

News & Views

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Weird stories – and opportunities!



Alastair Reid
TISCA General Secretary

Towards the end of January, Alix (our Development Officer) and I set out on what, in recent times, was a 'weird' opportunity: to visit some TISCA schools in person and to hold regional meetings without depending on Zoom and a screen. And what a joy it was!

Revd Martin Poole, a governor at Ballard School, spoke at the South regional gathering at Castle Court Prep School. His enthusiastic accounts of sharing stories at school assemblies ranged from showing us how to 'tell the Bible' using the fingers of one hand (a thumbs up for encouragement, an index finger to point to things needing attention, the middle finger – taller than the others – to be Jesus, a fourth – the ring finger – for commitment, and then the little finger for prayer), how to divide 19 camels fairly between a sheikh's three sons (my maths was mightily challenged) and also how to use sport to tell the gospel. The latter illustration was very effective: what's the strongest and often the winning shot played in tennis? This is, of course, the serve. Our service as Christians is often what draws others to Jesus.

The meeting at Castle Court was also remarkable for the overflowing excitement shared by staff from several schools, but especially Castle Court, of being able to have fellowship together (over a very fine meal I should



BBC
Comedy  **THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND**

add). Some schools have been unable to have in-person staff meetings until very recently and whilst we remain in awe of what technology can do to bring us together, there is nothing to replace seeing others face-to-face.

On our tour we took in Bryanston and All Hallows →

Coming up in this edition

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

- | | | | |
|--|---|--|--|
| <p>1 Editorial</p> <p>3 TISCA Events 2022
■■■■■■■</p> <p>4 The Giving And Receiving Of Support
■■■■■■■</p> <p>6 The Cheltenham Education Partnership (CEP) & Radley College and Broadway Academy Partnership
■■■■■■■</p> <p>8 Personal recollections of the residential chaplains' conference in October ■</p> | <p>9 Chaplaincy in every school ■</p> <p>10 Chapel Foie Gras: Speaking in chapel / assembly in schools ■</p> <p>11 A Chaplain reflects... Revd Tim Mullins at Eton, Radley and Stowe ■</p> <p>12 Taking a Gap year in a school ■■■</p> <p>14 Chair/Head relationship: A reflection from a Prep School ■■</p> | <p>15 The Governors and the Head: A reflection from a Senior School ■■</p> <p>16 Houseparenting ■</p> <p>19 Worldviews in Religious Education: A response to Alastair Reid ■</p> <p>20 Change: the place for Christianity in education
■■■■■■■</p> <p>21 Character Virtues for Christian Schools
■■■■■■■</p> | <p>22 The Myth of Neutrality in Education ■■■</p> <p>23 "Flourishing or Failing" for teachers and parents ■■</p> <p>24 Book reviews and resources for schools
■■■■■</p> <p>26 Digging Deeper into the Environment
■■■■</p> <p>27 Revd David Prior
■■■■■</p> |
|--|---|--|--|

Weird stories – and opportunities!






continued

before going to King's Bruton for the South West regional meeting. Here colleagues gathered from King's, Hazlegrove and Monkton (and elsewhere) and we were

treated to BBC sitcom writer James Cary's musings on weird stories in the Bible. Here's what Revd George Beverly, chaplain at King's, wrote:

Have you ever considered how the Bible is jam-packed with weird accounts: Baalam's donkey talking! The transfiguration! Absalom's long hair getting tangled in a tree, leaving him stuck hanging until he was captured! →

TISCA Communications

-  **www.tisca.org.uk** Updated regularly and includes job vacancies (let us have these), events, news
-  **07702 950730** TISCA phone number
-  **gensec@tisca.org.uk**
We send out regular updates, resources, forms, etc. – let us have your email address if you are happy to be kept in contact this way
-  **Chaplains' WhatsApp group**
Now has over 40 members: sharing news, prayer requests, events, speakers, resources and a weekly 'thought'. If you'd like to join, please contact Alastair or Alix. One chaplain comments about the group: *I'm LOVING it. Genuinely delighted to be part of it. It is so helpful. Thanks for sorting it all out.*
-  **Heads' WhatsApp group**
Has over 20 members. Details from Alastair or Alix
-  **Governors' WhatsApp group**
Launched this year. Details from Alastair or Alix
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Previous General Secretaries

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

The physical resurrection of many bodies from tombs in Jerusalem when Jesus Christ rose back to life - and they walked around Jerusalem talking to people - a bit like zombies!

What do we do with such accounts? Shy away from them? Focus on the more "rational" sections of Scripture? Try and explain them away as deceptions that tricked supposedly gullible people thousands of years ago? No - none of those are wise or responsible approaches to make. We believe in a God who made the very laws of science, who is all-powerful and created everything. Thus, He is not constrained by such laws. The very fact He brings about miracles shows he is God. And on Thursday evening, it was lovely to welcome James Cary, Christian writer, speaker and comedian to speak at TISCA (The Independent Schools' Christian Alliance) regional meeting hosted at King's. James sits on the Church of England's Archbishops' Council, hosts numerous podcasts and writes comedy for the BBC (e.g. *Miranda*, *Hut 33*, *Bluestone 42*, *Think the Unthinkable*) often alongside Milton Jones. James commended us to not shy away from the weird and controversial aspects of Scripture. God has given us these passages and they richly overflow with the message of His gospel love. Moreover, as teachers/chaplains/staff in schools, we are surrounded by children and teenagers whose world is immersed and full of an obsession with the weird and



wonderful. Consider: *Star Wars*, *Marvel*, *Narnia*, *Harry Potter* and so much more. Best of all, as we engage with Scripture's stranger segments, it often prompts genuine discussion and enquiry between pupils and staff - and isn't that wonderful! What could be more important and fascinating than debating and discussing the message of the One who claims to hold the answers to life's biggest questions?!?

So, our challenge to all in TISCA is to seize opportunities to engage in the weird and wonderful in the Bible - and to do the 'weird thing' of meeting up again in person! Do come to our Keynote Conference (organised jointly with ACT) on Saturday, 5th March, in Westminster. Take inspiration, too, from the pages of this TNV and do let us know what you think. As you will see, for example with the Professor Trevor Cooling article, we are not afraid of some challenge and debate!

Up-coming TISCA events in 2022

Saturday, 5th March **(all day)**

Keynote Conference at the Mary Sumner Hall, Westminster, in association with ACT

Tuesday, 10th May **(6pm)**

TISCA Heads meeting for sharing, fellowship and dinner at Cranleigh School by kind invitation of the Head, Martin Reader

Tuesday, 17th May **(6.15 pm)**

A TISCA evening with... Mel Lacy (Executive Director of Growing Young Disciples) - online - 'Equipping'



Tuesday, 14th June (all day)

TISCA's annual conference at the Emmanuel Centre, Westminster

Theme: *'Inspiring faithfulness, not fretfulness: being people of compassion and conviction in a post-pandemic society'*

(We still plan regional meetings in the East and in the Midlands during March and April, respectively. The Scottish meetings are postponed until late September 2022.)

