Disagree?

The Case of Bernard Randall – A case being followed carefully by TISCA supporters, and many others in the UK

Chaplains

Governors

Supporters



Steve Beegoo

Head of Education at Christian Concern and CEO of the Christian Schools' Trust

Rev Dr Bernard Randall was the chaplain for Trent and the Elms school, a school with an Anglican foundation.

He raised concerns about an external organisation, which had been training staff in the school. The organisation was 'Educate and Celebrate', who had been encouraging staff to chant together, 'Smash heteronormativity!' as part of their training.

Months later, he was asked by pupils to discuss in his sermon series, 'all this LGBT stuff', as pupils themselves wanted to know how to handle what was being promoted in the school. And so Bernard carefully constructed a sermon, passing it by a trusted Anglican theologian and commentator, Ian Paul. A sermon, not really about the traditional beliefs of the Anglican church. Not about a Christian worldview on human identity. Not about what the Bible says about the place of sexual intimacy. But about *freedom of thought*, and tolerant, loving, disagreement.

When an Anglican chaplain steps up to the pulpit to bring the gospel message of Jesus Christ, you may expect some disagreement and questioning, especially from what might be a captive audience in a school. But this sermon on freedom of thought and how to handle this well, resulted in his suspension and referral to the anti-extremism body of the government by the school leadership. In time he was made redundant from his role at the school. Many of us would like to know why.

You can read or hear his full sermon online, and here is a key extract:

"Now when ideologies compete, we should not descend into abuse, we should respect the beliefs of others, even where we disagree. Above all, we need to treat each other with respect, not personal attacks – that's what loving your neighbour as yourself means. By all means discuss, have a reasoned debate about beliefs, but while it's OK to try and persuade each other, no one should be told they must accept an ideology. Love the person, even where you profoundly dislike the ideas. Don't denigrate a person simply for having opinions and beliefs which you don't share."



Further Up, Further In: An Online Education Conference. See full information on page 13 →

Christian Concern and the Christian Legal Centre is supporting Bernard Randall as he challenges his treatment at the school. Anglican church leaders have broadly remained silent about what has occurred and, perhaps understandably, are reluctant to comment on an employment case still pending. However, many looking on have been shocked that even *the content of his sermon*, has not been thought worthy of endorsing. Traditional, tolerant ideas of freedom of thought, expressed by an Anglican chaplain, in an Anglican school, seem to have been not worthy of support. Is this because of a growing culture of fear around any challenging of certain organisations or ideologies?

The legal case has been adjourned. In the months ahead, possibly years, the ability of Christians to present reasoned and traditional Christian views on tolerance, respect or issues of sexuality and gender will be front and centre. A man's career and life has been decimated. Bernard himself, describes this season in his life as his world 'falling apart'. Pray for him and this case, that justice will prevail.

All of us who have a platform need to speak boldly of the need for Christians to be able to politely express contrary views, biblical views, views which may differ from new, popular, 'progressive' thought. Views which include that, *'no one should be told they must accept an ideology'*.

Steve Beegoo is Head of Education at Christian Concern and CEO of the Christian Schools' Trust

You can find the sermon at <https://christianconcern.com/resource/a-school-sermon-by-bernard-randall-competing-ideologies> ■

Paths to Learning, Education Consultancy

As a former London Property Solicitor for ten years, then teacher for twenty-seven years, in both state and independent schools, and various international contexts, **Felicity Gunn** has recently established an education consultancy: **Paths to Learning**.

Our vision is twofold:

to advise **PARENTS**, whether international or expatriate, to find the best school for their children in the UK; and to advise **PARENTS AND GUARDIANS** of children with **disabilities** to find the best form of education whether in a school or with home-schooling or tutoring.

We have a thorough knowledge of the schools that we recommend in the UK, so a good match can be made between the children, their families and the best school for them. This entails

- An assessment of the child's SuperPowers which reveal skills and character
- An understanding of the child's learning needs, such as dyslexia, and provision the schools make to meet them
- An ability to support the family if the move comes in the middle of the academic year
- Help for parents and their TCK or CCK to be prepared for the cultural change in coming to the UK and then being prepared for returning home to another part of the world where parents are living or working.

"We're a family that has been through several international relocations, due to the nature of my work, and this latest one, being sent to Central London, was particularly complicated, because of the timing. We have two children (8 and 13 years old), who were attending an American School in the Middle East.

The English school system can be a little complicated to understand! Finding places in the best schools, or even knowing what "best school" means for each child, is not an easy task. As parents we all want our children go to a school that "ticks many boxes": a good school, with high ratings, fits our children's development needs, and in a good location.

It is not an exaggeration to say that this is a titanic (if not impossible) task, with so little knowledge. Getting the help of somebody who's knowledgeable, genuinely understanding and helpful was the best decision we made, during this very stressful time. This is exactly what we got from Felicity Gunn, and cannot be more grateful to her, and to the friends that recommended Paths to Learning."

Eduardo Delgado, Senior Petrochemical Engineer, whose children were placed in state schools.

through our Virtual Summits to guide, inform and train **SCHOOL LEADERS, RELOCATION AGENTS, HUMAN RESOURCES TEAMS** in multinational organisations and others working with international families in understanding and celebrating culture.



Podcasts can be accessed through the website www.pathstolearning.com

Please contact me by mobile:

0044 772 161 7447 or by email

felicity.gunn@pathstolearning.com

School leaders may ask: With up to 30% of our school children from other countries how can we celebrate their culture while enabling them to settle and flourish in a British [International] school?

These ideas, among others, were shared at the Virtual Summit Knowing Culture for Better Education 2020

- Carefully considering the school vision, so the school has a balance of nationalities
- Having a rigorous Induction Programme both for the new pupils and for the teaching team, so expectations in relation to rules, learning and reporting, and behaviour – especially in a non-teaching context are known and understood
- Having contacts on the staff or in the community who speak the language of the children from other countries
- Having celebratory events where the international pupils can host
- Know your market and tailor your advertising accordingly.



