

News & Views

89 · AUTUMN 2024

‘Your Kingdom come, Your will be done’ Maintaining Kingdom values in challenging times

Chaplains

Heads

Parents

Staff

Governors

Pupils

Supporters



Norman Patterson

TISCA Trustee, former Bursar of Luckley House School and a Prep School governor. Norman has also served Overseas at St Andrew's, Turi, in Kenya

In preparing for some of the most significant challenges ever to face independent schools, most governing bodies are placing significant pressure on Heads and Bursars to cut costs in order to minimise the impact of VAT on our school parents.

In most cases schools are already functioning efficiently with little opportunity to remove costs without taking some painful decisions. Bursars are usually at the forefront of these discussions, drafting proposals to present to their board in consultation with Heads and leadership teams. They have,



The TISCA Trustees meeting for the 2024 AGM at King Edward's School, Witley

Coming up in this edition

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

- | | | | |
|---|--|---|---------------------------------------|
| 1 Editorial | 20 Are we listening?
Top tips for university freshers | 24 Burnout in leadership | 32 In the middle? |
| 4 TISCA meetings during the Spring and Summer terms 2024 | 21 Big World, Big Questions | 25 The importance of engaging with each other | 34 Prayer works – the Filling Station |
| 8 TISCA's Annual Conference | 22 Giving Kids a Voice, Keeping Kids Safe | 28 The importance of supporting children with Special Educational Needs | 34 Worship in School: Is it Worth it? |
| 12 TISCA over the years | 23 Hope through despair with mental health | 30 The power to fail | 36 The contribution of chapel |
| 15 TISCA News | 24 Petra College | 31 "Stand firm dear brothers and sisters" | 38 Book Reviews |
| 16 Stunted Growth | | | 39 Epilogue |
| 18 What can we learn from top sportspeople who follow Christ? | | | |

TISCA Communications

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- 💬 **Chaplains' WhatsApp group**
Now has nearly 60 members: sharing news, prayer requests, events, speakers, resources and a weekly 'thought'. If you'd like to join, please contact Alastair or Alix.
- 💬 **Heads' WhatsApp group**
Has over 30 members. Details from Alastair or Alix
- 💬 **Governors' WhatsApp group**
Over 20 members and looking to grow. Details from Alastair or Alix
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Alex Aldous, newly appointed TISCA Chair, under a portrait at KES Witley of Queen Charlotte



Jim Houghton (trustee), Alix Stockwell (development officer), Joanna Wright (trustee), Alex Aldous (chair) at the February 2024 AGM and Trustees' meeting



Alastair Reid, General Secretary, with Peter Woodroffe, Deputy CEO of the ISA (and a TISCA supporter) at the ISA Annual Conference, May 2024

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- **Revd Alex Aldous**, Chaplain, Prestfelde Prep School, Shrewsbury (Chair)
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- **Mr Ray Maher**, former Bursar of King Edward VI School, Southampton
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- **Mrs Lizzy Nesbitt**, Head, Emmanuel School, Oxford
- **Mr Norman Patterson** (Treasurer)
- **Mr Victor Selvaraj**, Teacher, Mill Hill School, London
- **Mr Antony Spencer**, CEO, Mill Hill School, London
- **Mrs Joanna Wright**, Head, King Edward's School, Witley

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Council of Reference

- Stephen Baldock
- Dr Priscilla Chadwick
- Lord Griffiths of Fforestfach
- Revd Tim Hastie Smith
- Revd Hugh Palmer
- Nick Pollard

Previous General Secretaries

Ken Barnes (1995–1998), Revd Michael Hepworth (1998–2002), Mark Greenstock (2002–2006), Hugh Bradby (2006–2019)

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‘Your Kingdom come, Your will be done’

continued

therefore, influence not only in where cuts can be made but also how agreed strategy is implemented.

It is, thus, timely to remind ourselves that even in such a painful process, we need to ensure that in our schools with a Christian ethos, our Kingdom values are held to the fore.

Compassion

Staff salaries account for, by far, the most significant costs and therefore in most schools they are an unavoidable target for reducing costs. Schools will take professional advice and ensure that processes are legal but let us ensure that in every case they are progressed with compassion.

Generosity

Fee remissions are also coming under scrutiny with many schools removing the monetary value of scholarships awards. Where bursaries are funded out of income rather than from an endowment fund, they are also a potential target for cuts. While some bursaries may remain to satisfy Public Benefit requirements, let's remember that bursaries provide an opportunity for the school to exercise the scriptural principle of tithing and many pupils have been greatly blessed by them.

Mission

Most TISCA schools have a chaplaincy team, or at least a chaplain. While the Christian ethos of a school can and should be evident in everything it does, including the bursary function, the chaplain(s) has a crucial role. We have a responsibility to protect their budgets as much as is reasonably possible.

May Governors and Leadership Teams alike have wisdom and discernment in challenging times to prioritise wisely and implement our plans with patience and compassion.



Norman Patterson in conversation with Emma Taylor at the TISCA AGM 2024



TISCA meetings during the Spring and Summer terms 2024

Chaplains

Heads

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Summary by

Alastair Reid

TISCA General Secretary



Courageous advocacy in our schools

Elizabeth Howat of the Archbishops' Young Leaders' Award (which operates in over 1200 schools), spoke very enthusiastically at our Lent Term online evening meeting about the importance of raising young people as agents of change (cf 1 Timothy 4:12).

She told us that the YLA is striving to raise a generation who:-

- Have the self-confidence and humility to lead by example
- Intentionally demonstrate God's love through their actions
- Seek servant leadership and take this teaching to others

Elizabeth reminded us from John 10:10 that Jesus offers 'life in all its fullness' and that we should strive in our schools for an 'ecology of flourishing'. In the Zulu language they use the word 'ubuntu' in reference to good community development: it means 'I am because we are' – in other words we can't flourish in isolation. We should speak out against injustice (and encourage young people to do likewise) and be a 'prophetic voice' by going beyond the bake sale and the litter pick to

A TISCA evening with...
Elizabeth Howat
(Director of the Archbishops' Young Leaders Award)
Thu 25 Jan
19.45-21.00
TISCA | The Independent Schools Christian Alliance

ask uncomfortable questions – even if it makes us unpopular. By taking small steps, dropping pebbles 'in the water', we can follow Jesus' example of speaking out and bringing change in society.

We were reminded of examples of 'courageous advocacy' in our world: Marcus Rashford, Greta Thunberg, Ellie Simmonds, Desmond Tutu, Nelson Mandela...Jesus! Why not 'join them' and encourage others in our pupil bodies to be brave in leadership and to seek social justice? 'And what does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God' (Micah 6:8)

See: www.archbishopofyorkyouthtrust.co.uk



Firing our faith

The Rt Rev Jill Duff, a former school chaplain and now Bishop of Lancaster, spoke winsomely about 'making a way for the Lord' in our settings.

This online meeting was well supported and over half the attendees were School Chaplains. Bishop Jill began by reminding us, from Luke 1 (11-17 and 76-79), that just as John the Baptist preached, God's timescales are not our own. We need to remain faithful to the Gospel and to trust and pray for the Lord to be at work, even when we can't see immediate changes. We were reminded of William Wilberforce: he hoped that slavery would be abolished in 18 months but it took over 44 years to accomplish. Bishop Jill exhorted us to allow the Lord to 'fire our faith' to take us to the next horizon, and not just 'the next thing'.

Three themes were explored by Bishop Jill from the passages in Luke: **forgiveness**, death and peace. Firstly, forgiveness: repentance can seem an old-fashioned, even a 'dark', word but in the Scriptures it is accompanied by joy (witness Zacchaeus or the thief on the cross). The Lord is bringing darkness into the light. Secondly, **deliverance**: pain and trauma can become a launching pad for evil and difficult to escape from – and sometimes we need deliverance. Pastors often focus on Jesus' preaching and healing but neglect the emphasis in the Gospel on deliverance, too. Bishop Jill spoke of a moment of release in her life from the memory of rejection by her mother (a recurring theme in other parts



of her family) and she reminded us of what Martin Luther said: 'You can't stop the birds flying over your head but you can stop them nesting in your hair'. We need to pray at times for Jesus to deliver us from bad memories and those things which oppress us. Thirdly, **peace**: be willing to 'pray peace' as you enter a potentially difficult situation or conversation. Let's remember that often in the Gospel, peace precedes an encounter with Jesus: 'Peace be with you' is Jesus' regular greeting.

We were struck by Bishop Jill's openness and her willingness to touch on things personal and close to her family. We came away from the meeting eager to read her recent book, 'Lighting the beacons' (SPCK) – and also encouraged to pray for Bishop Jill in her work, her service and family life. Bishops are much in the public eye and need our prayers!



Regional meeting at Heritage School, Cambridge May 2024

Cathy Priest of the **Faraday Institute** tackled the question: '*Science and religion: do we have to choose?*' With visitors from three different schools, and also from Good News for Everyone, we found ourselves back in an enthralling classroom.

There were science experiments and explosions as well as 'homework' to discuss and evidence to consider. Cathy helped us answer the question she posed by enabling us to understand that we didn't need to choose science or religion – both were important as we grappled with issues in our world. She helped us understand that at its best, science helps us explore the world around us

Cathy Priest is introduced by Alastair Reid





with wonder. She also demonstrated how science has limitations – instruments can't measure the heat on the sun's surface and we can't run a timeline to show how life has evolved – and that there are some things which science can never measure or determine such as love between a couple, a career choice, the pleasure of a kiss or how prayer works. We need an integrated approach in our schools, indeed in life generally, where science helps with the how? questions and religion enables us to grapple with philosophy, morals and ethics. Cathy's final challenge was: are we ready for a challenge? Can we help young people as they ask the 'big questions' in life – who am I and why am I here?



Heads' meeting at Mill Hill School

Our host was the CEO of the Mill Hill Foundation, **Antony Spencer**, who is also a TISCA Trustee.

On a lovely early summer evening in May, we were able to walk round the school grounds and note the school's connection with movies (including Dr Who, Harry Potter and Raiders of the Lost Ark), with the creator of the Oxford English Dictionary (James Murray) and with scientist Francis Crick, discoverer of DNA. Ahead of a superb meal and in a room with fine portraits, Antony shared a devotion from three Bible texts around the 'theme' of a meal. Our 'starter' was from Hebrews 12:1. The 'witnesses' looking on as we run the race of life were like the portraits on the wall. The job of leading a school is hard and as time passes, not least at this stage in the summer term, we can grow weary. However, like parents encouraging primary school children at the end of a sports' day race, we are reminded that there are many 'cheering us on', both on earth and in the heavenlies.