Thursday, 22nd September (all day)

Senior Prefects' training hosted by Monkton Combe School

The Giving And Receiving Of Support

Love God, your neighbour and yourSELF

Chaplains

Heads

Parents

Staff

Governors

Pupils

Supporters



Julie Robinson

CEO of the Independent Schools Council (ISC)

With over 50 people booked in it proved to be a popular evening for a good spread of Heads, Chaplains, Governors, Senior Managers, Teachers and Retirees.

Our General Secretary, Alastair Reid, asked Julie a series of questions regarding TISCA aim number 1: supporting. What follows is a summary of Julie's responses...

1. Why is this subject important to you?

- I'm sure it's important to anyone with a vocation that they serve and try to make the world a better place. As Frederick Buecher says, "*your deep gladness meets the world's deep need*". In living a life of service as a Christian and in commitment to education, we are dedicating ourselves to that greater good and willingly sacrifice rest and exhaust ourselves in the business of giving to others. But if we are always giving, we will eventually burn out.
- I'm so glad my title includes the **receiving** of support because to be our best selves and to be the role models we need to be to others, we also need to recognise how to be advocates for ourselves. I remember the moment (not all that long ago) when I finally recognised that "*love your neighbour as yourself*" actually meant I needed to treat **myself** as well as I like to treat others.
- We're well-used to the duty of appearing strong in order to help others but the older I get, the more I realise that if we are to be as resilient and effective as we need to be, we must recognise and accept weakness and **willingly and actively invite help in return**.

2. What have been your observations about the giving and receiving of support (with a faith perspective) specifically in the context of education and perhaps also the barriers to effectiveness?

- I tend to think that the broader philosophy and teachings of **a faith perspective** help us enormously as we try to cope with the pressures of school. Faith encourages us to see beyond the immediate, connecting us with deeper truths and forcing us to go up the mountain (metaphorically) and seek quiet.
- The place of **assemblies and worship** in my (schools of Christian character) timetables provided the chance for hymns and prayer recital, a return to soulful and spiritual matters (if we were lucky with our speakers!) and the reassurance of familiar readings and rituals. If it's difficult to be yourself with a colleague, you might look for a mentor or someone to pray with or a pastor outside your circle. It's easy to become very inward looking, too, so it's a bonus if you can build a supportive link with someone outside school.
- When I was closely involved in **training prep school heads** in my IAPS role, I felt very much the personal needs of those Heads beyond the professional work they had to do. The need to manage their energy, preserve their spirit, find time to reflect and think deeply. In order to lead the community and espouse its values effectively, they were called to be present and able to articulate authentically and positively the school motto, the guiding principles for everyone in that school. They were whole people who needed nurturing themselves in order to be able to fulfil that duty. If you like, I recognised the need we all have to occasionally disappear off up the mountain for quiet personal reflection. I can only hope that governors recognise this because not all heads feel comfortable asking governors for help.

3. What difference has faith made to your understanding of support – and I know you want to pay tribute to Chaplains here...?

- Reflecting on my title for this evening has made me **value the chaplains** I've worked with in schools of Christian character more than ever. When you're a Head, there's an expectation you will have answers to everything! And that's not good for humility! School leadership is tough on Heads and relationships between Chairs and Bursars and Heads can be strained and political therefore to whom can the Head turn? In my experience, the Chaplain was someone in whom I could readily confide, who would keep those confidences and would understand and wouldn't overreact but would offer solace and the safe quiet of the Chapel.
- If you don't have a school Chaplain, then there's always the possibility of a **local church** taking that role. In my second headship, I appointed a local vicar to be school Chaplain and when he retired, he was helpfully focussed on the school community so a retired vicar is a good option
- A good chaplain is in a position of absolute trust and can be a **natural ally**. There's a trust and listening relationship there that I think is very important. Chaplain is someone who will say to the head "how are you?" and can get an honest answer.
- **Chaplains seem to see the entire person** in a way that parents and children and often other staff don't or can't, and my favourite chaplains had a way of preaching that included all the staff and really spoke to us all at the same time as the pupils.

4. From your career experience, what advice would you give your younger self on support in an educational context?

- We are encouraged to be **rushaholics** and the easy access online world has made that even worse. Yet time in the rituals of faith whether that's a service, a hymn, prayer or meditation, whatever your style of devotion to the greater spiritual world. That time slows us down into a rhythm and brings us I think pace and back to ourselves, taking away some of the anxieties of the work?
- Where to go **when I need solace** and don't know where to turn in school? To the Chapel and find comfort in the environment there.
- Ensure that children (and perhaps staff, too) are introduced to the support that can come from **Christian groups** to suit their age, confirmation classes, summer camps and other opportunities



- Have the courage to do extraordinary things and live a life of service but at the same time always be mindful that there's more you don't know than that which you know. So **have the humility to ask for help**. And seek out the people who will not only take from you but will be your mentors

5. Are there specific lessons to be learned in this area for today's times and perhaps from the pandemic?

- At this time when youngsters are understandably anxious about online harms and harassment; getting spiked with drugs on a night out and unfair treatment of various kinds, it must **be important to develop relationships that facilitate open conversations** about what we need to cope, so I feel there's a need to reassure youngsters that *"it's okay not to be okay"*, as the Samaritans posters tell us. To encourage healthy and open conversations about coping strategies
- Giving out support in itself doesn't weaken us: possibly inviting help also doesn't weaken and it takes the well-rounded individual to admit weakness. When I was a Head it was explained to me that it **helps others to know their work for you is needed as well as appreciated**, so it's OK for school leaders to say *"you are better at this than me, please will you lead on it"*, that's true delegation and empowerment of your team, in fact

6. How might we pray for you, Julie?

For me, I welcome **prayers for wisdom, focus and energy** to listen, to lead and to be rightly led in supporting the education sector and the hundreds of thousands of people touched by it. This year, I'm involved in founding a new charity called *the School Partnerships Alliance* which could do great things to support less advantaged children. Please pray for its success.

Julie Robinson, CEO of the ISC, mentions the need for School Partnerships. What follows are two examples of where such partnerships have been developed recently – in Cheltenham and also between Broadway Academy / Radley College

The Cheltenham Education Partnership (CEP)

Chaplains Heads Parents Staff Governors Pupils Supporters



David Evans

Voluntary Ambassador for CEP and ex-Director of External Relations for the Dean Close Foundation



CEP began its activities in 2019, after 2 years of discussions between the secondary schools of Cheltenham and a number of town and county organisations and institutions.