Parenting for Faith

Parents



Becky Sedgwick

Part of the team at Parenting for Faith

I was seven years old, and today mum was the supply teacher in my class.

It felt a bit odd, but she'd primed me when the phone call came through that morning and I knew that today, all day, she was 'Mrs Sedgwick' and I was just one of the class. But then came PE. We were excitedly running around the playground, passing the ball. Mum caught it, and I realised I was in the perfect place to get the pass. "Mum!" I shrieked, arms waving in anticipation. She looked straight at me and passed to another child.

Walking home after school, deflated, I asked her. 'Mum, why didn't you pass me the ball?' She looked at me. 'Because you forgot to call me Mrs Sedgwick.'

For so many of us parents and carers, God calls us to minister in our child's school. Sometimes in a professional capacity, sometimes as a volunteer. And that can feel tricky! Having to shush your child, or not being able to offer them a hug as you pass in the corridor, or feeling their resentment seething from them as you are late leaving school – again – can be stressful. So how can we balance being both parent and teacher / dinner lady / lady in the office or whatever role we hold?

Rachel Turner, The Bible Reading Fellowship's Parenting for Faith Pioneer, has written extensively about the challenge of being both parent and leader in her book 'Parenting as a Church Leader'. She describes it as wearing two hats: your parent hat and your leader hat. My mum that day expected me to see her teacher hat, while all I saw in the heat of the moment was her mum hat. But the truth is we are never just one or the other. The skill we need is knowing how to wear both hats well and in a way that our children understand that no matter what we are doing, they are always connected to us and prioritised by us.

You know your children best and will be able to work out what they need: knowing your child's love languages may be an excellent guide. But here are some ideas that may be helpful.



Connect well before school

The morning rush is a thing! But finding ways to put in some connection with your child before the bell rings sets you both up well for the day. That could be choosing to walk to school rather than drive so you have time for a chat, or making sure you whisper 'I love you' as you hug before they go into the playground, or getting up that little bit earlier to make their favourite breakfast. I had teacher friends whose children loved to come in early and help them set up their classroom before school. Those few moments can go a long way towards helping children stay feeling connected to you all day.

Help them hear their yeses

Particularly with young children it can be hard to help them understand why things at school are different. A preschooler may still want to clamber on your knee

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CANON J JOHN
International Evangelist



MIKE BEAUMONT
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ANDREA WILLIAMS
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during circle time, or an older child resent that you can't go on the school trip like their friends' mums because you're in the classroom. The trick is to give them alternatives rather than just saying 'no'. So you might say: 'I love cuddling you, but at school you can either sit right next to me or we can touch hands', or 'I can't come on that trip today, but could we take time on Saturday to go somewhere together?' When you give them choices or invite them into solving the problem, your child isn't hearing just 'no' but rather a way to hear their 'yes'.

Create ways to connect during the day

Being in school with your child gives you the huge privilege of being able to create connection points during the day. I knew of one admin officer who would occasionally sneak giant strawberries into her daughter's lunch box as a surprise for her child. You might choose to deliberately walk past your child's class doing PE and wave, or pop out into the playground at break time to allow them the chance to run over to see you. A quick nod or hand tap as your child's class files into assembly or, where phones are allowed, a quick text to your teen saying 'Hey, how was your maths test?' will

reinforce that you are thinking of them.

Check in with your child regularly about how they feel

Children are constantly changing and it's worth checking in regularly to see how they feel. Asking questions can be a quick and easy way to assess how your child is feeling about your being in school. Questions such as 'What do you like about me being in school? What do you wish was different? Why?' will quickly give you insight into your child's feelings. Questions like 'If you could change something about how we are connected while we're at school, what would it be?' are the first step to adapting things so that you wear both hats well.

Becky Sedgwick is part of the team at Parenting for Faith. Not only was her mum her teacher, but she spent ten years as the lady in the office at her daughter's primary school.

Parenting for Faith exists to help parents, carers and everyone with children and teens in their lives disciple them into a lasting and vibrant two-way relationship with God

parentingforfaith.org ■

Create a Psalm 23 garden in your school

Chaplains

Heads

Parents

Staff

Governors

Pupils

Supporters

At this year's RHS Chelsea Flower Show (2021), which will take place between 21 and 26 September, Bible Society will be sponsoring a garden on the theme of Psalm 23, 'The Lord is my Shepherd'. Award-winning designer Sarah Eberle has created a garden that will bring Psalm 23 to life.

To help schools to create a Psalm 23 garden of their own, or to give new life to an existing garden, free videos and downloadable resources are available at <https://www.biblesociety.org.uk/psalm-23/get-active/>:

- A gardening guide, which sets out how to create a Psalm 23-inspired garden on any scale, from a just a couple of planters to a larger space
 - An assembly in which children can learn more about Psalm 23 and reflect on what it means for them
 - Some resources for lessons about Psalm 23 and gardens in the Bible
 - An opportunity to obtain some free trees from the Woodland Trust to get the garden started
- Please let us know how your Psalm 23 garden is progressing by contacting us at education@biblesociety.org.uk. ■



'He makes me lie
down in green
pastures'



'He leads me beside
still waters'



'Even though I walk
through the valley of
the shadow of death,
I will fear no evil'



'You prepare a table
before me'

Telling a better story

Advice for parents on RSE

Chaplains

Heads

Parents

Staff

Governors

Pupils

Supporters



Revd Nick Seward

Head of Kingham Hill School

Kingham Hill School

Many parents holding to the Bible as their authority will be concerned about the current educational landscape where 'RSE' (Relationships and Sex Education) is concerned.