Heads enjoying a Mill Hill meal



Touring Mill Hill School



Antony's 'main course' was taken from Ecclesiastes 12. Not many courses and conferences for Heads offered teaching on wisdom: we would do well to read this passage, and others in the Scriptures, and remember that whilst '*much study wearies the body*', without values study is meaningless. This passage points us to the '*one Shepherd*', Jesus. Finally, for 'dessert', we read Colossians 3:15-16. Our destination in life is to be bringers of God's peace. We are to be thankful, both great and small, and to remember that to be fully 'nourished' (as with a meal) we need to '*let the word of Christ dwell in you richly*'.



TISCA Supporters' Event in London May 2024

Some 20 of us gathered at the British Museum for a 'tour of the Bible'.

With a superb guide, a pastor in Kent and member of 'Day One' tour guides, we focussed on the rooms containing Egyptian and Assyrian artefacts. Among much else, it was a delight to see part of the Assyrian frieze once held at what became Canford School. Above all, we were shown just how archaeologists are proving over

and again the historicity of the Bible. This tour was then followed by tea for 25 in the Phoenix Gardens. During tea there was an update on 'TISCA today' together with short presentations by the Chaplains of Trinity School, Sevenoaks (Anna Graham), Bishop's Stortford College (Ian Morris) and Felsted School (Nigel Little) about how TISCA was supporting them in their ministry. This day launched a fundraising campaign to take TISCA beyond its 30th anniversary year (2025).



Alastair and Alix speak at the Phoenix Gardens' tea for supporters



Anna Graham, Chaplain at Trinity Sevenoaks, addresses supporters



TISCA's Annual Conference

June 2024

Chaplains

Heads

Parents

Staff

Governors

Pupils

Supporters



Summary by

Alastair Reid

TISCA General Secretary



RESILIENCE, REASSURANCE AND REFRESHMENT IN SCHOOLS TODAY

A consideration of mental, emotional and spiritual health

Annual Hybrid Conference: Tuesday 11 June 2024

TISCA | The Independent Schools
Christian Alliance

We were blessed with over **80 delegates** in person at the Emmanuel Centre in Westminster and with several online.

There was a great sense of fellowship and of encouragement. Many of the delegates were Chaplains and this provided an opportunity for a 'catch up' ahead of their residential conference in October. Several Heads were also in attendance and planning their strategies for the new academic year in the light of political challenges! We were blessed with **sponsorship** from three organisations: Rock UK, Utility Aid and Access Insurance. There were also **exhibition** stalls from Good News for Everyone, ACET, Go Teach, Saltmine, the Faraday Institute, Lifewords and ReMind.

Revd **Alex Aldous** (Prestfelde Prep School), TISCA Chair, opened the proceedings with prayer and later coordinated the Panel time. We had sung worship led by Rev **Hutch** (Monkton Combe) and these times helped us focus on the God to whom we look for our reassurance and refreshment.

Revd **Becky Taylor**, in her first year as Chaplain at Berkhamsted School, brought devotions on the

theme of '*Reassurance: the names of God*'. Her focus was Psalm 23 and seven names for God: Jehovah-Rah (Shepherd), Jehovah-Jireh (Provider), Jehovah-Shalom (Peace), Jehovah-Reaba (Healing), Jehovah-Tsidkenu (Righteousness), Jehovah-Ezer (Help) and Jehovah-Nissi (Banner). She then related these descriptions of God's goodness to what we see, too, in the Feeding of the 5000 (Mark 6) where we also discern **the Good Shepherd at work** providing, healing, giving rest and satisfaction. Becky's joyful and encouraging presentation set us up excellently for the day!

Revd Becky Taylor



Livy Gibbs of TLG – 'Transforming Lives for Good' – then followed with a workshop about 'emotional first aid'. Her teaching was clearly applied to schools, and to ourselves as 'caregivers' in education. We were taken through an 'internal stress dial' as the brain moves through the five stages of calm, alert, alarm and fear through to terror – and then how best to provide reassurance, safety and recovery. Like having a manual for a car in order to discern the messages on its dials, so we need to get to know children, to 'read their manuals', and to bring the necessary response. Things that help can be a picture, a fidget relief, an action (even a punch bag), a scent (such as a hand cream), something to listen to and possibly a special item. Livy suggested three steps in particular to help someone who is stressed: breathe deeply ('**I see you**'), drop down or walk with them ('**It's not good that man should be alone**') and then to listen ('**I hear you**'). These steps are not linear but they are usually necessary to reach out to someone in need.

Livy Gibbs



James Shone (of the charity 'I can and I am'), now with significant sight loss, spoke of his disappointment of having his Headship taken from him when he suffered from a brain tumour which meant he had to learn afresh how to eat, talk and to walk. He used a balloon for illustration and suggested **four 'pillars' that help inflate our balloons**: firstly, remember that all of us are unique (and give evidence-based praise whenever we can); secondly, all have a purpose (and use the co-curricular programme in schools to help discern this for pupils); thirdly, attitude is important: don't be defined by setbacks – reflect and then refine; and, fourthly, consider what it means to belong: '*Belonging is as important as the day we breathe*' (Mother Theresa) – and establish a culture of encouragement. James has had to overcome so much disappointment and personal disability in his life: it was an incredible encouragement to hear him speak about how we should 'look up' (to God) and 'look out' (to others) whilst we 'look after' (ourselves).



The formal part of our day conference concluded with **Beth Lewis** (Director of Safeguarding at Monkton Combe School) and Revd **Andy Hutchinson** (Head of Chaplaincy at Monkton) reviewing what we had learnt over the day about resilience, reassurance and refreshment, and then applying this to our lives in school today. We were given questions to consider in small groups: how do we nurture a **culture of resilience** in schools? We need to help children not simply to know things, but to dwell (in God's presence / in acceptance of who they are). They mentioned how the regular theme in Principal's assembly at Monkton is 'learning from failure' and celebrating these times. A second question was: how can you know pupils – and how does the school help in this? Once again we were encouraged to **value relationships**, to be professional in all we do (including showing up on time and keeping promises) and to be active listeners. Finally, we considered this: what kind of **refreshment do we seek**? Beth and Hutch suggested this should be threefold: physical (don't forget to pace our week and have downtimes/Sabbath rests; emotional (cultivate friends, eat well and role model effectively); and, spiritual (is there space for CU in our school week and do we encourage pupils to attend church where they can?).

Beth Lewis and Rev Hutch





The closing **Panel** time allowed for questions and also for sharing about how tough school life can be – and what tips we have to persevere and to prosper. We prayed for each other and sang together – and throughout the conference we enjoyed super food, great conversations and much sharing of resources.

The Panel



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(top left to bottom right):
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TISCA over the years...

Memories from former General Secretaries

[Chaplains](#)[Heads](#)[Parents](#)[Staff](#)[Governors](#)[Pupils](#)[Supporters](#)

TISCA is approaching its 30th anniversary in 2025. We are excited about the future – the work is growing and seems to be needed as much as ever. We shall be focusing on sharing more widely about TISCA and fundraising next year: might you become a personal supporter of our mission? Here some of our former General Secretaries share their memories of TISCA past...



Ken Barnes

TISCA General Secretary (1995–1998)

I am sure that I will not be the only one who likes to spend a few moments at church before the service begins reviewing the words of the hymns, so I was recently very pleased to see one Sunday morning that we were to sing a hymn with an author's name beneath that brought to my mind many good and thankful memories.

As we give thanks to God for the first thirty years of TISCA the name of Rev. John Eddison may not be well known among our current members and supporters, but he was the author not only of some good hymns but also the inspiration for the formation of TISCA. He planted the seed from which the organisation we have today has grown.

After ordination and a short curacy, John moved on to what was to be his life's work as a staff worker with Scripture Union for independent schools – especially, but not exclusively, preparatory schools, where his gift for proclaiming a biblical message in an attractive and relevant way made him a welcome regular preacher in chapels and assemblies at schools throughout the country. His godly insight and biblical wisdom made him a great source of support and encouragement for

many heads and staff seeking to live out their Christian faith in their schools. He was a governor of many independent schools and for many years a greatly respected chaplain to the Prep. Schools' (IAPS) annual conference.



It was at John's initiative that a group of Christian heads began to meet together two or three times a year for prayer, fellowship and discussion and to seek a Biblical perspective on the issues of the day we faced in our schools. John always brought his grace and wisdom to those meetings and it was a natural progression when he suggested that Christian staff and governors may benefit from similar fellowship and support. The rest, as they say, is history.

John would be thrilled to see how TISCA has grown and the way in which his vision is being fulfilled today in the face of many issues that are far more challenging and





Church House,
Westminster where TISCA
was launched in 1995



Wadhurst College, Sussex, where the
fellowship originated that became TISCA

divisive that we could have imagined thirty years ago.

In the words of his hymn we sang that Sunday morning, John also left us the legacy of a prayer that you may find as relevant and helpful as I do, as we look back with thanksgiving and forward in faith and trust for the future:

*Father, although I cannot see
the future you have planned,
and though the path is sometimes dark
and hard to understand,
yet give me faith, through joy and pain,
to trace your loving hand.*

*When I recall that in the past
your promises have stood
through each perplexing circumstance
and every changing mood,
I rest content that all things work
together for my good.*

*Whatever, then, the future brings
of good or seeming ill,
I ask for strength to follow you
and grace to trust you still;
and I would look for no reward,
except to do your will.*

John Eddison (1916–2011)



Michael Hepworth

TISCA General Secretary (1998–2002)

The origins of TISCA are rooted in a group gathered together by Christopher Bacon, Head of Dean Close School.

This was initially a London based group and it gave the opportunity to pray together as we shared news of what was happening in our schools. Discussions widened when Michael Coates (then HM of Monkton Junior School) began to guide us to think in a more holistic fashion and further strengthened when the group was joined by David Prior. He was Secretary of the Centre for Marketplace Theology and aimed at Christians who worked in the London financial Marketplace – “The City” – to live as authentic disciples of Christ. He quotes Ephesians 2:8ff. God who made us alive to show the incomparable riches of his grace, expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus “for we are God’s workmanship ... created in Christ Jesus to do the good works which God prepared in advance for us to do”. This theological insight is important – as in Colossians 3:17: “Whatever you do, do everything in the name of the Lord

Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him”. It’s not what we say that matters, Jesus said, it’s how we live that counts.