There were originally four state and four independent schools with the University of Gloucestershire as full partners, all paying an equal levy and having an equal say, but three more state secondaries, Gloucestershire College and GFirstLEP have now also joined. Meanwhile, supporting partners include Cheltenham's Festivals, Trust, Christian Arts Festival and Borough Council, Gloucester Diocese, Gloucestershire County Council and others, showing increased standing within the town. A Steering Group (of all partners) acts as an executive group and an Operations Group (of all full partners) plans the programme of events under CEP's co-ordinator. A pilot year saw each school host an event of their choice (a taster session in Astronomy, GCSE Latin, an Education Question Time pupil panel chaired by Jeremy Vine, a sustainability project etc.), but sadly the

pandemic brought activities that year to a premature halt. The second year saw various staff CPD offerings on-line and a Manifesto for Change project (where pupils discussed how education should change in the light of the pandemic), which led in the current academic year to a presentation by pupils at the Cheltenham Literature Festival. This year has also seen the launch of a climate change project, Change Makers, hosted at the Town Hall, with a follow-up conference for 500 pupils planned for Summer 2022. Starting with small, focused activities has meant that positive momentum has been achieved and CEP is now increasingly invited to give a voice for education in town initiatives like the Golden Valley Cyber Park Development and the Borough Council's Culture Board. Although CEP is not a specifically Christian organisation, it is encouraging that many individual and organisation members are motivated by Christian values of service and cooperation. For further information visit: Cheltenham Education Partnership - Home (cepcheltenham.co.uk)

Radley College and Broadway Academy Partnership

Chaplains Heads Parents Staff Governors Pupils Supporters



Ron Skelton

Headteacher and CEO of Broadway Academy Trust

'Two are better than one, because they have a good reward for their toil.' Ecclesiastes 4.9

Two schools at polar ends of the 'social and economic' continuum, Radley College and Broadway Academy, over the past two years have developed a thriving and mutually beneficial partnership which has had a positive

impact on students and staff at both schools. (*Both Broadway and Radley are TISCA associate schools*)

Radley College, in rural Oxfordshire, and Broadway Academy, in inner city Birmingham, Aston, could not be more different and yet they have both brought different, unique and equal contributions to the table. Both schools share similar values and have the development

of students' character at the centre of all they do. They both have a distinctive and palatable ethos which enables students and staff to flourish.

The catalyst and tour de force behind the on-going relationship, between Broadway and Radley, is the Director of Partnerships at Radley College (John Sparkes) whose infectious enthusiasm and relentless energy has been the heart of the amazing partnership. He initiated the partnership in Spring 2019 and has since worked with the senior team including 'zooming' in on Broadway briefings and staff meetings. John has an ongoing, easy and very pleasant presence at Broadway. Typical of the 'believe it can be done' attitude of both schools, the partnership flourished during the pandemic lock-down. Students and staff met on line and teaching staff zoomed into each other's lessons to observe best practice in teaching. The breadth and depth of partnership work has been immense, including student leadership development at Broadway's Outdoor Centre at Top Barn Trust in Worcestershire; a project to improve reading ages of Broadway students and the development of the House System at Broadway. The Head of Maths at Broadway, Steve Wood, said:

'An Easy A Maths app has given our KS4 students the opportunity to receive personalised support from trained Radley mentors with their independent study and revision. The students involved have made excellent progress with the help given by the Radley mentors, who explain in detail how to approach the problems with which the student is having difficulty. This helped the Maths department to achieve strong GCSE results in 2020-21 and helped several students to get onto their Sixth Form/College courses.'

The Broadway Head of Geography Jack Cockayne who was the national winner in the Princes Teaching Trust, Bernice Mc McCabe award for the development of the geography curriculum, said:



Broadway boys visiting Radley with their parents, for their interview for a scholarship, in Spring 2021



'Over the course of the last year, the relationship between geography departments at Radley and Broadway have thrived, with experiences ranging from discussing natural hazards with author and lecturer Ilan Kelman, to contributing to the discussion at COP26 in an exclusive Q&A. Our students have benefitted tremendously from the journey so far and look forward to our continued bond in the future.'

On the 18th January 2022 both schools had students and staff representatives working on a safeguarding campaign and policy with the English Cricket Board at Edgbaston cricket ground. It was a very successful day with excellent contributions from both schools.

Partnership is thriving at all-levels. The Warden of Radley (John Moule) has become a governor of Broadway and Chairs the Deep Academic committee which is responsible for the quality of education at Broadway Academy; he often visits Broadway, observes lessons and is well known to staff and students. I have had the privilege of attending the Radley College Council meetings. Two Broadway students were selected for full scholarships to Radley sixth form in September 2021- this has been life changing for the boys from Aston and their families.

In September 2021 we took a group of Broadway sixth formers and staff to Radley to visit the scholarship boys Hamza and Saymon. It was a great honour to speak in the impressive, newly extended, Radley chapel to Radley and Broadway students and the staff. This was followed by an excellent lunch for 20 students and staff in the Warden's house where students and staff really got to know each other and enjoy each other's company. Senior staff, teachers and student exchanges continue to take place. Relationships and friendships have been forged. We are excited about future joint plans and projects.

**'Opposites attract
and likeminded last'**

ROHAN RATHORE



Personal recollections of the residential chaplains' conference in October 2021

Chaplains

In October 2021, over 30 chaplains gathered in person (with some six online) at the Elim Centre in Malvern. This was our first in-person TISCA event for over a year owing to the pandemic. The focus was "Encouraging, Enthusing, Equipping and Envisioning for renewed service".

It proved to be a thrilling time with excellent teaching, mainly from serving chaplains, on topics ranging from managing mental health, coping with distress and how to utilise IT and social media. Chaplains Alex Aldous (Prestfelde) and Tim Hall (St David's) led devotions on encouraging, enthusing, equipping and envisioning. Areti Bizior (Luckley House) was our visiting Head and we had a super visit to Malvern College, including tea with the Head, Keith Metcalfe. Three attendees gave us their impressions of the conference...

A new chaplain

As a newly appointed, non-ordained chaplain, I wasn't quite sure what to expect from my first TISCA conference. I needn't have worried.

Following a warm welcome by Alastair Reid, we swiftly had our hearts turned to Christ through a series of devotionals led by Alex Aldous. These sessions highlighted the importance and supremacy of Christ, and how essential it is that his life-giving message be clearly proclaimed across our schools. The devotionals were interspersed with practical 'equipping' sessions which, as a new chaplain, were invaluable; Victoria Ikwemesi and Alice Monaghan's session on managing difficult pastoral situations was particularly insightful.

All of this was complemented by excellent food, stunning views out over the Malverns, and countless conversations with fellow chaplains generously sharing their experience and wisdom. It was an enormously helpful way to start my chaplaincy, and I very much look forward to future conferences in the years ahead.