It is now compulsory for children to attend relationships education, even though the right to withdraw remains where sex education is concerned. In practice, this distinction can often be blurred or unhelpful. I am blessed to lead a school with a clear evangelical Christian ethos; we promote a biblical view of marriage, gender and the sanctity of life, whilst also teaching factually about the culture we are preparing our girls and boys for through Fundamental British Values, and the plurality of beliefs and lifestyles protected by law. Many Christians will not be in that situation, and the following advice is offered to help parents know where they stand if there are obvious worries about what rights they may or may not have.

1. You are on stronger ground than you think (probably)

Your Christian faith is a protected characteristic in law, including beliefs pertaining to RSE. The legal test is whether those beliefs are 'worthy of respect in a democratic society'. Currently the Biblical understanding of marriage, for example, is upheld by the established church in law, whose governor is our Head of State, to say nothing of its historical and universal nature. One would hope that meets the test!



2. Government guidance is useful on the subject

You may be surprised that DfE guidance to schools of September 2020 says this: "Materials which suggest non-conformity to gender stereotypes should be seen as synonymous with having a different gender identity should not be used and you should not work with external agencies or organisations that produce such material". You are perfectly entitled to believe (as I do) that transgender ideology is false and unloving, and not to feel pressured by the culture into silence or fear about that faith.

3. Schools have a duty to consult, and go on consulting

Schools have a legal duty to consult parents on their policy and teaching of the subject, and to respond to feedback by regular review. Ask your school about this (it is your right), and don't be afraid to stand faithfully. We want to love those around us, confident that the Bible's truths are a better story that our culture needs to hear, and to do that with grace and courage; Glynn Harrison's book of that name is a great starting point! (See page 24 book review.) ■

Faithfulness and availability

A chaplain reflects

Chaplains



Revd Nigel Little
Chaplain at Felsted School

The 'Class of 2021' has a particularly special place in my story.

I still remember the time when many of them gathered in their newly decorated Year 5 classroom one September morning in 2012. Pristinely presented, they tried not to fidget as they waited for their first lesson of the year, a lesson that would be given by me, their new school Chaplain. It was also my first lesson at Felsted School - I am not sure who among us was the most nervous!

Then, in what feels like the blink of an eye, those fresh faced children, are the young adults, poised and ready to take flight, waiting for me to deliver their Leavers' Address. This occasion, coupled with the twentieth anniversary of my own Ordination, prompts me to reflect on how we can serve those who we seek to care for in our Chaplaincy ministry.

Imagine my joy when some of the Leavers called me aside before Speech Day to tell me that they still remembered our 'Denominations Chant' and can still explain the 'Church-Worldtree Drawing'. Others encouraged me as they remembered joining in Year 9, and their first TEP (R.S.) lesson exploring The Day of

Atonement - with the aid of an electronic Shaun the Sheep racing off across the School Front!

Such stories are a delight to share but as we send 'The Leavers' off into the future, with a right sense of pride and with genuine hope, I inevitably find myself asking whether I have done all I could for these young people. Quantifying 'success' might be trickier than I imagined however. A business might calculate profit, a teacher might analyse grades, a charity might look at impact ratios, but what can we measure?

Though many of those first Year 5s have been part of our Lenten Addresses and visited our EXPLORE group, revival has not yet broken out in the Essex countryside. Whilst they eagerly poured into Chapel for their last service, it is true to say that this probably had more to do with the popular school anthem than with any intention of long term attendance. Nor, sadly, have we been able to do all we wanted to change the world yet - despite the incredible efforts of those who joined us in Year 12 and adopted one of our Charity Partners, Teach Uganda, as their own (their commitment didn't wain, even when their visit to Africa was cancelled because of the COVID Pandemic).

Felsted School





Given these realities, how may we assess the hallmarks of what is worthwhile? To help answer this I reflect on two pieces of advice given to me as I began as a Chaplain;

1. 'Be Faithful, Be Available'

I recall this advice that was given to me just a few weeks before I stepped into that Year 5 classroom for the first time, and then shared, quite independently, with me again as I reflected at the end of this year.

Being faithful requires us to be prayerful and to be distinctive as a witness to Christ and an encouragement to others in their witness. Chaplains are signposts guiding people towards Christ. On occasion being faithful may also mean summoning the courage to 'stand in-between' two groups who have very different perspectives, or to be a compassionate, confidential listener, enabling reconciliation amidst dispute or family breakdown.

Being available can mean countless games of table tennis or walking the touchlines on freezing winter weekends. It also means being open to the wider school - colleagues, parents, alumni and the village community. It can sometimes be exhausting. Sometimes 'loitering with good intent' can seem like a total waste of our time, but being available means being ready when we are

needed and being known to be ready. (I am also learning that it can mean not intruding when we are not needed.)

2. 'Serve as Sowers not Harvesters'

The Parable of the Sower is known as the 'parable that unlocks all the parables'. The farmer is resilient, caring, tireless and dedicated and, given that so much is lost, the sower is incredibly confident that one day there will be a harvest. Sowing is time consuming and sometimes discouraging work. Jesus helps us see that, just like the patient farmer, as faithful and available servants of God and our schools, we can be sure of an abundant harvest one day. The sower may not be the harvester, but our hope is in the Son of Man who is the Lord of the Harvest. We sow, we care, we wait, we trust.

How these principles work out in Chapel Services and the busyness of school life will vary from term to term, year to year and according to the challenges and fluidity of circumstances. I believe that they are a solid guide. In all this it is important to remember that we as Chaplains and teachers are not perfect; we are frail, we fail and need forgiveness, and so it is important, too, to remember that the parable teaches us to trust Christ who grows his Kingdom. We serve, we are thankful for the time we have with the children and young people, we look to the future with hope. ■



Reflections from a recently retired School Chaplain

Chaplains



Revd Gavin Williams

Recently retired Chaplain at Westminster School and also a former TISCA Trustee

It is a rare privilege to be a school chaplain, an experience that changes us as much or more than any change we may be part of. What might the role of the school chaplain be? The following stories offer some oblique suggestions.