I was appointed as General Secretary following Ken Barnes and I was helped and influenced by Ann Holt, who was working with CARE for Education. She worked with me in running courses for all manner of subjects throughout the UK. They were all holistic in nature. For example, we wrote to all 400 school listed in the ISC list, inviting them to apply for a place in “Leading Values in School Management” and were well supported. I suppose “Guidance in Christian schools on Safeguarding” would be on offer in our current environment.





Mark Greenstock

TISCA General Secretary (2002–2006)

Having retired from classics and housemastering at Harrow and hoping for an easy life, in March 2002 I received the daunting invitation to take over from Michael Hepworth.

With his impressive range of contacts Michael had built up the membership to just under 300 including many Heads and Chaplains. However, the diplomatic skills of Michael Coates and Tim Hastie Smith prevailed and on meeting the Trustees I was reassured by their saintly wisdom and generous support.

We set up the TISCA website and added 'Views' to the 'News' to attract an increased stream of comments and articles from members. I threw in a series of 'Slow Food' Bible studies in the fond hope that we could build a huge bank of resources to help busy teachers, which never quite materialised. But the greatest joy of the job was visiting schools, meeting members at first hand and hearing their stories.

We had one tense Trustees' meeting when we had to cancel one of the two annual London meetings owing to lack of applications. I proposed we should drop to one

a year which caused some dismay. But to my relief they accepted the situation, so we began a school membership scheme and held regional meetings twice or more a term. One such meeting in 2005 took place at Durham High School for Girls where Ann Templeman invited Bishop Tom Wright to speak on 'Resurrection Thinking' (reproduced in TNV 36). After nearly an hour of a splendid lecture delivered without any notes he disappeared to the dentist with raging toothache.

I could never have survived without my assistant secretary, Essex girl Lesley Molyneux. Her prayerful common sense and unquenchable sense of humour kept me sane amidst the welter of phone calls, emails, correspondence, newsletters and meetings. I had a wonderful four years in the job until it was time to hand on to a more talented successor.



Hugh Bradby

TISCA General Secretary (2006–2019)

Ruth and I look back on our time running TISCA with almost unalloyed pleasure.

The greatest sense of accomplishment probably came each year in early September when we prepared and mailed out the large envelopes containing the latest edition of TISCA News and Views, together with other information about activities planned for the coming year. Casting an eye over the address list also prompted prayer for individuals and schools as the academic year began.

We had TISCA meetings in a number of interesting locations, perhaps none more so than the dinner in the Tower of London, when General Sir Richard Dannatt spoke movingly about the link between a believer's Christian faith and vocation - whether that be in the military, medicine, law, politics or indeed education. The number of those gathered on that occasion, and the keen interest shown, made us aware of how significant the influence of TISCA was becoming.

Finally, we recall with gratitude many meetings of the Trustees and General Purposes Committee. TISCA has been blessed in the quality and the commitment

of those who have taken responsibility for its governance. The meetings were characterised by an absence of acrimony, but rather by prayerful support and deep concern for the successful continuation of the work TISCA carries out for the greater glory of our saviour Jesus.

Our prayer that God would provide the right new General Secretary for new times was answered when Alastair Reid made himself available. Truly, as the pandemic struck in 2020 and all TISCA activities went online, Alastair and Alix (with her media gifts) proved to be 'for such a time as this' as the book of Esther says. We rejoice to see the TISCA brand flourishing in increasingly challenging times and give thanks for God's faithfulness.

Hugh Bradby was Principal at Woodstock School in India and then Head of Kingsmead School, Hoylake.



TISCA

- Celebrates its **30th anniversary in 2025** and will hold a Thanksgiving Service at 2.30 pm on Sunday, 11th May 2025, at Dean Close School, Cheltenham. *Save the date!*

Schools

- New members / contacts include New Hall School, St Dominic's Grammar School, Exeter School, KCS Wimbledon, St Edmund's Canterbury and Repton School

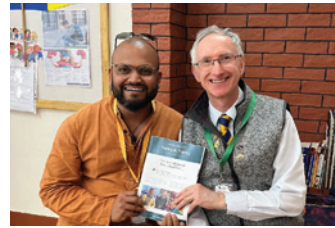
Chaplains

- **Richard Horner** (Rugby School) is stepping down at the end of this coming term and will take up the position of Rector of five small villages in South Somerset in January 2025.
- We welcome **Fran Walsh** as lay chaplain to Rye School – now part of Headington Rye
- **Clifford Swartz** leaves Monmouth School to return to the USA and to Princeton Anglican Church. We welcome **Alycia Timmis** as his successor.
- **David Ibbotson** retires from Malvern College and his successor, already well known to the College, is **Adam Wharton**
- **James Soper** has moved on as lay chaplain at Warwick School for ordination training and **James Holden** is his successor
- **Adam Maynard** is the new Chaplain at Woodstock School in Mussoorie, north India

Alastair and Alix on their way to the TISCA Annual Conference, June 2024



Dickon Baird, Deputy Head at Westbrook Hay Prep School, with Alastair Reid



Victor Selvaraj, Trustee, and Alastair Reid, General Secretary, meet at Hebron School in south India (where they both used to teach) for Hebron's 125th anniversary celebrations



Alastair Reid, General Secretary, with Ian Morris, Chaplain at Bishop's Stortford College



Anthony Buckley, TISCA chaplain, with Alex Aldous, TISCA chair, at the Annual Conference, June 2024

Heads

- Longstanding TISCA supporters retiring from Headship include **Thomas Garnier** (Pangbourne) and **Martin Reader** (Cranleigh). We wish them and their families God's richest blessings on their new 'adventures'.
- **Sam Godsen** (Dolphin School) moves to The Mall in Twickenham and we welcome **Lucy Price** as his successor.
- We welcome **Kate Johnson**, former Deputy Head at Castle Court School, as its Head

Trustees

- **Emma Taylor** (Warden at Dean Close) steps down as a Trustee after 6 years in this role but remains a keen TISCA supporter! We are very grateful for her service. **Alex Aldous** has been appointed Chair of Trustees. **Ray Maher** retires as Bursar of KES, Southampton, but remains as a Trustee

Obituaries

- **David Baines**, longstanding TISCA supporter and teacher at Harrow School for 22 years, has recently passed to glory
- **Bishop Timothy Dudley-Smith**, longstanding supporter, former Chair of Governors at Monkton and also on the TISCA Council of Reference

Stunted Growth

Chaplains

Heads

Parents

Staff



Jason Fletcher

Headmaster and Co-Founder, Heritage School

I have been watching the rise of the Smartphone Free Childhood movement over recent months with interest, and believe it is something that Christians should get behind. Let me explain why.

What's going wrong

Many years ago we found a book by Nicholas Carr helpful – *The Shallows: How the internet is changing the way we think, read and remember* (2010). 'What the Net seems to be doing,' he wrote 'is chipping away at my capacity for concentration and contemplation.' (p.6) Now, the internet is instantly accessible 24/7 on our smartphones and, as Johann Hari explains in his book *Stolen Focus: Why You Can't Pay Attention* (2022), the most powerful companies

the world has ever seen are aggressively seeking to colonise our interior life. And how successful they have been! Average screen time statistics are staggering. The power of these tech companies, says Hari, dwarfs that of the individual will; something is happening to us.

And the cost is mounting. In his recent book *The Anxious Generation: How the Great Rewiring of Childhood is Causing an Epidemic of Mental Illness* (2024), Jonathan Haidt shows that the rates of anxiety, depression, self-harm and suicide among pre-teens and teenagers have increased sharply across the developed world over the past decade, and he argues that the best explanation for this is the rise of social media and the market saturation of the smartphone since about 2012.



Heritage School, Cambridge

Why it matters

For us, the book by Nicholas Carr resonated because we had already been steeped in the thinking of a remarkably insightful British Christian educationalist called Charlotte Mason (1842-1923), whose work was and remains the inspiration behind Heritage School.

At the centre of her educational vision is the conviction that, like the body, a child's mind needs food to grow; and, she says, the food of the mind is knowledge. These days, we are unwittingly influenced by a secular, one-dimensional view of knowledge – as mere information that helps us perform a function. Because she was a Christian, Charlotte Mason saw knowledge as something far richer, as something intrinsically valuable. To know is to connect with or encounter; it is to establish what she would call a 'relation'. The idea is that as we give of ourselves to get in touch with reality – with God, with others, with the best of human culture past and present, and with nature – we get something in return. We become, as Charlotte Mason would say, larger people. We grow.

Here's the problem. Knowledge demands attentive engagement. Education cannot be done to you; it must be done by you. She illustrates the problem of inattention and lack of will power with respect to a young child: 'Watch him at his investigations,' she says, 'He flits from thing to thing with less purpose than a butterfly amongst the flowers, staying at nothing long enough to get the good out of it.' (Home Education, p.142)

The problem is that the internet, social media, video streaming and gaming, and particularly their incessant intrusion through smartphones, is destroying our capacity for the attentive engagement that leads to knowledge that leads to growth. As such, smartphone culture is taking an axe to the root of the tree of human flourishing; it is undermining the common good. Those of us who are 'people of the book', who believe that the ability to read and listen deeply is at the heart of the spiritual life, have a reason to be particularly concerned.

Following Charlotte Mason's lead, we have worked to create an alternative learning culture: one that is free from the distractions of smartphones and ed-tech, and one that prioritises books and nature and real world activities and relationships. We are wholeheartedly behind Smartphone Free Childhood, and would urge you too to join the movement and help reclaim childhood.



Heritage School pupils exploring nature



What can we learn from top sportspeople who follow Christ?

Parents

Pupils



Brian Glynn

Digital Communications Officer for Christians in Sport

This Summer of Sport (2024) was incredible. If you love sport you'll undoubtedly have a highlight from the last few months, be it the Euros, the Olympics, Tennis, Golf, Cricket... the list goes on.

If you love Jesus, you may well have followed the journey of top sportspeople who profess to follow Christ as they've competed and spoken of their faith. So, what can we learn from such cultural achievers as top sportspeople, how can we put our faith into practice on the field of play?