James Soper

Head of Academic Music and Chaplain, Warwick School

A presenter (and primary school Christian worker)

My first TISCA Chaplains' conference was a feast in every way. The beautiful college setting in the Malvern hills for the eyes, delicious food for the body, and such rich spiritual food for the soul! I had been invited to co-present a session on the use of online resources for schools after making some online assembly videos over the past year. Being a 'Christian schools' worker' in a variety of school settings, rather than a Chaplain, I expected to feel perhaps a little out of place, but I was soon put at ease with such a warm welcome from everyone, and found all the talks so helpful for my own work in Pembrokeshire. It was wonderfully encouraging to talk to Chaplains from all over the country who know the call to be 'salt and light' in their school, and discover what that looks like in different contexts. I brought so many great 'nuggets of truth' home with me from the 24 hours I was able to attend. I was particularly blessed by Rev Tim Hall's 'envisioning' session where he talked about the often overlooked character Bezalel in Exodus 31:1-11, and the creative spirit that God has put within all of us in bearing his image, for his glory. 'Beauty brings the presence of God'. Although I'd often 'felt' that was true - I don't think I'd heard it articulated so clearly before! Thank you to Alastair and Alix for organising such a great feast for us. The three and a half hour drive each way was more than worth it!



Robyn Welsby

Christian schools' worker in south Wales and 'Walking through the Bible' presenter. She is also a former music teacher from Hebron School, India

An online attendee via zoom from North Uist, Scotland

I very much appreciated the Conference, and am so glad I could take part from the Manse on North Uist. (For anyone wondering where that is - west of here, apart from St Kilda 40 miles away, there is no land before one reaches Canada!) If I were to highlight just one encouragement from it, perhaps I might mention how helpful it is, especially during a period when in-person gatherings have been more or less restricted, to at least be able to meet and share online with other School Chaplains and Christians fulfilling different roles in education. Like any ministry, Chaplaincy can sometimes be a lonely path to tread; and to see and hear both those who gave presentations, as well as take part in breakout rooms with other participants, was a most welcome blessing.



Revd Alen McCulloch

A former Services' chaplain and now a Parish Minister on Uist, Outer Hebrides

Chaplaincy in every school

Chaplains



Maggie Everett

Lead Development Officer, Centre for Chaplaincy in Education (CCE)

** Name has been changed*

TISCA has links with a number of Christian organisations. One of these is the Centre for Chaplaincy in Education (CCE) led by Maggie Everett...

A Chaplaincy in every school and college in the UK...

I met Sara* last week. She works, voluntarily, in her local secondary school as a Chaplain. Her first words to me were: 'The best thing about what I do? I get to spend time with young people who often have no-one else to talk to'.

What that doesn't tell you is that Sara has spent every lunch time in that school since September (under Covid rules of course), has loitered around the playground, mopped up spilt drinks and food for the students who have physical challenges, sat with, prayed with, cried with, laughed with and worked with those who are isolated as well as the most popular. No wonder one pupil said to me: 'Every school needs a Sara'.

'A Chaplaincy in every school and college in the UK', is the vision of Centre for Chaplaincy in Education.

A big vision I am told! But surely one that when achieved will bring hope and the transformative love of God to school and college communities, in turn having an impact families and local communities the length and breadth of the UK. Our vision can only be realized through the collaborative partnerships we are continuing to grow across all denominations and with all organisations who are involved in school and college chaplaincy. It is a joy to bring together leaders nationally and regionally as we seek to serve those already serving as chaplains through training and networking, and encourage and support those who are beginning to explore this amazing ministry.

We have a way to go yet! Our current research - being undertaken with Newman University- indicates that around 9% of Secondary Schools in England have chaplaincy in some form.

Catching the vision is only the beginning, of course!

To achieve it will mean local churches getting involved: where you already pray for your local school/s, how about



A team challenge assembly

calling the headteacher and ask what you can pray for? Or take in some chocolates or biscuits for the staff to encourage them? Show the staff you are there to support and it goes a long way to open the door for opportunities to serve them in other ways as they realise you care.

How can you support CCE's vision?

Pray for all education chaplains across the UK -in supporting the needs of their communities they often feel isolated;

Ask God to open doors in schools for chaplaincy to be brought in;

Ask God to raise up people who catch the vision to serve schools and colleges as a chaplain; Is that you perhaps? Then consider taking part on our 10 week 'Exploring Chaplaincy in Education' course where you will have the chance to discover more about chaplaincy in schools and colleges and meet others with a similar interest <https://mailchi.mp/48840316cbdf/exploring-education-chaplaincy>

Join the CCE mailing list so you can be kept informed of the opportunities there are and ways in which you can pray. <https://bit.ly/JoinCCE>

Join the conversation on Twitter: <https://bit.ly/CCETweet> and find out more as people share stories and connect with chaplaincy

Consider supporting a chaplain who wants to take part in our Induction Programme. This course equips and gives rigour and depth of learning for chaplains in their first 3 years of service- many schools are struggling to pay for training so we are setting up a bursary fund to help: find out more from admin@c4ce.so.uk

Why? Because our young people need people like Sara.

TISCA is commissioning a survey to go to as many former independent school pupils as possible which seeks to evaluate the impact made on pupils whether people of faith or none. Do contact Alastair or Alix if you can help spread the survey far and wide. In the following article, John Ash (chaplain at a TISCA Foundation School, Dean Close) offers advice about compulsory chapel / assembly settings...

Chapel Foie Gras

Speaking in chapel / assembly in schools

Chaplains



Revd John Ash
Chaplain, Dean Close School

This side of the return of Christ, there are only two forms of commended Kingdom compulsion.

Those of the Kingdom are compelled *of their own volition* to speak of her King (Acts 4:20; 1 Cor 9:16; Jude 1:3), and those who hear His call warmly are compelled *of their own desire* to enter (Jn 6:44-45, 65). Chapel therefore presents a conundrum. A place where adults and youngsters alike are compelled by contract or chit to engage with the gospel of freedom. If that isn't a paradox I don't know what is. Is this the foie gras of ministry whereby our charges have a gospel pipe shoved down their throats in order to fatten the attendance register? How can we plan our forced Chapel diet such that we give credence to good and wrongful compulsion?

The question is prickly and slippery. Prickly because every Chaplain knows that within it lie the seeds of his or her demise, especially – to overextend my metaphor – where the topsoil is secular already. Slippery, because Biblical principles to guide us through are seemingly scant

Over the years I have become convinced that there is another question which lies beneath the one already voiced, which can help. It is this: *'When and why is it ever right to say less than we could of the Kingdom, at any given time?'*

I am convinced that we ought to speak differently in obligatory attendance contexts such as Chapel as opposed to our CUs, and voluntary groups, and that sometimes this may mean saying less than we could. This applies to the content of any given talk as well as to the finessing of a series.

There is one further factor to consider. Most School

leaders – quite understandably – want Chapel to act as a place of togetherness. Here the scattered school comes together as one 'we' and 'us' rather than Set 1, and C Team, for example. The issue is that the One we speak on behalf of in Chapel can be perhaps uniquely polarizing (Lk 2:34-35; Mt 10:34), notwithstanding adopting Jesus' generosity of spirit, welcome and tone. Therefore we will often want to be sensitive to particular times of year where school togetherness matters most, so we can cut our cloth accordingly.