On December 26, 2004, Tilly Smith, a ten-year-old, was on holiday with her family in a beach front hotel in Thailand. Only three weeks earlier, she had been taught about tsunamis by her geography teacher at Dane's Hill School in Surrey. She had learned that when the sea mysteriously drains away far below the low tide level and the water streaks with rising bubbles, a tsunami is coming. Seeing the water slowly recede and not waiting to ask an adult, Tilly took it upon herself to scream at all those around her to move to higher ground. Almost 100 people on that stretch of Mai Khao beach followed her lead. It was one of the few beaches on the island where no one drowned.

Professor Sibyll Trelawney was Harry Potter's Divination teacher at Hogwarts who regularly predicted the death of one of her students. Unimpressed by what she was being taught in her lessons, Hermione Grainger dropped the subject, but Harry and Ron Weasley took the Divination exam because it was easier to pass than alternatives like Arithmancy. In Divination, they knew they could just make up stuff about the future. Notwithstanding widespread scepticism about her magical abilities, at least two of Trelawney's prophecies did come to pass. However, this could be because, surprisingly, people acted on what she said would happen and thus brought it about.

The Revd David Railton was the army padre who instigated the Tomb of the Unknown Warrior in Westminster Abbey. It is the most hallowed tomb in the Abbey. And yet this is the resting place of a man who, for all that anyone can know, may not have believed in God at all. ■



7 Characteristics of a Christian Teacher

Staff



The Rev'd Dr Gerard G Moate FRSA



Trustworthy: *“Show yourself in all respects to be a model of good works, and in your teaching show integrity and dignity”* (Titus 2:7). In public and in private, in issues of heavy responsibility as in matters of small concern – consistent integrity of character and dignity in the high calling of teaching others will gain the honour of being known as one who is trustworthy.



Empathy: *“The student is not above the teacher, but everyone who is fully trained will be like their teacher”* (Luke 6:40). To imagine what it is like not to know or understand, to walk with a student as they begin to make discoveries is but part of a teacher's task; to model a love of learning and to rejoice when a student begins to see further ahead – is Christ-like empathy.



Approach: *“And God is not served by human hands, as if he needed anything. Rather, he himself gives everyone life and breath and everything else”* (Acts 17:25). As it is in God's nature to have aseity (no dependent need of us), so a Christian teacher does not seek satisfaction of personal need from, or develop a dependence on, those whom they teach. In the strength of God's grace, it should be gracious generosity that shapes our approach.



Consistency: *“Let my teaching fall like rain and my words descend like dew, like showers on new grass, like abundant rain on tender plants”* (Deuteronomy 32:2). A good teacher is consistent; a great teacher is authentic – which is where one's character, growing in the love of God, is applied honestly and with consistency.



Holiness: *“The Holy Spirit... shall teach you”* (John 14:26). A Christian teacher will remember that they are in part doing the work of the Holy Spirit; as advocate, counsellor and teacher of wisdom, knowledge – and holiness.



Endurance: *“And let us not grow weary of doing good, for in due season we will reap, if we do not give up”* (Galatians 6:9). When the year begins, when the week seems unending, when preparation wasn't enough and when the term gets tough, then a Christian teacher will need to find a lower gear, a spiritual resilience; *“Having done all – to stand”* (Ephesians 6.13). Then, by not giving up, they will eventually enjoy the good harvest that comes from such a God-given endurance.



Readiness: *“Always being prepared to make a defence to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect”* (1 Peter 3: 5). When you do not expect it, and from someone an unlikely source, will come an invitation for you to give 'a reason for the hope that is in you'. A faith founded in the love of Christ and strengthened through experience, will nevertheless find a Christian teacher to be in a state of readiness.

Gerard describes himself as a Church historian and bibliophile who was once a mountaineer and who now enjoys exploring the valleys. He is currently ministering in the Windrush benefice, being five rural churches near Burford. ■

Dealing with death in school

Chaplains

Heads



David Gilchrist

A retired School Chaplain – including Dover College and Brentwood School

The story is told of a meeting of Headmasters in the 1940s: one Head said that in his school they prepared their pupils for life, whereupon the Head of a prestigious Catholic school said, We prepare our pupils for death ...

Death is a part of life.

Grandparents die - and sometimes parents. Teachers may die. And governors. And old boys. And sadly, even current pupils may die.

We expect death to take the old.

We know that the majority of the people we study in History are dead.

But we don't expect it to happen to our friends now - or even to us.

But what if it does?

The school chaplain has an important role to play here.

After my two curacies I served as a school chaplain for 28 years in 3 different schools.

In my second term at Brentwood School a boy was in school one Monday, but died from meningitis on the Wednesday. In such circumstances the chaplain is called upon to minister to the family and to the school community.

That evening I drove to Robert's home to put a card through the door. As I was getting back into my car the front door opened and his mother came towards me. "I am so sorry," I said, "I didn't want to disturb you at this terrible time." "No, please," she said, "We would like you to come in." The school community was shocked by the death. On the Thursday I went to the headmaster and said, "Robert's parents have asked me if I would conduct the funeral in the school Chapel in about 10 days. Is that alright?" "Of course," he replied. "But I feel the school needs to express its grief before that," I said. "May I arrange a short memorial service for lunchtime on Friday?" "Certainly," he said. I had never led such a service before: what would be its contents? In my personal opinion, Protestants are not good at dealing with death and bereavement, and there was nothing suitable in the BCP or ASB. So I contacted a couple of



friends, former Anglican clergy who were now Greek Orthodox. They provided me with material. The next morning, I put a note in the pigeon hole of all staff who were dealing with registration at the beginning of the day, saying there would be a short service in the Chapel at 1 o'clock, and anyone who would like to come would be welcome. I thought that Robert's friends and some of his year group might come - but at 1 o'clock the Chapel was packed with 300 young people. I had prepared rows of sand trays on benches in front of the altar, and there were boxes of partly-burnt candles left over from the Christmas Carol service. Everyone was invited to light a candle if they would like to. I started with an introduction, we listened to some recorded music and there was a Bible reading. I then led 5 minutes of chanted Orthodox prayers, remembering Robert and entrusting him into God's hands. The service ended with everyone saying the Lord's Prayer together.