It's OK to want to win

Elite athletes work to perform, competing to win is their job description. Golfer Scottie Scheffler's is so competitive he says it makes him feel sick sometimes:

"I wish I didn't want to win as badly as I do. I think it would make the mornings easier. I love winning. I hate losing. I really do. In the biggest moments, when I'm sitting there with the lead on Sunday, I really, really want to win badly."

Competitive sportspeople know this kind of feeling, and this can be a good thing! Sport is a wonderful gift given by God to enjoy, and competition is a context for sportspeople to use their talents to be creative as they strive together to perform.

It is good to want to maximise the creative gift God has given you in sport and praise Him for such a gift that reflects His creative nature.

But if winning is everything – it enslaves you

In today's culture we tend to look 'within ourselves' to find ourselves. Sport is an easy way to do this. It is

natural to base our identity on our, wins, our skills and our successes—to fashion for ourselves an achieved identity. This is a shaky place to find your worth and value.

England Rugby Union World Cup winner Jonny Wilkinson once said:

"It feels as if I spent years trying to fight depression with "another Six Nations Championship, or some more caps, or titles, or points. 'Surely,' I told myself, 'That will keep you off my back?' It doesn't. It's never enough."

The danger of competition is that we become slaves to it. Our happiness and security becomes dependent on success and our joy becomes fragile as it's based on approval from others. It is not hard to see how easy it is for sportspeople (including Christians) to live in this kind of slavery.

God's good gift of sport is given for our joy, and His glory.

Only by separating our self-worth from our achievements (or potential ones) can we find satisfaction and security – not slavery. Ashley Null has worked as a chaplain in five Olympic Villages and knows this only too well:

"Only love has the power to make human beings feel truly significant, not achievement. Only knowing that they are loved regardless of their current performance has the power to make Olympians feel emotionally whole."

In his press conference having won the Masters Scheffler explained more about how his faith impacts his golf. Having narrated how much he wants to win he said:

"My buddies told me this morning my victory was secure on the cross. And that's a pretty special feeling to know that I'm secure for forever and it doesn't matter if I win this tournament or lose this tournament. My identity



is secure for forever.”

This feels very counter-cultural in the culture we swim in where winning seems to be the only currency, so what does Scheffler mean?

He is speaking about how he believes his standing before God is unchangeable now because Jesus died in his place on the cross. Jesus performed in his place

and Scheffler believes he will enjoy life forever with God because of it.

This freedom and security provided through Christ allows Christian athletes to give their best in competition any given week, whilst resting in the knowledge that the victory that ultimately matters has already been won for them by Jesus.



Are we listening?

Top tips for university freshers

Parents

Staff

Pupils



Revd Jim Houghton

Chaplain at Eltham College (and a TISCA Trustee)

I imagine many reading TISCA News and Views (TNV) will have experienced the emotional wrench of students or children leaving school to pastures new (whether university or other) with a fledgling Christian faith and the worry of how to encourage without haranguing, direct without dissuading.

While I speak as a Chaplain who has seen many students tread this path, I also speak as a parent who somewhat dreads this day (indeed, I pray often about it despite it being almost a decade away still!) and so these words must be taken with a significant pinch of salt.

I want to mention two things; firstly the oft-quoted top tips for students arriving at university but secondly, an undergirding theological framework which I wish someone had told me before I arrived as an undergraduate*.

So firstly, in my experience, humanly speaking, the key to students flourishing in their Christian Faith at university is plugging quickly into a Christian community. Tips like 'try and mention your Christian faith soon, try and find Christians in the same position, don't church hop for more than a couple of weeks, go to the CU even if you can't stand anyone there...alongside the daily

Christian habits' do seem to be vital.

Secondly though, my conviction is that whatever top tips we give, if students have fallen for the oldest lie in the book (that God is out to spoil their lives cf Gen 3) then these top tips will merely paper over the cracks. However, if we can prayerfully nurture in our students' lives a biblical conviction that a life lived for Christ might be tough and involve sacrifice, but will be infinitely more joyful and meaningful than a life lived without Christ, then there will be a more genuine attempt to engage with Christian groups at university. In my experience, there is often a brief dalliance with the purported freedoms offered by freshers' events before a more sober (literally or otherwise) realisation that 'the fleeting pleasures of sin' are just that, as well as being hollow and deeply dissatisfying. To be honest, nothing has been more powerful for our current students than hearing from second years about the mess they made of the first few weeks and how much they regretted it and appreciated the Christian community they got involved in after. Does this do much to allay my fears for a decade's time...not really...but it's probably good for me to know my weakness and limitations as a Christian parent, and keeps me praying!

*They probably did but I wasn't listening!

Big World, Big Questions:

How can exploring responses to climate change help students engage with personal perspectives in RE?

Chaplains

Heads

Staff



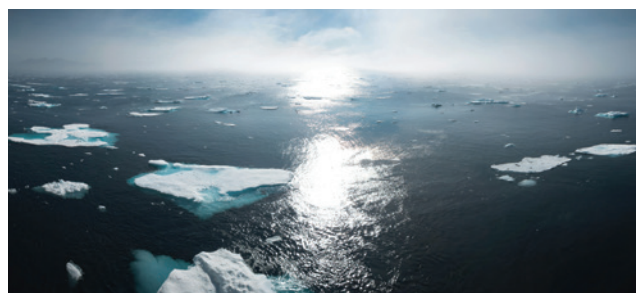
Cathy Priest

Training Lead, Youth and Schools' programme, The Faraday Institute for Science and Religion

Speak to the young people around you and it is highly likely they will be aware of, and possibly anxious about, the challenge and impacts of climate change.

At the Faraday Institute for Science and Religion we encourage people to draw together ways of knowing from the sciences, religious faith and more, to approach big, interdisciplinary topics – of which climate change is a key example. Our climate change resources for secondary religious education (RE), and primary classrooms support students in exploring how both science and wider worldviews can help us understand and respond to this challenge. Alongside the scientific solutions, these resources aim to help young people engage constructively with their own, and others', thoughts and feelings about climate change, considering the vital roles of different personal perspectives in shaping human responses to this issue.

Science offers invaluable ways of knowing about our physical universe. By using repeatable, empirical (measurable) methods we can explore the mechanisms of how things seem to work; as well as design and test solutions to the threats we uncover. Due to its power in this area, students may be tempted to think that science, alone, can tackle a challenge like climate change. However, given opportunity to reflect on how slow we have been to respond to the science of climate change, students will quickly identify that it is not so simple. In complex human societies, more is at play – from politics and economics to spirituality – and other ways of knowing must be explored to grasp the full picture. One might begin by exploring factors affecting people's practical ability to respond to the science. But crucially, we also need to engage with people's personal perspectives and motivations to respond, or not, exploring questions such as 'why should I care', 'why is the world worth protecting', and 'why should I sacrifice my comfort'. These are concepts that science is not designed or equipped to fully deal with – they require exploration through other ways of knowing.



RE guidelines require students to understand the worldviews of others and to engage productively and respectfully with those who think very differently. As such, RE, or interdisciplinary primary, classes provide wonderful opportunities to recognise and discuss the role, and importance of, personal perspectives, and the influence of religion, philosophy and ethics in shaping perspectives. Via a role play climate forum activity, our resource 'How can RE help with tackling climate change?' enables students to research and represent a diverse range of nuanced contexts, positions and worldviews – including a lorry driver earning money to feed his family; a subsistence farmer whose food supply is insecure; and a student who wants to reduce their carbon footprint (with opportunity for further characters to be added by teachers or students). Activities such as these help young people to develop an empathetic understanding of the variety of views people hold on climate change; why they hold these views; how this can lead to climate action or inaction; and what might be done to help one another better respond to the global challenge of climate change. Ultimately, by integrating and valuing the knowledge and contributions of religions and worldviews, alongside those from the sciences, young people can gain the intellectual tools to become wise change makers, able to engage meaningfully and effectively with people and the wider world around them.

You can find this resource, and many others, at www.faradayeducators.com/resources. We hope you enjoy using them and welcome you to get in touch with any questions, comments, or classroom feedback.

Giving Kids a Voice, Keeping Kids Safe

[Chaplains](#)[Heads](#)[Parents](#)[Staff](#)[Governors](#)[Pupils](#)[Supporters](#)

Jules Loveland

Communications Manager, Thirtyone:eight

The Bible gives us a clear mandate to ensure that those who are vulnerable are protected, heard, defended, and treated compassionately.

In our ministries, education, families and communities we must protect those at risk from harm. In today's fast-paced world, safeguarding our children has never been more critical. Christian schools can play a pivotal role in protecting students by encouraging them to understand their emotions and use their voices to speak up.

Emotional Intelligence: The First Line of Defence
Imagine a school where students can identify and express their feelings. Emotional intelligence—the ability to recognise, understand, and appropriately express emotions—is key. When students can navigate their emotions, they manage stress better, build resilience, and improve communication. They learn to recognise when something feels off, making it easier to communicate discomfort or concerns to trusted teachers.

Building Empathy and Social Skills

Students who understand their own emotions are better at empathising with others. This leads to healthier relationships and reduces conflict. In such an environment, children look out for one another and report concerning behaviour, rather than colluding with it.

Setting Boundaries

Teachers can guide children in setting and asserting boundaries, which is vital in preventing abuse. A school environment that encourages open communication allows children to discuss sensitive topics without fear of consequences. This openness ensures that any issues are addressed promptly, reducing the risk of harm.

Speaking Up

Encouraging students to speak up empowers them and reinforces their sense of agency. They learn that their voices matter and that they have the power to influence their surroundings positively. This empowerment instils confidence and courage in students, enabling them to advocate for themselves and others in challenging situations.

Resources

Promoting emotional understanding and encouraging students to use their voices is fundamental to their safety and well-being. There are already a variety of resources available, but none unique to Christian schools or churches. Thirtyone:eight have produced Christian Safeguarding resources for children called 'Raise Your Roar with Roarry'. The resource is a complete session plan for use with children aged 4–9. It's flexible enough to suit a variety of settings and timings and it delivers the content in a fun but informative way. Find out more at thirtyoneeight.org

About the Author

Thirtyone:eight is an independent Christian charity that provides professional advice, training, support and resources in all areas of safeguarding children and adults at risk of harm. The organisation has been working with churches since 1977.



Hope through despair with mental health

Chaplains

Heads

Parents

Staff

Governors

Pupils

Supporters



Nick Pollard

Nick Pollard, on the TISCA Council of Reference, is co-founder (with his wife, Carol) of Damaris and Ethos Education, and is the Director of Family Mental Wealth

We felt an overwhelming sense of despair when our, then 14-year-old, daughter Lizzie became severely ill with Anorexia Nervosa, requiring an emergency admission to hospital and six months in an inpatient unit.