In my experience, new beginnings (especially of the academic year) and times of exam stress in the summer rate highly on this measure. For times such as these we may want to reach for a less spiritually spicy series, with more quiet reflection built in. Sometimes I run a series with a negative and broader brief where speakers aren't asked to commend a particular aspect of Christian truth, but rather are asked not to conflict with one! Examples include *'I wish somebody had told me that...'* or *'Where were you when'*, or *'The Tiger who came to tea'* (choosing someone to meet from history). For this sort of thing I ask to see talks in advance, and will choose a resonant Bible reading. The twin advantages here are of broadening one's base of speakers from the Common Room, and also lowering the spiritual temperature for the sake of togetherness.

The lion's share of our Chapel series at Dean Close are unashamedly Christian in content. We aim for variety trying to teach at least something representative of *'the whole counsel of God'* through a half decade. I am unabashed in aiming to increase Biblical literateness, as well as praying for that deeper formation. Our calling is not ultimately to be popular after all, but faithful. But not faithful at the expense of shrewd.



A Chaplain reflects... Revd Tim Mullins at Eton, Radley and Stowe

Chaplains

Tim Mullins first became a school chaplain in 1995. Frankie Knight (TISCA Trustee) interviewed him as he begins to think about the possibility of retirement.

What caused you to go into school Chaplaincy in the first place?

When I was in a parish I particularly enjoyed working with teenagers. As a curate, I ran the youth group and enjoyed regular school visits. I was also a governor of the local primary school, taking assemblies every week, so I was thinking about the possibility of school chaplaincy right from the start. Summer camps had also given me a window into school's work, and I suppose my own school days had shown me both the pastoral and spiritual opportunities that the chaplain has.

What have been some of the highlights as you look back on your time in school Chaplaincy? Some of the challenges?

It has been a huge privilege to be a *part of a school community* all day every day: to host people in our house, to spend evenings in boarding houses, to have conversations on sports pitches, to share one's life with others in so many small ways.

Another joy has been our *involvement in the local church*. It's a very real danger for chaplains that they are so busy in their school that they are never properly involved in church life - a great battery charger.

Another highlight, in hindsight, is *seeing how the Lord has worked in people's lives*, often since they've left school. As a Chaplain, you can sometimes feel like you're throwing seeds around and not really seeing much response. It's been wonderful looking back and realising that I may have been planting seeds, others may later have been watering them, but it is God who makes them grow.

One of the challenges was *keeping the family's faith going* during the busyness of serving in a school, especially when the children were young - a common issue felt by many teachers in boarding schools.

Another challenge has been balancing the need to be true to Jesus and his gospel whilst *being sensitive with the congregation*. Pupils don't have the choice of coming to Chapel so it's important to be gentle whilst being faithful.

Looking back, is there anything you would have done differently?

I'm sure there are, and I am sure there are plenty of areas I could have done better! At the same time every job requires compromise. As a Chaplain, your hands are tied to some extent by the demands the school makes on you. For example, I had to do a huge amount of classroom teaching early on in my career and that really limited my pastoral time as a Chaplain.

At times I also struggled with the busyness of term time, working long days and seven days a week. I wondered if I was being a good husband and father, and not just a good chaplain.

How have you seen Chaplaincy change over the years?

Due to safeguarding, things are now more restricted in what you can do, how much you can circulate freely around houses, what a teacher can do or say with pupils, for example.

I think you also have to 'win your right to be there' amongst colleagues more. Long gone are the days when the Chaplain was a figure who was automatically revered. Rather, you have to win friendship and trust.

What are some of the things you think you've learned more about the Lord Jesus, or you're especially grateful to the Lord Jesus, through being in this particular ministry?

I'm *grateful for His faithfulness* and the fact that He is willing to use ordinary people to serve Him. What a relief that the Lord doesn't wait until we're perfect before He starts using us!

I'm also grateful that *the gospel works in these unlikely surroundings*. Just to see the transforming power of God, and to see Him at work in my life and in the lives of pupils, has been the biggest joy.

I've appreciated *Christian fellowship with colleagues* and the importance of mutual encouragement - having brothers and sisters in Christ at school.

Lastly, my wife Lucy and I have often learned things through hard or difficult times - that *the Lord's will really is good, pleasing and perfect for us all*.

Many people decide to take a 'gap year' after school or university. Some, including the TISCA General Secretary and the Development Officer, take up the opportunity to serve in a school. TISCA has put together a database of some schools offering such a scheme (do see our Jobs Page on our website for details) and here are some reflections from 'gappies' and from staff at TISCA schools...

Taking a Gap year in a school

Staff

Pupils

Supporters

Monkton Combe, Bath

Both Monkton Prep and Senior Schools have been using Graduate Teaching Assistants (GTAs) as part of their staffing for a number of years now. One of the beauties of the arrangement is that everyone benefits - staff, pupils and the GTAs themselves. The GTAs all bring energy, enthusiasm and expertise and fulfil a number of different roles from sport to boarding house life and to lesson cover. The pupils love interacting with staff who are that bit younger and who have many of the same cultural references as them. For the GTAs themselves, they learn whether teaching or coaching is the right way forward for them or simply get to work in a fun and busy environment, often making lifelong friendships.

James Sertin

Deputy Head, Pastoral, Monkton Combe School

Port Regis School, Shaftesbury

From September 2021, I spent almost 3 months working at Port Regis School as a gappie. I was part of a team of 8 gap year assistants from the UK and Australia. We were all attached to a department in school but a large part of our role was supporting one of the boarding houses with practical chores, activities and supervision. It was such a fun experience! At school, I was a day pupil so it was eye opening to see the boarding side of school life with boarders as young as 7 years old and what it was like for them spending so much time away from home and with each other. Throughout the term, the school went out of their way to tell us that the gappies gave a different and incredibly valuable support to the children than teachers are able to. The term I spent at Port Regis was fantastic and I highly recommend it to other school leavers.



Pippa Salisbury

A gap year student at Port Regis Prep School



Lambrook School pupils

Lambrook School, Bracknell

Hi, I'm Bethany and I am currently working as a Gap Assistant at Lambrook School near Windsor. Lambrook is a co-ed primary school for nursery through to year 8 that offers flexible boarding for those in Yr 3 to Yr 8. Us 'gappies' are heavily involved in the boarding side of things which allows us to form close relationships with some of the children and this is definitely my highlight of each day. Sport is also a big part of the gappy job, so is helping with nursery and the lower years which is a lot of fun! I have found this job a great way to grow in confidence and develop time management skills which I'm sure will greatly benefit me in university or whatever you choose to do after your gap year. I personally am considering working in the world of education at some point, and this is the perfect opportunity to get a taster of the career but to also gain work experience in a professional environment which will be beneficial for any future career. My Christian faith also played a part in my decision to work in a boarding school in my gap year. I thought it would be a good opportunity to live out my faith alongside young people and to encourage them. From the viewpoint of a student, just finishing school and suddenly faced with the real world, having a job as a gap assistant is a great option. I get free accommodation and food during term times, as well as being paid monthly, including during holidays (which is better than many of my other friends working by the hour!). You also get the bonus of being able to put this job on your uni application or CV which will look amazing!