Afterwards a colleague (who was not a church goer) said to me, "David, that was incredibly moving. In 25 years at this school I have never experienced anything like it."

Sadly, I have had to deal with other deaths in school - one of a senior pupil in a girls' boarding house (whose parents amazingly donated her organs to spare other parents such trauma) and another involving a 3rd Year pupil who was killed alongside his mother and his 11 year-old sister in a car crash in Portugal.

All this is part of life's rich but tragic pattern. The questions remain. But I am reminded of the saying that all I have seen of God's love and care teaches me to trust him for all I have not seen and do not understand.

When faced with death, people ask questions, especially the young. Why did this happen? Is there any meaning to life? Is there any hope?

Some of these questions must be addressed at the funeral. Not all will listen and hear, but some may. And we fail in our duty if we do not present the Gospel.

I often started my 'sermon' at a funeral by saying, "When someone we have known and loved dies, it raises questions for us about the meaning of life and of death.

Jesus taught that the purpose of life was that we should come to God the Father, and get to know and love him." I would always include a summary of the Gospel – God's love and his wonderful world spoiled by sin, but Jesus came to deal with the problem of sin and death: he died and rose again and opens the kingdom of heaven to all believers. And I would end with this story: "Some generations ago a man was dying in a little cottage, and his doctor was at his bedside. 'Tell me, Doctor,' he said, 'What is it like on the other side of Death?' The doctor didn't know how to reply to this question, but just then he heard a scratching at the cottage door, and realised that his dog must have followed him from home, and was

wanting to be reunited with his master. He said to the dying man, 'My dog wants to come in. He has never been here before. He does not know what he will find on the other side of this door. All he knows is that his master is here. The same is true for us as we face the door of death: we do not know what we will find on the other side, but all we need to know is that our Master is there.'

Christian Publishing and Outreach provide some excellent materials e.g. <https://www.cpo.org.uk/range.aspx?range=4111&prod=C4111PC&cat=814&pt=30>

David reflects:

For most of my time as an Anglican I was a 'dissident' - appalled at the liberal direction in which the CofE was headed. When my wife died I decided to retire early, and to become a member of the Orthodox Church. Last month I was ordained deacon to serve at St Michael's Orthodox church in Margate. I shall soon be 70 and am delighted that the Lord has opened up new opportunities for service! ■

TISCA is always happy to promote God-centred resources for use in schools, such as this one from Lovewise. Other recent materials include advice and guidance on the new RSE curriculum.

Lovewise Online

Parents

Staff

Pupils

Lovewise Online is our website for teenagers. Launched in 2018, it now contains over 60 articles for young people aged 13+ on current topics under the headings of Relationships, Sex and Living Wisely.

Our most recent article, **How can I make good choices when I move away from home?**, is particularly relevant at this point in the year to school-leavers looking ahead to beginning university courses and apprenticeships in a new place. ■



lovewiseonline.org

Teacher Training: What I Wish I'd Known

Staff



Frankie Knight

Lymington Rushmore camps and a TISCA Trustee

Training to be a teacher can be a daunting experience. Frankie Knight asked some trainees from last year to share lessons they learned and what they wish they'd known from the outset. Frankie is a TISCA Trustee and has supported Christian teachers for several years as part of her work with Lymington Rushmore Holidays.

I wish I'd have relaxed more at the start and been myself more instead of trying hard to behave in a way I thought pupils or my mentor expected me to. As soon as I was encouraged to relax and enjoy interacting with pupils my anxiety before lessons decreased significantly.

I wish I'd known that it doesn't matter whether the kids like me or not. I've got friends outside of school - I don't want/need 13 year-old mates! I'm so eager to be liked that it can make school more difficult, especially when it comes to behaviour management and making hard decisions.

I wish I'd remembered more that all of my pupils need Jesus: it was tempting to pray for the less challenging/rude ones but to use the excuse of "wanting to switch off from work" as a reason to not pray for those I found more difficult!

As Christians, we know that we should love hard

people (colleagues and pupils) but in practice I wish I had known that I might be rejected and yet I'm still called to love them - it's not conditional on them loving me back!

I wish I had known more keenly that Jesus is with me and totally understands my feelings, worries and how my day has gone even if no one at school cares or asks.

I wish I'd relaxed more and learnt to 'let go' a bit. I wish I'd allowed for some chatter at points of the lesson, calmed down and allowed for the ebbs and flows. That makes for a much more enjoyable and smooth lesson for all.

I wish I had known to just be more unapologetically myself and not always to wait for people to ask me questions, particularly about myself and faith because they're not necessarily going to. So I wish I had been a bit bolder in taking an interest in them and telling them more about myself.

I wish I had known just how much the pupils pick up on and remember in lessons. I have always tried to start each lesson on a clean slate no matter how badly they have behaved previously but I didn't always realise how much the kids remember and want to have a fresh start too. ■



Easter 2020 from the perspective of a Bursar and Clerk to the Governors

Heads

Staff

Governors



Ray Maher

Bursar and Clerk to the Governors, King Edward VI School Southampton and Stroud, King Edward VI Preparatory School, Romsey

We are often reminded just how uncertain life can be but rarely does such immediate and significant change impact everyone simultaneously.