Nick was a former research psychologist, and Carol was a former teacher and Chair of Governors. We were both now serving in Christian ministry. But nothing prepares you for the devastating experience of severe mental ill-health affecting your own child.

Thankfully, over time, Lizzie journeyed through to full recovery, got to medical school, and is now a happy, healthy, doctor with two young children of her own. Lizzie says that she will be forever grateful for the clinicians who helped her, but what really made the difference was the family-based self-help that we gradually learned to provide for her.

That is why, together, we subsequently co-founded a social enterprise called Family Mental Wealth, to help other families (see www.FamilyMentalWealth.com). Family Mental Wealth is currently part-funded by the NHS and works in collaboration with many academic and

clinical centres of excellence to provide all families with evidence-based knowledge, skills, and tools to help their children build mentally healthy lives.

There are many different types of families and, in an educational context, the school can feel like family for them. So, all members of the school family can play their part. They can learn how to 'be curious not furious', gaining insight into the invisible psychological processes behind visible and disruptive behaviour. They can learn to 'be the anchor not the captain', keeping the young person safe whilst helping them to develop the necessary self-efficacy for their personal journey to a mentally healthy life.

The evidence shows that one of the major factors in a successful journey, back to mental health, is 'hope for recovery'. For those of us who are people of faith, we can hold on to the biblical promise of a hope and a future. And we can discover for ourselves the reality of the growing body of evidence about the mental health benefits of spirituality and faith.

Nick and Carol Pollard of Family Mental Wealth. Nick is also on the TISCA Council of Reference

Petra College

Chaplains

Heads

Parents

Staff

Governors

Pupils

Supporters



Heather Wells

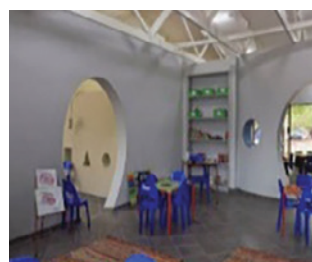
Principal (<https://petra.college>)

Petra College is nestled in the community of Bulawayo Zimbabwe on an amazing campus just 40 minutes from the incredible Matobo Hills. Started by a group of Christians in the late 1980's Petra is now a 4–18 College catering for around 1000 students.

The vision for Petra is to provide high quality learning via the Cambridge international curriculum, in an environment where Christ is central. We have guiding distinctives which seek to ensure we demonstrate the love of God in all we do and say. This means we are educationally inclusive, rigorous in our teaching and consistent and robust in our discipline and care, ensuring students are well supported as they grow into men and women of godly character and potential.

Petra College is made up of two schools/campuses – Petra Junior and Petra Senior with a full range of facilities to cater for the educational needs of our school and community.

We are part of a national community of trust schools (ATS) and so work together to build co-operation in the



pursuit and provision of high-quality holistic education. We offer and participate in a wide range of sport and cultural activities pursuing excellence in all we do. By joining with TISCA we are excited to build community across other nations and to build on those connections for the benefit of all the staff and students in our care and the community we serve.

Our mission is to form character and release potential. We see potential in everyone as they are created by God for a purpose. We also champion students to find their passion and purpose so that they can be equipped to overcome life's inevitable challenges with confidence.

Burnout in leadership

Chaplains

Heads

Governors



Marcus Honeysett

Executive Director of Living Leadership

Burnout is remarkably common in leadership.

Just like Moses' experience in Exodus 18, we find our patterns and burdens get out of control, usually bit by bit, until we are overburdened, overwhelmed and barely

surviving but not sure what to do about it. Then it only takes a single major additional stressor and we go over a cliff.

In my role at Living Leadership, a lot of Christian leaders have spoken to me about this over the years.

Here are a few of the chief factors I have heard repeated time after time:

- Isolation, complexity, exhaustion and discouragement. What I call “The Cell” in which we get trapped. When they combine it is deadly, but usually it is the isolation that is the final straw.
- People who don’t give attention to their limits for a long time, allowing their load to exceed their limits thereby normalising the unsustainable.
- This leads in turn to squeezing out their inner life with God, and often their home life, so that neither are adequate to the demands of their outer life in leadership. Their life patterns start to tend towards unhealthiness rather than healthiness, and their support structures are inadequate to help them reverse the direction of travel.

There are always other factors, but these are common. They result in many people crumbling. In Christian leadership this is often after about 15 years or aged about 45 because they established unsustainable patterns when they were 30 and now perceive they are unable to renegotiate the conditions. Being married to a senior teacher, I believe the world of education is frequently just as pressured, or more, and with less opportunity still to renegotiate.

A friend of mine describes normalising the unsustainable as a form of self-harm. However, in leadership it is a complex one because not only is it demanded of us, it is also socially approved. We get positive validation for remaining in that state and feel we are letting people down if we take positive steps to get out of it.

Ensuring we are not running on empty is essential not only for our own health but also for that of our organisational cultures and staff. Setting impressive organisational goals that can only be delivered at the cost of burning people out is common but neither healthy nor honourable. And it definitely doesn’t reflect the heart of a saviour who invites us into his rest.

So, can I ask you to consider what makes you over-extend? What causes you and your organisation to exist in overdrive? What are you expected to deliver that can only be done at the expense of unhealthiness and drain? We all have limits and we all eventually meet the law of diminishing returns. Do you know what yours are?

There are no quick fixes to burnout because the issues are multi-layered. But at rock bottom is the fact that God renews the weary, and those who wait on the Lord renew their strength (Isaiah 40:29-31). The question I would like to leave you with is: do you have any margin in your life in which God is able to do that? And if not, what practically would need to change in order to create it? Godly rest is the antidote to unsustainable pressure.

In my experience leaders almost never manage



to renegotiate pressure on our own. We lack the deliberateness. After all it means changing our patterns, expectations of ourselves and others' expectations of us, our attitude to time and activity and how we use all these things for affirmation. It takes practical strategies for embracing different expectations and patterns, all of which is hard. Like Moses, for most of us it takes Jethro to help us analyse the factors and encourage us to make the changes. It was his intervention of wise insight and spiritual care that started to take the lid off the pressure cooker.

So, what do you need to do to start to be replenished, and who might be able to help you, for you to have any chance of making changes in reality? If you are aware of warning signs, don't just ignore them and soldier on hoping it will get better. It almost never does. But your God loves you and he is determined to refresh the weary and satisfy the faint (Jeremiah 31:25). If you will but let him.

Marcus Honeysett is Executive Director of Living Leadership, a charity devoted to helping those involved in spiritual leadership in churches and Christian organisations, and their spouses, to live in Christ joyfully and serve him faithfully. To find out more about their ministries and resources, visit www.livingleadership.org

The importance of engaging with each other

Heads

Governors



Julie Robinson

CEO of the Independent Schools Council – and a member of TISCA

When you google “independent”, several definitions pop up. Some are more applicable to independent schools than others, for example “capable of thinking or acting for oneself”. However, one particularly stands out, at odds with independent schools and how we on the inside know them: “not connected with another or with each other; separate”.

There is no doubt that a key strength of independent schools is the freedom to innovate, to adapt, create, and take on unique characteristics. Yet it would be wrong to pursue an inward-looking approach such that might be deemed separatism, and there is so much to be gained from collaborating with others, something that independent schools have done for many years now. Ecclesiastes 4, v9, tells us “Two are better than one, because they have a good return for their labour” and ISC recommends that each school should play a meaningful part in their wider community through mutually beneficial links. Our pupils need to understand the broader context of their lives; appreciate and value differences; relate to others; be in a position to serve society at large.

In Bridget Phillipson’s first speech to the DfE upon becoming Education Secretary in July, she announced her wish that together, the Department would “deliver a better future for all of our children”. My experience of independent schools is that they include in their mission a similarly outward-facing desire to spread educational opportunity and understand that there is benefit for all participating schools, pupils and staff, in collaboration.

Taking part in meaningful, cross-sector partnership programmes, independent schools join forces with state schools, other independent schools, and community groups to share enriching educational opportunities for children across the country. These partnerships take many forms, ranging from academic programmes to those specialising in music, sports, and careers advice. Each participant contributes as much as they gain, diversifying and enriching their experiences. In developing these links, schools learn more about their neighbours, address gaps in provision, and discover new

ways of doing things in their own schools. Through open-hearted collaboration, we demonstrate to those who have no experience of our schools that independence does not mean “separate”, it means taking

responsibility for independent action supporting an educational offer that has relevance to, and benefits, wider society beyond the school gates.

Standing alongside each other, supporting one another, is arguably more important than ever as the prospect of VAT on fees looms. The policy would hit some harder than others. Small schools, faith schools, military families and children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) are among the most vulnerable. Together, we can amplify their voices and raise awareness of the policy’s unintended consequences. We can also highlight the true value of our schools to society and their role in supporting the stated aim of the new Labour government in “improving the life chances of all children” and “building a better future”. Independent schools already play a key part in widening access to educational opportunities and boosting both the local and national economy.

We should work together – all kinds of schools for all children – as one education sector. 1Thessalonians 5, v11: “Therefore encourage one another and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing.”

ISC, TISCA and your member associations are here to support you, too, so please do call on us as you navigate the challenges ahead.

To view examples of the inspiring partnerships taking place between state and independent schools, visit schoolstogether.org. To learn more about the important role of school partnerships in improving outcomes, visit schoolpartnershipsalliance.org.uk.





Advertorial

Leadership Development for Emerging Senior Leaders



James Aidoo

James Aidoo works with middle and senior leaders in education and helps with tailored coaching for enhanced leadership, emotional intelligence and team dynamics

“What is it like being on the other side of you?” This question lies at the heart of Innerscope’s leadership development training as teams are asked to think deeply about the imprint of their impact as leaders.

Founded by James Aidoo an executive coach with a background that spans a decade in youth and community ministry, conflict resolution and alternative education, much of Innerscope’s work with staff teams entails working with leaders who are seeking to achieve high levels of team performance through high levels of team harmony.

As the varied demands of school life consistently contribute to fragmented morale and fatigue, Innerscope’s work takes shape through supporting first-time middle leaders who face the new challenge of line management or experienced leaders who are seeking innovative ways to enhance the effectiveness of their team’s existing culture.