Beth Ronalds

A Gap Year student at Lambrook School, near Windsor - who was until last summer a student at Hebron School in south India.

Hebron School, Ooty, India – the International Guest (IG) programme

Here on a campus of 19 acres in the Nilgiri Hills of Southern India, Hebron School welcomes gap year volunteers in August and January. This International Christian School, located at an altitude of 2200m, was founded in 1899. These International Guests (IGs) come after school or after Uni, contributing to many areas of campus life. Being younger than most staff, the IGs act as role models in the dorms, PE lessons, Junior School, with ESL students or in the music or drama departments. Living in an international context with over 20 nationalities requires initiative, creativity, patience and flexibility. During our debrief sessions at the end of the semester, IGs often say they feel better prepared for Uni or for a job or further studies due to their stretching experiences at Hebron. IGs have later returned to Hebron as Staff after some professional experience, already familiar with the culture here, which feels like the best appraisal of their experience here at Hebron. Some IGs also come as retirees or 'Senior Volunteers' – what a great way to share your experience and skills later in life!

Resa Daven

Staff member and IG Co-ordinator

Greetings from Chengelo School, Zambia!

Gap students and volunteers form an integral part of life here at Chengelo School. We welcome students on a gap year between school and university as well as graduates seeking an opportunity to serve before starting work.

Gap year students with pupils at Chengelo School, Zambia



Over the years we have also had a good number of more seasoned volunteers who wish to reinvest their experience and make the most of their retirement years. It is not unusual for volunteers to come for a couple of months and end up staying for several years!

As a School we greatly value the energy and experience that they bring along with the heart that they have to discover something new and serve the staff and students here.

We have also found it to be a transformational experience for those volunteering. Whether they are serving at the Primary or Secondary School, Ndubaluba (our Outdoor Centre) or at the Farm they grow in their relationship with God, their understanding of other people and cultures and enjoy the beautiful environment we live in.

If you would like to find out more about volunteering at Chengelo or Ndubaluba, please do have a look at our website www.chengeloschool.org or get in touch with me on principal@chengeloschool.org



Paul Vines
Principal

TISCA has worked closely with many Heads since it began in 1995. In recent years we have also been reaching out to Governors – to support, advise and to pray. In the next two articles we asked for a Chair of Governors – one at a Prep School and the other at a Senior School – to reflect on the importance of the Chair / Head relationship...

Chair/Head relationship: A reflection from a Prep School

Aldro School, Godalming

Heads

Governors



Tim Johns

Chair of Governors at Aldro School

At the heart of any relationship is the requirement for trust, respect and freedom, none the more so than between Chair of Governors and Head. To achieve this requires time, working together through practical events that build and extend these qualities.

Imagine a real-life scenario; the excitement and trepidation of a first headship, moving to a changing school in need of significant strategic shift. One term in, having started to establish relationships within the leadership team and staff, a global pandemic strikes and everything is thrown into the air. Regular Government directives (or lack of them), creative remote learning and an avalanche of unexpected and additional demands suddenly dumped on the school's operational capabilities. Such was the situation facing the UK education sector in 2020 and in particular at Aldro, coupled with a new Chair in March 2021.

Given AGBIS's (Association of Governing Bodies of Independent Schools) advice of 'eyes on' and 'hands off', to ensure clear water between governance and operational matters, what principles underlie the ability to navigate through this and other turbulence, together?

- The power of encouragement cannot be underestimated. Striking the balance between support and challenge, whereby affirmation and backing are regularly provided from across the Board. In like manner, accountability is maintained to ensure that the pursuit of 'best practice' remains at the forefront;
- The importance of aligning the priorities of the Head with those of the Board, in the midst of huge operational challenge. Having governors loosely linked to departments helps with this mutual understanding;
- Providing a listening ear to the Head and encouraging a network of reliable advisers, including prior contacts, to whom he/she can turn;



Aldro pupils

- Giving space, within the tight constraints of multiple demands (eg roll, Covid, inspection, well-being, Strategic direction), for the Head to spread wings and excel in his/her own capabilities;
- Regardless of circumstances, appraisal and development practice (a more empowering term than 'performance management') are essential to provide the Head with valuable feedback, priorities and training opportunities;
- Finally, within the context of a Christian Board of Governors, prayer and sharing spiritual perspectives should be central to communication, both with the Head and in support of the entire school community.

How often communication occurs depends entirely on the personality and skill set of the individual. Transparency and availability are key, as is the proximity of certain governors to come on site when needs arise. In a Prep school with a family ethos, the visibility of governors and an appropriate familiarity avoid a 'them and us' culture. Governor/parent forums, to interact over strategic aims, gather ideas and align perspectives are also a valuable tool in building up a strong interdependent community. Ultimately, we are all engaged in the same goal; to provide the best environment and education for the pupils.

Christ's servant leadership is exemplary for Chair and Head, offering friendship whilst being answerable to different levels of authority, with the dynamics of love, grace and forgiveness at our disposition.

The Governors and the Head: A reflection from a Senior School

St David's College, Llandudno

Heads

Governors



Rev Dr Peter Gaskell

Chair of Governors at St David's College, Llandudno – a
TISCA foundation school Team Leader, Gloddaeth Holidays

“There is a time for everything: a time to weep and a time to laugh, a time to mourn and a time to dance, a time to scatter stones and a time to gather them....a time to be silent and a time to speak” (Ecclesiastes 3:1-7)

I have been Chair of Governors at St David's College, Llandudno for 3 years. It is a wonderful role seeking with the other governors to humbly serve the school in its strategy, compliance and finances. But I've come to realise that undergirding everything is the relationship of governors with the Head such that we can weep as well as laugh together, and work out together when to scatter stones and when to gather them.

What will this involve?

- **The governors' eyes** - all governors know to be 'eyes on, hands off' but seeing the school first-hand provides a healthy fresh perspective in discussions with the Head.

- **The governors' ears** - By listening we understand more and more the many attitudes and desires so we can grasp what is really going on in the life of the school.
- **The governors' mouth** - Wisdom discerns when to speak and when not to. This might involve a word of reminder - for example of the school's foundational charitable aims. In St David's case these are to 'present the Evangelical Christian faith showing the love of Christ both by example and teaching'. Or it may be a word of experience drawing on the different skills of different members of the Board, or a word of challenge, or a word of encouragement. But only having used our eyes and ears are we in a position to incisively speak the right word?
- **The governors' knees** - above the Tudor fireplace in St David's it says in Welsh, 'With God everything, without God nothing' which is a constant reminder of our need to rely on the Lord in prayer. Such prayer, including praying either for or with the Head, is the bedrock for what being a Christian governor entails.



St David's College, Llandudno

At the heart of a boarding school, the House or Dorm parents play a vital role, along with the Tutors. We asked a few to reflect on their role and, especially, on what it means for a Christian to serve...