Teaching staff were truly remarkable in moving into the brave new world of remote learning from toddlers to adolescents, reinventing their pedagogy, literally overnight. When the learning curve is that steep it is all about initiative, attitude and commitment. As Bursar and Clerk, moving into these uncharted waters could scarcely have come at a worse time. Along with most schools our financial year end and budgeting cycle mean that October to March is a time when the workload turns long hours into seriously long hours. Easter for me has always been a time to get two weeks away and recharge the batteries, mentally, physically and especially spiritually. It is a time to stop and reflect on the holiness of God, the cost of rectifying our relationship with him and His goodness to everyone who accepts the gift of Christ.

As warmer climes beckoned the clouds of Covid were looming. Two weeks in the heel of Italy, followed by a week in Majorca, evaporated from my diary. Over the next six months it was replaced with 17 additional evening governor meetings, with weekly agendas, papers and minutes. As the maelstrom began, and parents and fees were discussed I was beginning to wish that the Head of Finance was not in the middle of her maternity leave. Aside from the logistics of furloughing over 80 support staff and negotiating to ensure key contractors would still be around in the aftermath, such as transport and catering, the discussions with parents began. These often lasted up to an hour at a time, as businesses collapsed, families lost loved ones and many of our parents had the new experience of worrying where their next pay cheque was coming from. Significant numbers of parents from our prep and senior school needed to talk through their circumstances with the Bursar, many having



several calls. To cope with the demand in this period, my mobile was available from 9 to 9, Monday to Saturday. For one or two parents greater flexibility was required. At times, I have to confess, it was overwhelming. My overriding impression of 2020 is one of sheer exhaustion. This was compounded by adding two house moves into the mix but that's another story. The historicity of Christ and the joy of Easter Sunday is my foundation, sustaining me through good times and bad.

I have never struggled with theism because like Anthony Flew, I don't like putting infinity into probability equations. There was a time however when I struggled to understand why Christ's death would help me to be reconciled to the author of my DNA. I came to realise that to misunderstand the cross is to misunderstand the holiness of God. The cross is a unique place where unadulterated justice and mercy meet. We can only be reconciled to God on His terms, not ours. As someone who believes Jesus is who He said He was, the examples of Joseph and Daniel undertaking demanding leadership roles in difficult circumstances are a great resource. They gave of their best to bless the place where God had placed them. In Jeremiah 29:7, the Israelites collectively are also urged to '*...seek the peace and prosperity of the city to which I have carried you...*'. I will continue to pray, give of my best and trust in Christ. Easter 2020 will indeed live long in the memory. ■

TNV Book Reviews for Autumn 2021

Chaplains

Heads

Parents

Staff

Governors

Pupils

Supporters



***'Out of the smoke'* by Matthew Wainwright (Wakeman Press - Published 2020)**

This novel, based on life in Victorian London, is billed as 'a new historical novel for young adults'. As someone who can't usually claim to be 'young', I have to say that it is a real page turner for adults of any age! It is aimed at upper Key Stage 2 and KS 3 pupils, especially those transitioning from primary to secondary school (and comes with engaging learning resources, too) but is an intelligent and gripping read.

The novel tells the story of Billy, a young chimney sweep, who leads us through the criminal underworld of late Nineteenth Century London. The story twists and turns and is rarely predictable. Each chapter is of a length to allow for 'sound bites' as part of an assembly series, will encourage a love of reading and, above all, is a story of Christian kindness featuring the 7th Earl of Shaftesbury. I can't recommend this book more highly.

Alastair Reid (Gen Sec of TISCA)



***'A better story'* by Glynn Harrison (IVP, 2017)**

In this accessible and engaging book, Glynn Harrison challenges Christians to face up honestly to 'our subculture of shame', and reimagine what it means to be sexual in the image of God. In contemporary culture, Christianity has moved from a place where its moral framework was generally accepted (if not followed), to representing 'the bad guys' where sexual ethics are concerned. We are seen as stunted and repressive, and heard to be saying 'no' more than commending a positive vision of human flourishing. He encourages us to remember that men and women flourish when we live in harmony with God's design, and to 'leave behind the broken promises of the sexual revolution to tell a better story of our own.'

Revd Nick Seward (Head of Kingham Hill)



***'Ireland to the Wild West'* by Marcus Paul (Barnes and Noble, 2019)**

Marcus Paul has spoken at a TISCA regional conference and is a former Deputy Head at Queen's Taunton (and

an alumnus of Monkton). He has also written 'The Evil that men do' – an unflinching account of some of the worst periods in church history. In this new book he also writes about a period of Scottish church history but it's certainly not dry! If you're looking for a half-term read, a page turner and a true story – in this case about James and Agnes Wilson who, as newlyweds emigrate to America and found churches in the Wild West in addition to farming, then this book is for you! Agnes' intimate letters home take us on a journey through marriage, travels and life in Nineteenth Century USA. These letters are a treasure trove for historians but the 'ordinary reader' will find 'Ireland to the Wild West' to be engrossing and an inspiring story of romance, faith, tragedy and hope.

Alastair Reid (Gen Sec of TISCA)



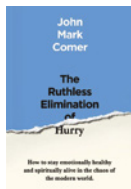
***'Faith Journeys'* app**

The start of the new school year has coincided with the launch of an innovative app providing accessible and entertaining biblical fiction which is of interest to

teachers and students (especially Y11-13) alike. 'Faith Journeys' features brand new e-books in an exciting format at low cost, encouraging readers to grow their interest in the Bible and the men and women who were used in the building of the kingdom in remarkable ways. Free books feature alongside others starting at 89p, readily available on I.O.S. and Google platforms.