With aspects of their work being delivered to corporate, educational and church leaders globally, James is passionate about supporting leaders to lead with integrity of heart and skilful hands.

With an emphasis on empathy, self-awareness and effective communication, teams are invited to understand how to utilise their leadership styles so that they can lead with a renewed sense of confidence and competence.

This approach harnesses the value of creating a dynamic and reflective environment for teams to benefit from coaching and training where they can be supported, challenged and spurred to bring their best to the students and staff they are called to serve.

When working the Shared Learning Trust in Bedfordshire, a cohort of middle leaders explored themes like the art of collaboration, hallmarks of high-performing teams and modules related to applied emotional intelligence and team dynamics. Just under twelve months later 83% of this cohort went on to receive internal or external promotions and the Shared Learning Trust have decided to work with Innerscope on an ongoing basis since.

A constant theme from participants is that leaders emerge with a renewed sense of purpose and competence accompanied by skills and qualities that enable them to lead their teams towards common goals.



To explore how Innerscope can support your middle and senior leaders contact us at:

info@innerscope.co.uk

Schools who enquire through the TISCA network are eligible to be gifted with a complimentary Leadership Voice Discovery Masterclass

The importance of supporting children with Special Educational Needs

Heads

Staff

Governors



Christine Morris

Christine Morris is a qualified Special Educational Needs consultant with more than 30 years' experience of working in this field in India

Around 2004, a family applied for their son's admission (Student J) into Hebron school (the school in South India I worked at between 1992 and 2006) as they had been turned away from many schools in Hyderabad, where they lived.

Their son was 14 years old, had completed only Year 6 in school and had undiagnosed dyslexia. The child's only problem was that he had a "hidden disability" which had not been recognised by the teachers in the schools he attended and had interrupted his education. This forced his parents to move away from their work in Hyderabad to Chennai (via Ooty) to find suitable support.

According to the Right to Education Act (RTE, 2010) and the more recent National Education Policy (NEP, 2020), all Indian schools are instructed to "cater for the needs of all children irrespective of their abilities". The NEP encourages and promotes "barrier free access to education for all children with disabilities".

In India, the government is acknowledging the importance of educating children with Special

Educational Needs (SEN). This now has to filter down to the teachers in schools who require training in how to adapt their teaching and learning methods in order to provide such education.

Hebron school, Ooty began this process in 1996. The Learning Support Department (now renamed Department of Enhanced Learning) has a fully trained staff catering for the needs of children with Dyslexia, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), Autism and English as an Additional Language (EAL) among other needs. At the recent 125 years' celebrations in April 2024, it was a pleasure to meet students who had benefitted from the LSD/DEL department who have gone on to be successful in the areas of Sport, Business and work.

If Hebron can do this for Student J, how important is it that we support other students too?

Why? Because....

God's community is *inclusive* of those with disabilities. (Luke 14:12-14). In fact, "weaker" members are indispensable to the Body of Christ (1 Cor. 12:22-23).



Christine training in schools





Their weakness and inadequacy plays its part in shaming the strong and confident, reminding one of God's compassion, as well as focusing support from the more fortunate (1 Cor. 1:26-29)

Disability provides an opportunity to work out God's purposes for humanity. To encourage each child to reach their full potential teachers should celebrate differences, whether in learning styles, backgrounds or abilities or being "differently abled".

The social model of SEN states that a person is not disabled by their medical diagnosis but by people's **attitudes, the environment, teaching methods or language** that alienates children with SEN.

This reflects the Biblical model. Jesus' disciples, when they encountered a man born blind, asked him who sinned. *"Neither this man nor his parents sinned but this happened that the works of God might be displayed in him,"* was Jesus' answer in John 9 v 3-4.

A teacher's attitude will overflow in the way they respond to children in the classroom, as well as to parents and other professionals. Such teachers will search for ways to include children in the class, rather than relegate them to a special school as someone else's problem. In extreme cases, a special school is indeed the solution, because that is the better environment for the child to thrive in.

Providing a supportive **environment** (physical, social and emotional) is every teachers' responsibility. Are our classrooms a tolerant, encouraging, secure, approving, fair, accepting place to work?

Incorporating **suitable teaching strategies** to include, and integrate, everyone into classrooms, demonstrates that we, like God, value every one's contributions to society.

Do **we say** "public transport can be inaccessible" here and "the light switches are too high" and "there were no sign language interpreters provided (or no induction loop), which prevented him from taking part

in the meeting" or do we say "she can't use public transport", "she's too short to reach the light switch" or "he can't take part in the meeting because he can't hear".

Moses who might have had a speech impediment, or disabling degree of anxiety, was afraid to speak to Pharaoh. God provided support through his brother Aaron, who became Moses' spokesman. Other stories of an inclusive community, include Elijah (mental ill health), a group of people with physical disabilities (leprosy) 2 Kings 7, and Zacchaeus (possibly dwarfism) Luke 19:3.

Our responsibility, as (Christian??) teachers, is to "cater for the needs of all children irrespective of their abilities" and promote "barrier free access to education for all children with disabilities" in order to provide an opportunity for God to work out His purposes for humanity.

Christine is a qualified Special Educational Needs consultant with more than 30 years' experience of working in this field in India.

With a B Ed in Special education from the UK and a certificate in cross cultural studies from Redcliffe College, UK, she is also a member of the British Psychological Society (membership number 262521) and conducts educational assessments for children. She also mentors teachers who are taking PDQ training from Cambridge.

As Principal and manager of the Good Word Education Centre Community College, Coonoor she trains tutors who provide tuitions for children with SEN; offers 5 diploma courses for teachers in Teaching and Learning, Teaching Phonics, teaching children with Dyslexia, teaching children with Autism and ADHD and Providing for children with SEN all of which are affiliated to the Bharathiar University Coimbatore. She also oversees the Griha Shiksha curriculum for home school programmes for parents who home-school.

The power to fail

Chaplains

Heads

Parents

Staff

Governors

Pupils

Supporters



Joe Sidders

has taught in five schools and finishes this summer at Monkton Combe after 10 years of service. In that time he has been Deputy Head Academic, Deputy Head Learning (leading the academic and co-curricular life of the school) and Director of Quality (as an internal coach facilitating quality assurance). He moves on to Repton School with his family - Sarah, his wife, and 3 children - to take on the role of Deputy Head Academic.

Walk down any corridor in any self-respecting school and you'll most likely find posters with a quote like this on them: *'Failure isn't an option. It's a requirement.'*

But I wonder how often you've heard a failure-embracing colleague say, *'If it ain't broke, don't fix it'*.

As adults we are wary of change for the same reasons that our students are wary of failure - Change and Failure (and their parent, Having A Go) often lead to less good outcomes on the way to better ones and, let's face it, sometimes just lead to less good outcomes.

What does Christianity offer to give us and our students the power to fail, and so grow, learn and lead fulfilling lives?

1. Redemption separates self-esteem from failure

At Monkton we try to turn the usual tactic for building self-esteem on its head. Rather than using success to build confidence, we use confidence to build success. But that does beg the question - how do we build confidence?

The Bible speaks of a God whose attitude to humanity is one of favour divorced from performance. As Christians, we can look failure full in the face knowing that past and ongoing failure have no bearing on our present or future status before God. This is a powerful, unique source of self-worth.

Robert MacIntyre, Scottish golfer, overcome many setbacks in this summer's Scottish Open, including this bunker shot, to win the tournament for the first time with a birdie on the final hole



Not only that, but the Bible also makes clear that ongoing failure is part of God's plan to grow our Christlikeness. 'And we know that in all things [including our failure] God works for the good of those who love him' Rom 8:28.

Of course Christians don't have a monopoly on suggesting that unconditional appreciation leads to a healthier attitude to embracing failure, but compared to the messages which the world gives, it is strikingly unalloyed.

A glance at the apparent routes to find self-esteem in social media, the workplace, and high-stakes assessments reveals significant ambivalence in our world.

2. Sovereignty replaces uncertainty with confidence

'The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom' Prov 9:10. Fear of God has a number of facets one of which is an appreciation of his unchallengeable sovereignty. In the hands of a capricious being, such sovereignty would be debilitating, but combined with the truths expressed in Rom 8:28, the debilitation of uncertainty is replaced by the confidence of assurance.

Vine's expository dictionary talks about the biblical concept of wisdom *'as a process of attainment and not an accomplishment'*. Knowing that it is a journey with a certain destination is a powerful antidote to the fear of failure which stops us in our tracks.

How, as Christian educators, how can these ideas shape our practice in schools where at least some, and indeed perhaps many, of those we teach do not share that faith?

The unconditional appreciation that Jesus showed to those he encountered was, time and again, the catalyst for change in their lives. As his followers, knowing our certain destination, we have the privilege of holding out that same unconditional appreciation with the opportunity for the same transformative effect.

And as we do it falteringly and imperfectly, we too take further steps on our own journey of wisdom.

“Stand firm dear brothers and sisters”

Staff



Mark Herbert

is a former teacher and church pastor, and now the co-founder and Director at *Salt & Light Leadership Coaching*. He is the author of *I'm not a Leader* and supports multiple schools with their pupil and staff leadership development. He lives in Guildford (Surrey) and has two children.

SALT & LIGHT 
LEADERSHIP COACHING

Opportunities abound in schools for Christian staff to be salt and light.

Just as a pinch of salt can transform the taste of a plate of food, or a tiny shard of light illuminate a clearer path ahead, so too the follower of Jesus can have a big impact, often through what may seem like the smallest of moments.

Yet it can often not feel this way. How easily our heads can drop. How quickly we can feel discouraged, whether this be by external factors such as cynicism, apathy or busyness or internal factors such as isolation, felt inadequacy and exhaustion.

Following Jesus is a privilege but is hard.

The first century Christians in Corinth are likely to have experienced similar tensions. Knowing this, the Apostle Paul wrote to them with encouragement and the rally cry to keep going:

“Therefore, my dear brothers and sisters, stand firm. Let nothing move you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, knowing that your labour in the Lord is not in vain” (1 Corinthians 15:58)

As a leadership coach specialising in decision-making, much of my work involves helping leaders and leadership teams think about how they think. Better thinking generates better questions, which in turn supports making better decision-making. As you

consider how you think about and make decisions, every verse from God's Word is an invitation. An invitation for God's wisdom to shape the decisions we make.

Can I encourage you to take hold of God's invitation today from 1 Corinthians 15 and spend some time thinking, asking and deciding what you will do with it?