Houseparenting

Staff

Cosmo O'Reilly at Monkton Combe School

In the pursuit of happiness we can often chase adrenaline highs, wealth, objects but we lack contentment. Being a houseparent is a wonderful job as my role is to parent these boys to grow up knowing they belong. Through the Christian model of the school having houseparents means the pupils are part of my family, eat in my house and have a sense of home and belonging in the moment. Teenage years can be both formative and traumatic and need a careful steer to protect their impressionable minds. At Monkton we are so lucky as the parents buy into this, as we pass the baton between us to raise these boys to be successful, confident and fulfilled in life. But most importantly they know of the ultimate belonging and home through Jesus. Subconsciously they see the gospel lived out as being part of my family, our behaviour management and consciously through Friday House Prayer meetings or Tuesday thoughts for the day. On the days you are struggling or everything is a little busy my advice is find your 0,0. Find the place at the heart where it all started. I went into teaching as I felt passionate about pupil welfare and the development of their character. For me I therefore go into the common room, speak to some boys and find out how they are. It's a chance to get back to my core interest and passion.

When we applied for the post we had spent a long time praying for the job knowing that God is at work and this has continued to be a great comfort, guidance and strength for us. For others looking at being a houseparent or currently in the post, prayer is a great place to start. One of my highlights since starting the role was my head of house asking for us to stop a meeting and pray. It was a great reminder that we are not in control and that we need to acknowledge our need for God. It was also lovely as clearly the boys had realised their vulnerability and therefore need for God. I try to pray for each of the boys, however, I am by no means perfect and don't do it as much as I would like, but by doing this I consciously think about their needs and seek wisdom on how best to support them. Prayer is also a way others can support us in our role. Regularly we are comforted to hear parents have been praying for us and the boys. We really appreciate it!

We took up this job as both an opportunity to serve and a chance to make a family for the boys who were

away from theirs. It's such a great opportunity for this and there is such a need. Much like parenting you don't ever switch off from thinking about them as they become part of your family. It's a lifestyle, a chance to serve and a great gift.



Cosmo and Bethany O'Reilly

Houseparents of School House at Monkton



The School House boys at Monkton with their 'House shout'

A House Tutor's view

Serving in a boarding school is both rewarding and challenging! Moving from India to work in a boarding school in London was eventful, though the overall essence of service remains the same. Being a House Tutor is a wonderful opportunity for being available for the boarders in the evenings for conversations, academic support and pastoral care. I thoroughly enjoy the conversations and interactions which build a good and healthy teacher-pupil relationship beyond the classroom and also help the Housemaster. According to me, serving in a boarding house requires one to be a good listener and being available for the pupils to reach-out for help! As a Christian, it is also important, as we all know and do, to pray for the boarders as they live away from their families and friends and for their unique pastoral needs.



Victor Selvaraj

Former teacher at Hebron School in India and now teaching at Mill Hill, north London



Dormparenting at Chengelo School, Zambia

Angie Dodds recently undertook to share some Dorm parenting wisdom with the Dorm staff at Chengelo via Zoom. Her framework is CHENGELO...

Call

Holding on to your call is vital, especially when times are tough - and they will be, any work with people or community, especially a community that seeks to serve God and further his kingdom, Satan doesn't like.

Humility

Beware of pride. Be prepared to humble yourself, to say sorry when you have got it wrong. Remember Christ came in humility to our world and he is our example. Be a good leader, a good role model. You may not see the results of your leadership in your life time, but you need to do your bit and trust God for the rest. Primarily, you are leaders in order to lead others to Jesus. A title should not define who we are. Our confidence is in God and we know Christ has promised to be with us always.

Encouragement

Everyone likes to be encouraged. Encourage as many people as you can in a day, you never know what effect that might have. Share what God has shown you from his word that day. It may encourage others who may be tired and worn out. Always be encouraged that you are united with Christ, you are his child. Remember God's promises. He doesn't break them.

New

Keep short accounts with colleagues and students. Don't let the sun go down on your wrath, remember that God's mercies are new every morning. Don't bear a grudge, don't have favourites, do see every day as a challenge. Sing to the Lord a new song daily.

Goals

Your goal should mean helping to transform people and that means everything from the inside out with priority on the spiritual. You do need to plan activities, to set

goals for yourselves and your students but ALWAYS bringing them before God.

Energy / Enthusiasm

It's great when you have it, but what do you do when you don't? Act, share the load, ask for help, use the gifts of those around you, go the extra mile even when you don't feel like it and pray for all you are worth.

Laws / Love

We must have laws/rules for society to run smoothly. If you obey God's law and love it, and it becomes part of you, then you are going to apply it naturally to any and every situation you face daily, and if the children see you doing it then hopefully you will be good role models and they will want to live like that too. Children like boundaries, they make them feel secure. Make sure **they** know what they are, and that **you** know what they are and keep them. On love, Jesus commanded us to 'Love one another' so that is what we must do. Simply.

Obedience

Are you willing to obey God and give up what you love if you are asked to? Your reward may not be earthly for being obedient, but it certainly will be heavenly. Answering God's call to be a dormparent is the first step but obedience is daily.



Angie Dodds

First dorm-parented middle school boys in 1984-1987 at Hebron School, south India, where she also taught in the primary school. Having left and returned to Hebron with her family in 1996 she dormparented senior girls for 13 years as well as teaching English. After leaving Hebron in 2009 she worked for a short time in Kollegal girls home in south India where the family had always been involved, training dormparents and teaching English. From 2010 to 2013 she helped out on short term projects teaching English and generally helping at helping in Amano School Zambia.



Dorm parenting at Hebron School in south India

We can only imagine that most people who work with young people in a pastoral context, especially when that role demands you to be in loco parentis to the students in your care, see it as a vocation rather than a 'career move'. So what specific difference does it make carrying out the work of houseparenting as a Christian?

At our school in South India, our community of students and staff represent over thirty different nationalities. At its best it's a little taste of what heaven must be like. As with all international communities, however, there's a need to continually adapt and adjust to the plethora of cross-cultural sensitivities at play. Our shared Christian faith and sense of calling to serve at Hebron is more than just a school ethos; it's the very air that we breathe and the thing that binds us all together.

Living in close proximity with others within a boarding school context has its challenges, but as Christian houseparents, it provides us with an amazing opportunity to help our students practise some of the extraordinary counter-cultural attitudes modelled in Scripture - attitudes and behaviours that we are certain will benefit their relationships throughout their lives. We regularly take time to **talk to them** about things like preferring other's needs above our own (Philippians 2:3-4, Romans 12.10), choosing to be encouraging and build each other up rather than engaging in unkind banter (1Thessalonians 5:11), forgiveness and acceptance of each other's differences (Ephesians 4:2), working towards resolution rather than harbouring anger (Ephesians 4:26), and being great role models to others (1 Timothy 4.12).

But, of course, the biggest difference that our faith makes to our houseparenting role is prayer. We frequently take time to pray for each of the boys and their families by name. We seek God's wisdom when dealing with conflict, and his strength and patience when we feel emotionally or physically depleted. We share 'arrow prayer requests' with a small group of praying friends, and we ask colleagues to pray with and for us.