TISCA supporter and Christian humourist/author John Adamson has two stories on the app, one on the amazing strength of Naomi from the book of Ruth, and the other on the Bible's great encourager, Barnabas. He's a man who would certainly want to encourage everyone to download and use Faith Journeys!

John Adamson, currently finishing his fourth book, offers school visits with a 90-minute workshop ideally suited to Years 5-8, stressing grammatical concepts as a route to empowering and inspiring students in the art of creating characters in a story. Barnabas is used as a model for adaptation to biblical fiction, although a more general application is available. Cost varies according to travel requirements and can be discussed with John on johnbadamson@aol.com.

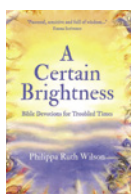


'The Ruthless Elimination' of Hurry **by John Mark Comer**

'Hurry is the great enemy of spiritual life in our day'. John Mark Comer tackles the perennial issue of the busyness and distractions of modern life and

encourages us to learn from Jesus to attain a life of greater depth, joy and contentment. Packed with personal anecdotes, this book presents an appealing and warmly realistic vision for life lived at a slightly slower pace. Even if you're someone who rolls their eyes at trying to make term time less stressful, this book suggests some great ways to streamline life to help you enjoy walking more closely with Jesus each day.

Frankie Knight (TISCA Trustee)



'A Certain Brightness' by Philippa Wilson

As the title page says, this book contains 'Bible devotions for troubled times'.

Philippa Wilson is a teacher who has struggled with her own mental health

and has written these wonderful reflections to show the hope that the Bible holds out in hard times. Philippa is realistic that believers can't always read large chunks of Scripture and so she focuses on just a few words from the Bible each day to draw out genuine, deep gospel reasons to keep going in times of struggle. Written with wisdom, spiritual insight and refreshing realism, this is a great devotional for being encouraged yourself during the thick of term time or when things feel tough.

Frankie Knight (TISCA Trustee)



'Faithful Leaders' by Rico Tice

Rico Tice is the first to admit that a lot has already been written about leadership.

However, this book packs a punch. Short and to the point, Rico hones in on the centrality of leaders' own characters

and attitudes in their leadership. At a time of increased awareness of the importance of integrity and high moral standards in leadership, this is a helpful book to read.

Written with pithy words of wisdom, personal anecdotes and helpful points for reflection at the end of each chapter, it's a brilliant resource for Christians in any positions of influence.

Frankie Knight (TISCA Trustee)

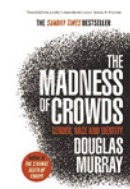


'Ten Words to Live By' by Jen Wilkin

Even in a post-Christian culture, many people still know that the Ten Commandments have something to do with Christianity. However, how many of us are guilty of steering away

from these commands for fear of making Christianity seem dull or rules-based? In this brilliant book, Jen Wilkin takes a fresh look at the Ten Commandments, unpacking them and applying them to life today in challenging and inspiring ways. This book is a great help for understanding the role of the Law today and appreciating the Ten Commandments in the context of relationship with the Lord and with one another. With discussion questions after each chapter, it could be used as part of a Bible study series or, alternatively, used as the basis for a Chapel programme.

Frankie Knight (TISCA Trustee)



'The Madness of Crowds' by Douglas Murray

This book isn't for the faint-hearted. Rather, it's for the seriously-minded who want to engage with issues of identity politics, social justice and

intersectionality. Whether you're entirely behind 'woke' culture, uncertain about it all or still not sure what the term means, Douglas Murray critically examines the cultural movement of our day and its ideological underpinnings. Arguing that this has become the 'new religion' of the West, Douglas Murray campaigns for greater freedom of speech and, he argues, more common sense in some of today's most heated debates. Whether you agree with him or not, this *Sunday Times* bestseller is an important read in challenging times.

Frankie Knight (TISCA Trustee)



'Klara and the Sun' by Kazuo Ishiguro

Nobel prize winner Kazuo Ishiguro strikes again with a fantastic new book. Written in a similar style to *Never Let Me Go*, this novel addresses the question of Artificial Intelligence and what it means to be

human. As one of the characters asks, is there such a thing as the human heart - Christians might say, the soul - that distinguishes us from machines, however clever they get? This book touches on the very relevant themes of teenage isolation, education, parents making difficult choices for their children's future, guilt and the ethics of a technology which is quickly becoming a reality. Super for a Sixth Form reading group, Oxbridge discussion or just a Half Term read for yourself. You won't be able to put it down.

Frankie Knight (TISCA Trustee)



A TISCA response to the REC on Worldviews

Chaplains



Alastair Reid
TISCA general secretary

TISCA became a member of the REC, the Religious Education Council of England and Wales, just over a year ago.

The REC was founded in 1973 to '*represent the collective interest of a wide variety of professional associations and faith communities in deepening and strengthening provision for religious education*'. As such it operates to inform Government and other bodies '*to champion RE*'. Its member organisations are diverse and include those representing major World Faiths, a range of Christian denominations, teachers' groups and also Humanist UK, the Pagan Federation, the Spiritualists' National Union – and many others. TISCA subscribes to the Evangelical Alliance's statement of faith and is in membership of the REC as one of a number of Christian organisations determined to ensure that Christianity remains at the heart of RE teaching.

In recent months, TISCA (and a number of other Christian associations such as ACT, the Association of Christian Teachers), has raised objections within the REC to the proposal to rename RE as 'Religion and Worldviews education'. This article considers the proposals of the final report of the Commission on

Religious Education (CoRE 2018) and its controversial conclusion that the law should require religious education to include teaching about non-religious worldviews alongside religions, presumably in equal measure. A fuller argument can be found in Philip Barnes' excellent research to the British Journal of Educational Studies. To link to this article: <https://doi.org/10.1080/00071005.2021.1871590>

TISCA Response to the REC

As an Alliance, we recognise that many schools already teach non religious beliefs and perspectives within the subject of Religious Education and many Locally Agreed Syllabuses include such elements. At its best, RE allows pupils to consider the important questions about life and how beliefs affect all we do. It encourages pupils to consider the different ways of believing and come to their own conclusions about how to negotiate life.