“My dear brothers and sisters”

God is inviting us to remember that we belong to him and we belong to one another. Christians can sometimes feel alone, which is why he has given us each other. Do you believe this?

“Stand firm. Let nothing move you”

The image Paul was referencing when he penned these words is likely to have been the Roman centurions 'digging in', bracing themselves in their military formations as the enemy descends on them. This phrase is a command, delivered with loving force; a rally cry to cajole and motivate. Are you standing firm in God's grace and power, or seeking to stand against the enemy alone?

“Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord”

Paul's challenge is a call to wholeheartedness. What healthy habit could you develop that would remind you to step into each school day committed to joining in with what God is already doing?

“Knowing that your labour in the Lord is not in vain”

Paul's encouragement is an invitation to trust. To trust that he is using you in ways you might be able to see but so often in ways that perhaps you cannot.

What decisions could you make that would enable you to stand firm as you start a new school year?



Poster on the wall of Portobello Baptist Church – and a reminder that God won't let go of us!



In the middle?

The pressures from all sides on Middle Leaders – and some top tips!

Staff



Rachel Johnson

is the CEO of PiXL, a leadership network working with 2500 schools, and their leaders, across the country. She believes that equipping our Leaders, and especially our Middle Leaders, is one of the most important things we can do in schools.



Being a Middle Leader is a job full of challenges and opportunities.

To get any promoted position our colleagues have usually shown they are great teachers and committed experts with a real understanding of what needs to happen in the classroom. However, Middle Leadership positions require all of that and a lot of other knowledge and skills that we don't always teach and that are not always learned (until we sometimes learn the hard way!). It doesn't have to be this way.

The tensions in Middle Leadership are not new, whenever there are teams there are things to be worked out. For those of us with a Christian faith, the

Bible is full of those who got it right and those who had some struggles with themselves and others! Take the disciples in those early days, for example, they had their own challenges as they went through the process of forming the team, working out the tensions with in it and then growing in confidence and courage to do quite remarkable things. Each member of that team had different strengths and flaws, experiences, standpoints and personalities and the way Jesus shaped them into his team is as relevant now as it was then. These are lessons that we can all adopt, no matter what our position but as we first start to lead a team, there are 3 crucial things to be aware of.

1. Get curious not judgemental.

When we are the leader sometimes we think we have to have all the answers, but better answers arise from great questions. We need to be more curious and less judgemental when we work with our teams. Instead of telling people the answers, we need to help them discover their own. Asking great questions is something that most great leaders do: asking questions that help other people work things out for themselves. Jesus was an expert at this, speaking in stories, asking questions which pierced through a situation and which allowed the hearer to have their own revelation. He was curious because he wanted people to think things through themselves, to have their own revelations. We need to master great questions, not interrupt and we must listen to the answers to hear what is, and is not, being said. If we don't do that, we will miss our crucial learning for us and for the people we seek to lead.

Time to Think: write down some great questions, start collecting them when you come across them. Some great examples are here:

- What has brought us here?
- What are we assuming here that may not be true?
- If you were not afraid, what would you do next?
- What do we know now that we will find out in 6 months' time?
- What is the one thing we should not change?

2. Create the time to think.

Sometimes when we get new roles, we do not stop. We want to show everyone that we are efficient, capable and have a great work ethic. All those things are great but sometimes that also means we get into bad habits in the belief that is what hard work looks like. We stop making the time to think, we start being responsive to our inbox instead of working on what we know is strategically vital; we have a 'to do' list instead of 'a success list' so we get through the things on the list rather than moving on the things that we know would bring major change. It is a temptation we all fall into, prioritising the urgent over the important. When we have things to think through or to process, we need time to think. Jesus was a great model of this; knowing when to be with the crowd and when to be away from the crowd. When he needed to respond to the storm and when sleeping was OK. Jesus took time to think to regain strength, to reflect, to pray and to understand the direction of what was coming and what his role was in what was unfolding. We would be very wise to take such time as leaders ourselves, so we are grounded, have perspective and are clear eyed about the next stage.

Time to Think: Look at your diary for the next week: where is your 'set aside time' to be strategic or to reflect, recharge or work through a problem? If it isn't scheduled, it won't happen!

3. Face the brutal facts but have unwavering hope.

In any leadership, we must face the brutal facts - the barriers, where things are not as we would want them or where there are issues that must be addressed. This can sometimes result in very hard decisions and even harder conversations but brutal facts must be faced. Great leaders are able to face the brutal facts AND do so with unwavering hope and belief, a concept often called 'The Stockdale Paradox' from Jim Collins' work in 'Good to Great'. The Stockdale Paradox is not new for those who have Jesus as their leadership example. There is no better example of someone who had to face the brutal facts AND embody hope throughout their life. The disciples learned this, too, as did Paul and his work with the early Church, as they encouraged others to set their eyes on the goal, to run the race and to address the things that entangled them.

Time to Think: make a list of your brutal facts and then write what your hope is for each one. Only then can you start to unpick what is stopping you get from one to the other. Then, of course, we need the time to think to be able to move these things forward.

Whether you are an experienced leader or new to leadership or Middle Leadership, we benefit when we can be curious not judgemental, make time to think and face the brutal facts whilst having unwavering hope. We will keep our perspective, know what is important, listen to others and have clear direction ourselves.

Rachel Johnson is CEO of PiXL, an author of two books with John Catt (Time to Think and Time to Think 2) and podcaster (PiXL Pearls and the PiXL Leadership Bookclub). Rachel leads PiXL, a membership organisation which defines itself as a leadership network. Working with schools on leadership, life chances and outcomes and teaching some important principles of leadership to thousands of leaders each year through the School of PiXL Leadership programmes.



Prayer works – the Filling Station

Chaplains

Heads

Parents

Staff

Governors

Pupils

Supporters



Rev Richard Fothergill
CEO & Trustee of the Filling Station Trust

Prayer changes things!

We at the Filling Station Trust have seen the effectiveness of prayer at our many meetings, which are held across the country and have seen things change for the better. Certainly, this scripture is true, *'the prayers of a righteous person are powerful and effective!'* James 5.16. We as Christians are not inherently 'righteous' on our own. We are told we are *'made righteous through Christ'* and what he did on the Cross for us - Romans 3.22.

The Filling Station is a network of 78 informal meetings that take place once a month, being held in non-church venues such as village halls, converted barns, cafes and so on. These gatherings are non-denominational and the majority take place in rural locations. From Thurso at the top of Scotland, to Falmouth in Cornwall, most British Counties have at least one Filling Station taking place within their boundaries. There are 13 meetings abroad in 6 countries and some 3,500+ people now attend one somewhere each month. We have seen over 650 become Christians for the first time at these meetings. Numerous people have been helped in their faith, many of whom were

exhausted, uninspired and isolated believers until they met other like-minded Christians at the Filling Station. We are seeing a growing interest in these meetings from the group often categorised as 'Generation Z' (b1997-2012). They are searching for answers and these informal meetings where we teach, worship, tell stories of prayers answered and actively pray for each other, are really helping them find their own faith in Jesus Christ.

We at the Filling Station have seen God answer our prayers on so many occasions now that we take it as read that if we want to get anything done, the first place to turn is prayer. Prayers of petition (requests), thanksgiving and proclamation (speaking it out). For example, I can think of Brian (name changed for confidentiality), who was damaged by an adverse reaction to the covid vaccine. He received prayer at an FS meeting. He was wonderfully healed, he felt stronger in his body immediately and gave his life to Christ as a result. As we pray and talk to the Lord about all the situations we face, we find Him to be faithful and kind, often intervening in the most profound ways! As it says in 2 Tim 2.13, *'even though we are faithless, He remains faithful!'*



Praying for Generation Z



A Filling Station team - here Moray FS in Scotland



A typical Filling Station meeting - South Lakeland FS in Cumbria

In my first Assembly as a Head of a UK school (writes Alastair Reid), I insisted on us singing a hymn of praise. A staff colleague asked me afterwards why we had done so – and were to continue doing so. I spoke about the power of community worship and some time later this same colleague kindly commented that he was finding this to be the case...

Worship in School: Is it Worth it?

Chaplains

Heads

Staff



Jake Drake

iSingPOP Head of Marketing and Communications

Music is more than just a catchy tune, and worship is more than an obligation.

It should be a creative wellspring of joy and self-discovery, a moment of vulnerability where we confront our inner selves and our relationship with creation. As teachers, you have the incredible opportunity to nurture this spirit within your schools.

In my years with iSingPOP, I've witnessed first-hand how transformational worship can be. In both Christian and community schools, I've seen shy students blossom while singing about love and acceptance. I've spoken with teachers facing personal struggles who find solace and strength in uplifting melodies of hope. Just last week, an eleven-year-old boy, recently displaced from his home in Sudan, beamed with delight after singing a faith-filled iSingPOP song, saying, "This is the happiest I've been since I left home." Worship heals.

The academic and social pressures placed on teachers have often led to collective worship slipping through the cracks. This is not due to a lack of desire but rather the sheer weight of work overload. However, I believe that the spiritual growth of a child is just as

important as their academic achievements. Inclusive Christian Worship, regardless of one's faith, creates a sacred space in the daily rush where reflection can take root. Authentic Christian worship provides a place to ponder life's big questions: Who am I? Why am I here? What do I want to do?

So, what can you do? Infuse worship with the same energy and creativity you bring to your classroom. Break down the lyrics, discuss their meaning, and choose songs that resonate with your students' age and interests. These formative years are crucial for building self-worth and a strong foundation. By incorporating joyful, inclusive worship into your curriculum, you are giving your students the tools to navigate life's challenges, feel loved and valued, and discover a deeper connection to themselves and the world around them.

Remember, Jesus said, "*Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these*" (Matthew 19:14). Worship need not be stuffy or intimidating. Let it be a vibrant, colourful reflection of your students' unique personalities, just as Christ welcomes them with open arms.



iSingPOP in full flow



The contribution of chapel

Developing pupils' spiritual and moral knowledge and understanding

Chaplains

Heads

Governors



Dr Anthony Macpherson

Senior Deputy Head at Ashfold School, Buckinghamshire

Following a doctoral study exploring the contribution of chapel to UK private senior schools, Senior Deputy Head at Ashfold School, Buckinghamshire, Dr Anthony Macpherson, outlines some of his findings and considers how chapel can transcend faith to help the development and wellbeing of children.