However, we find it difficult support the formal significant overhaul of Religious Education, and specifically the proposal for a National Entitlement of Religion & Worldviews Education. We do not endorse the recommendations for the reasons outlined below.



1. Worldviews as a concept

'Worldview' is an overly broad, abstract philosophical concept that has been the subject of much disagreement. We feel it has not been defined adequately, despite much discussion as to what is meant by the term. We understand that the REC sees 'worldview' as primarily about an approach to the subject content, at the same time noting that content cannot be separated from approach. It is a danger that we may be so caught up with what is meant by 'worldview' that we miss the reality that the **study of Religions will be diluted** if the CoRE Report is accepted in its entirety. The National Association of Standing Advisory Councils on Religion Education (NASACRE) states that worldviews being '*used as a catch-all for all belief systems may lead many to miss the importance of the study of religions*'.

Whilst it could be possible to say that religions such as Christianity have a worldview - a view of the world that is shaped **by the Bible, or other sacred texts** - this is distinct to what we feel is being proposed when the REC refers ambiguously to 'institutional' or 'personal' worldviews. This designation, we feel, advocates for a framework that construes religions primarily as worldviews yet ignores the importance and historic nature of foundational beliefs within world religions.

2. Practical concerns and compliance

RE and Worldviews has the potential to be excessively academic and difficult to access for teachers and students alike if taught as the REC propose. In reality it runs the risk of being 'dumbed down'. Schools will in all likelihood find it impractical to meet such demands and offer a superficial, simplistic version of the curriculum without much academic rigour.

RE is an already stretched and under-resourced subject with limited compliance in a significant number of schools. Any additional subject matter, perceived as being necessary under the proposals, could put further pressure on timetables and mean that the religious components are streamlined. Consideration of 'worldviews' should form a part of good RE teaching but not be an imposed part of a RE curriculum.

3. Threat to faith representations

The prospect of Religious Education morphing into a subject more akin to Philosophy, Sociology or Anthropology, rather than having a focus on world religions (and so even less emphasis on Christianity) is a real concern for Christian educators, as well as other faith groups. At the moment, the law requires 'Religious Education' to be delivered, and **'in the main' the content of this education should be Christian in nature**.

Recommendation 4 of the CoRE report would remove the requirement for local authorities to convene Agreed Syllabus Conferences. This would not only remove the statutory safeguards that entitle religious bodies to have veto over content in the curriculum, but severely weaken the contribution of the significant religious bodies in the locality, professional and elected local representation, and so weakening local democracy and, less opportunity for local faith groups to shape Religious Education according to local traditions and religious constituencies through the production process. This endangers the opportunity for the Christian voice in Religious Education to be heard.

Conclusion

TISCA does not support the statutory expansion of the subject of RE formally to include religious and non-religious 'worldviews', as proposed in the CoRE Report, as we believe it will weaken the subject of Religious Education rather than ensuring its flourishing. At the same time, we believe that the title Religious Education should be retained to emphasise the 'starting point' for the subject. As Christians who are also educators, we consider that the teaching of Christianity is likely to be profoundly undermined by the recommendations. ■

News from TISCA supporters

Autumn 2021

Chaplains on the move

- **Graham Wright** (who 'stood in the gap' at King Edward's School Witley for a while) is appointed Chaplain to Gordon's School, Woking
- **James Radcliffe** has moved from parish work to start as Chaplain at King Edward's School Witley
- **Duncan Weaver** leaving as Chaplain from Bloxham
- **Tom Hutchings** has moved from Cambridge to be Chaplain at Kingham Hill
- **Andrew Savage** has moved from Kingham to Lambrook School as Chaplain
- **Gavin Williams** has retired as Chaplain at Westminster School (and as a TISCA Trustee)
- **Antony Wilson** has moved from parish work to be chaplain at Mill Hill School
- **Ed Gray** takes up the chaplain role at St David's College whilst Tim Hall becomes chaplain emeritus!
- **James Soper** is the new lay chaplain at Warwick School
- **Andrew Gough** retired as chaplain of Bishop Wordsworth School
- **Victor Selvaraj** (Head of Christian Activities at Hebron School, India) moves to Mill Hill to teach science

Schools

- Murree Christian School (Pakistan) has closed but Dagmar (Principal) and Ralph Baron have moved to teach at Hebron School (India) where Dagmar is Deputy Head (Academics)
- Newly moved to a Foundation school is Berkhamsted and Immanuel Christian School with new Associate schools including Radley, Mill Hill and Trinity, Croydon, St Mary's Calne and Prestfelde.

Bereavements – with our condolences to their families

- **George Oliver** – very instrumental in Christian education for many years at the Stapleford Centre
- **David Ives** – a major part of IAPS and Head of Holmewood House, 1980-98

Up-coming TISCA events

Contact Alastair or Alix for further details

Thursday, 23rd Sept (all day)

Senior Prefects' training, Dean Close School

Mon. 4th – Wed. 6th October

Chaplains' residential (and online) conference, Malvern

Tuesday, 9th November (pm)

Heads' meeting, Cranleigh

Thursday, 18th November (pm)

A TISCA evening with...Julie Robinson (CEO of the Independent Schools Council) - online

Wednesday, 19th January (pm)

Regional meeting South at Castle Court Prep School

Thursday, 20th January (pm)

Regional meeting South-West at King's, Bruton

Wednesday, 26th January (pm)

A TISCA evening with...Graham Daniels (General Director of Christians in Sport) – online

Saturday, 5th March (all day)

TISCA/ACT Conference: 'Renewing our identity in Christ: a Biblical response to issues of identity in education.'