Have you ever paused for a moment during a busy day at school to appreciate the delicate beauty of a ladybird's wing? Perhaps not, but one little Pre-Prep girl did this during an ISI inspection that I was part of, and the moment was captured by another member of the inspecting team as evidence of P3 under the old framework: 'spiritual understanding and appreciation of the non-material aspects of life'. The wording in the new ISI framework has been revised slightly, and school leaders must now ensure that their curriculum develops 'spiritual and moral knowledge and understanding'. We might not have time for ladybirds, but we certainly should pause for a moment to consider how we deliver this important part of the framework, and how this might contribute to the overall development and wellbeing of the children in our schools.

I recently completed a doctoral study exploring the contribution of chapel to UK private senior schools. This involved me interviewing 40 participants, from 3 case-study schools: heads, chaplains, directors of music, heads of marketing, teaching staff, pupils, parents, and alumni. I found that once you peer beyond its apparent rejection by your average teenager, chapel offers something distinctive and important, both for school communities, and for most individual pupils. People told me that they value chapel as a space within the campus, and a time within the busy week, precisely because it stands apart from everything else. The sense of value attached to a 'sacred' space and practice held

for almost all 40 participants, including those without personal religious faith. The most frequently suggested contributions of chapel were represented in my thesis under two broad themes: 'building community, culture, and identity' and 'engaging with the sacred – taking pupils beyond their everyday experiences'.

Coming together as a community in chapel seems instrumental in the formation of a school's culture and identity. For many alumni, chapel remains the place they most want to revisit when they come back. As one alumnus reflected: "I think being with people, not just passing them in school; being with people, you're all there, focusing together on the same thing, singing the same songs, listening to the same voice. I think it brings the community together". Pupils also seem to respect and recognise chapel as a place of moral authority, and they largely accept the 'values education' that it promotes. Many participants spoke positively about the opportunity to hear inspirational and morally encouraging sermons and addresses. As one head reflected: "if you want to try to engender and encourage integrity, rather than entitlement, chapel is a pretty good place to do it". One of the most important contributions of chapel is the opportunity for communal singing. The culture of singing varied across my three casestudy schools, in terms of pupil enthusiasm (aka volume), but where it is done well, participants absolutely love the opportunity to sing hymns together. There is plenty of academic literature supporting the powerfully bonding experience of singing in groups and it will come as little surprise to most reading this that it can be one of chapel's big contributions to the community, culture, and identity of a school. One pupil put it this way: "I think it is rather cool, you know, singing any of those big hymns with 800 kids going for it. It gets the hairs on the back of your neck standing up".

An opportunity to engage with faith and religion was

the second dominant theme in my findings. As a place and practice built around communal worship, compulsory, wholeschool chapel will never be to everyone's liking. However, it was striking in my interviews how many people value chapel for its sense of being sacred and set-apart in some way from the everyday business of school life. This view was expressed evenly between religious and nonreligious participants. Chaplains also seemed very aware of their responsibility to provide a space for all. As one houseparent put it: "for young people, I think it's important that you set them on a road. They can then make their choices, but if you haven't invited them to experience faith and religion, then I think you've let them down to a certain extent". Chapel was also seen to provide comfort and reassurance. It is a sad inevitability that large communities are bound to encounter periods of grief and emotional challenge, as will individuals in their own time. It was a striking feature of my interviews that chapel seems to be hugely important for people when they are faced with life's difficulties. Again, this perhaps fits with chapel being somehow sacred and set-apart, but one houseparent told me that when their matron died the boys did not cry and outwardly grieve in house, but they did in chapel: "because of some of the tragedies we have had over the years, chapel has really become a place of safety and security for children, whether they are from a religious background or not". Many participants

also told me they appreciate chapel for the space it offers for a time of calm reflection, almost in a mindful and meditative way. One head told me with a smile that "chapel is 15 minutes in the day when no-one can get to me", but plenty of other participants seemed to value the chance, as one houseparent put it, to "pause, breathe, and reflect". Interestingly, one pupil said, "chapel allows you to get away from school for a bit", perhaps giving weight to the idea that for many people chapel stands symbolically apart from the rest of the campus and other school commitments.

My research did not suggest for one moment that chapel is universally popular; as a former housemaster, I know very well how hard it can be to motivate a teenager to attend chapel first thing in the morning, and some of them will offer compelling arguments against compulsory attendance. Nor did my research suggest that the primarily Christian focus of chapel in my case study schools was unimportant. However, what struck me most from my study was how the value and contribution of chapel seems to transcend personal faith (or lack of it). Chapel seems to offer a uniquely rich and formative opportunity to bring the community together and it certainly provides a space where schools can help pupils to develop their 'spiritual and moral knowledge and understanding'.



Chapel & Assembly Spaces (top left to bottom right): Scottish boarding chaplains; Trinity, Sevenoaks; Bryanston; KES Witley; Monkton Combe School; Glenalmond; Dean Close

Book Reviews

Chaplains

Heads

Parents

Staff

Governors

Pupils

Supporters

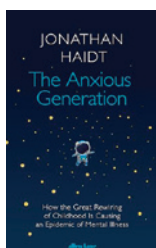
Curated by Frankie Knight TISCA Trustee



'Bad Therapy: Why the Kids Aren't Growing Up' by Abigail Shrier

In this New York Times bestseller, Shrier analyses the approach that many parents, teachers and mental health experts are taking to address teens' emotional and social wellbeing. She argues that, rather than solving issues, our overly therapeutic culture can

exacerbate them, and she has some refreshing suggestions of what to do differently. You might not agree with everything she says, or how she says it, but Shrier gives some serious food for thought when it comes to teen mental health.



'The Anxious Generation' by Jonathan Haidt

A highly-anticipated book from bestselling psychologist Jonathan Haidt, 'The Anxious Generation' explores how the changes in childhood, such as the decline of play, the rise of technology and the impact of social media, have impacted teenage mental health.

Calling for families and schools to adopt a radical phone-free, play-full approach to raising children, Haidt is inspiring and challenging in what he believes will help young people to grow up resilient and happy in today's world. Christians will be particularly interested to read what he has to say about a return to 'spirituality' when it comes to a healthy approach to life, too...



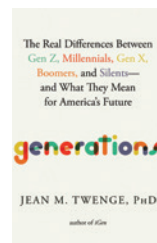
'Boarding School companion' by Alex Skerratt

Does my houseparent really hate me? How do I cope with homesickness? How often should I phone home? Why are there so many rules? Why do the toilets suck? Can't I just go home? Are teachers crazy?

These are just some of the questions that might enter your head when you first arrive at boarding school. Or

maybe you've been there a while and you're still baffled. Maybe you're struggling to cope and you're not sure which way to turn. Maybe your teachers are doing your head in. There's nothing quite like boarding school. A group of random people are thrown together and forced to live, work and sleep under the same roof. How can they possibly be expected to get along? Is such a thing even possible? What about exams? Prep? Revision? Disgusting food? What about the unfairness? The punishments? The lack of privacy?

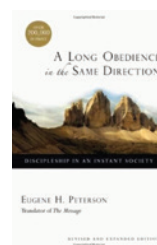
Alex Skerratt has lived in Kingham Hill School for three years working as a pastoral assistant and tutor. He has come up with 29 tips for handling one of the strangest living situations on the planet.



'Generations' by Jean M Twenge

Not sure about the difference between a Millennial and a Gen Z? Don't understand the phrase 'Ok, Boomer'?

This book could be for you... Jean Twenge explores the distinctions between the generational categories that are often quoted in the media and online but rarely explained. She shows where these differences have come from and what impact they have on people's political, social and religious views, their work ethic and expectations for life, to name just a few categories! A fascinating book to read and food for thought if you wonder what Generation Alpha might be like...



'Long Obedience in the Same Direction' by Eugene H. Peterson

This Christian classic was republished a few years ago to mark

its 20th anniversary. In a culture that emphasises speedy solutions and quick results, Peterson's emphasis on the long, slow obedience of Christian discipleship is strangely refreshing. Each chapter unpacks one of the Songs of Ascent from the Book of Psalms and brilliantly applies it to the life of 21st century believers.



'Mentor: strategies to inspire young people' by Robin Cox

In a post-pandemic world, where 'influencers' are invading young lives, I cannot recommend

this book more highly. It is practical, full of insightful questions, moving stories and clear strategies to help mentors with their mentees. This book sends a message of hope and encouragement and helps mentors flourish and grow as much as their mentees. It is reflective, creative and full of resources—and, above all, it helps young people to live their lives in all the rich fullness God intended. (Alastair Reid)

EPILOGUE

GPS – Seeing through the mist

Chaplains

Heads

Parents

Staff

Governors

Pupils

Supporters



Ray Maher

Former school bursar and a TISCA Trustee

Pressures on public finances are only serving to accelerate the tax changes looming over independent schools. Choices around generating and then deciding where resources are best applied appear to be increasingly challenging. For some the mist is so dense the way forward is far from clear.

I recently climbed Coniston Old Man. For most of the time we were walking in thick mist and too often on the wrong path. I was grateful to have my brother with me, and the app on his phone, which we clearly should have checked more frequently. When we did go wrong, it was usually when we missed an uphill fork, distracted by conversation and unconsciously gravitating down the easier route.

My brother's proactive planning and trustworthy GPS guided us to the right path although being more alert in the implementation would have resulted in a smoother journey.

Faith

The challenges or uncertainties we can face are often not in our control but how we respond is. If your faith is struggling, I would recommend 'The Land Between' by Jeff Manion. We know God is faithful and trustworthy. Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you

(1Pet5:7). The biblical examples (our GPS), also show He does rightly expect us to diligently use the talents he has given us.

Gifting

Peter was exhorting a spirit of trust not mañana. Don't procrastinate. Be creative (Income opportunities? Subjects? Class sizes?) Increased risk calls for increased proactivity and alertness. Important basics for all schools will include:

- Risk Analysis
- Increased focus on forecasting and cash
- Evidence based understanding of your parents and current catchment
- Detailed business plans (i.e. discuss, agree and cost your response to the possible scenarios before they occur)

Courage

Is simply adding 20% to the fee and praying that pupil numbers remain at sustainable levels, in lieu of the above, a valid biblical response? Yes, God has got it, but he has placed you where you are to make a difference. Don't ignore the market you are in. Compassionately exercise your faith, gifting and courage.



Through the mountain mists



At the summit!

The Fire of Faith

Faithful Foundations & Friendships in Christ-centred Education

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