Prayer really helps us to **keep perspective**. Much like when parenting our own children, it's easy to lose perspective and absorb stress as houseparents when things don't go perfectly, students make mistakes and we're faced with disciplinary issues. Appropriate discipline is obviously important, but understanding God's grace and unconditional love really helps us to 'reset' after incidents occur - to forgive, move on and wipe clean the slate, just as God does for us over and over again.

We are so blessed and encouraged by an amazing group of **Christian parents** of our current cohort who have, for several years, had a 'Praying Parents' WhatsApp group. We share specific prayer requests with them when necessary, and they have a routine of praying each day for different boys and topics each day, such as health, friendships, safety, exams and - happily - for us as we look after their children!

Our relationship with God and sense of calling led us to Hebron School and to the specific roles that we are currently doing. This doesn't mean that it always feels easy or straightforward, but this sense of purpose is what sustains us. Whether we're playing football with the boys, cooking up mountains of pancakes on a Saturday morning, listening to the tales of woe of an angsty teenager, or supervising prep, we attempt to keep in mind that we are doing it all *'for the glory of God'* (1 Corinthians 10.31). We count it as an enormous privilege and a responsibility to be houseparents and to have the chance to impact the lives of young people. We absolutely could not do it alone though. Wherever possible, we seek out experienced colleagues to advise us and we seek God, from whose fountain of life we draw all the fun, energy and patience that we need to do this important job.



Bene and Rachel Medhurst

Bene and Rachel work at Hebron School in South India. Bene teaches PE and DT and Rachel teaches English and Drama. They have three sons aged 8, 6 and 4, and are houseparents for the Year 12 boys.

A girls' Dorm at Hebron



Worldviews in Religious Education

A response to Alastair Reid¹

Chaplains



Trevor Cooling is Emeritus Professor of Christian Education at Canterbury Christ Church University. From 2015 to 2021 he was Chair of the Religious Education Council. In this article he is expressing his views and is not writing on behalf of the REC.

There is a paradigm shift in Religious Education (RE). The last time such a shift happened was around 70 years ago when the notion of Christian RE for the children of a Christian nation developed into the world religions approach. This was in recognition of the importance of equipping pupils for life in an increasingly diverse world, where knowledge of their neighbours' religions, both local and global, as well as Christianity was important.

There is however growing recognition that the world religions approach is no longer fit for purpose. This is not to say that excellent RE has not happened through teaching this way. But the world religions approach has foundered on at least two issues:

1. There is just too much content to cover. The danger is that schools adopt a superficial approach in the attempt to do justice to the many different religions.
2. The research evidence is that pupils today are motivated to explore questions of human spirituality and identity, but are less enamoured with the textbook study of institutional religion.

The RE Council's (REC) recent advocacy of a worldviews approach is a response to this challenge. How does it do this?

The answer is by starting with a basic fact about being human, namely that *Nobody Stands Nowhere*². What does this mean? It means that everyone interprets their experience of the world through what is called a worldview. This is an ambiguous term that people interpret in different ways, but the REC has gone to great pains to clarify what this term means for school RE³. Basically, it captures the fact that every person has a perspective on the world which they largely take for granted and are often unaware of. This influences the way they interpret the knowledge they learn and how

they respond to other people who may have very



different perspectives from them. No one is neutral. This is obviously very important in relation to religion. The worldviews approach makes this the central focus of RE.

There are of course risks with such a shift. In his article, Alastair raises concerns, but none of them reflect what the REC is looking to implement. In particular, this is not a move to add non-religious worldviews to the curriculum (they are already present) or even to include them "in equal measure" as wrongly claimed by Philip Barnes in the article that Alastair cites⁴. There is no intention to dilute the study of religion. As an evangelical Christian I strongly support this new approach as a positive missional response to the changing context that pupils inhabit. For me, this new approach is inspired by the long Christian tradition of worldview that I experienced when I worked for 25 years as an employee of the Association of Christian Teachers (ACT) and at the Stapleford Centre set up by ACT.

Alastair is concerned about the proposed change of statutory title from RE. I agree. However, dismissing the new vision for the subject on the grounds that "the teaching of Christianity is likely to be profoundly undermined" is, I suggest, profoundly wrong and misrepresents the REC's vision for the subject. I would urge TISCA members to explore an alternative evangelical viewpoint⁵.

1 TISCA News & Views, Autumn 2021, pp. 26-27

2 <https://vimeo.com/548847228>

3 See Literature Review and Discussion Papers at <https://www.religiouseducationcouncil.org.uk/projects/rec-discussion-papers-on-worldviews/>

4 My critical response to that article can be read at <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/00071005.2021.1954142>

5 You might like to start with the report that I wrote for Theos, the Bible Society Think Tank. See <https://www.theosthinktank.co.uk/research/2020/10/21/worldviews-in-religious-education>

Change: the place for Christianity in education

Chaplains

Heads

Parents

Staff

Governors

Pupils

Supporters



Alun Ebenezer

Head of Fulham Boys' School

It was a privilege in November to speak at the Association of Christian Teachers' 50th Anniversary.

The topic I was given was, *'Is there a place for Christianity in Education? An analysis of the shifting cultural sands of the past 50 years'*. I titled my talk, 'Change': (1) What has, (2) What hasn't, (3) What needs to. Below is a summary.

1. What has

As I prepared my talk, it struck me just how much has changed in the last 50 years. There have been 24 education secretaries. From Mrs Thatcher 'snatching milk', to Michael Gove battling 'the Blob' to Gavin Williamson and COVID, to Nadhim Zahawi and who knows what. We've seen the introduction of GCSEs and the National Curriculum in 1988. There have been different types of schools - grant maintained in 1988, no more grammar schools after 1998, Academies in 2000, Free schools in 2010. And let's not forget the arrival of Ofsted in 1992. Most significant of all, the Children's Act in 1989 as well as Every Child Matters in 2003. As for cultural change, I identified ten themes: (1) How we view children, (2) Authority, (3) Mental Health, (4) The Family, (5) Sex and Relationships (6) Equality, (7) Religion and Beliefs, (8) Technology, (9) Our bodies/exercise/healthy eating, and (10) The Environment.

2. What hasn't

1. God hasn't. He is still sovereign and the whole world is in His hands. Including education.
2. The Bible hasn't. It is still the inerrant, infallible, inspired Word of God (2 Timothy 3.16, 17). Hold your Bible up to your nose and you'll smell God's breath. We must remember, as John Bunyan once said, *'What God says is best, is best, though all the men in the world are against it'. The Lord's word is flawless*" (Psalm 18:30).
3. Sin is still sin. In my 24-year career, I have never had to teach a child to be lazy, lie, punch, kick, push in, answer back, look at things they shouldn't. It is in us all. Children are *'wonderfully made'* (Psalm 139.14) but born in sin (Psalm 51.5).

4. The Judgement hasn't. We all have to stand before the judgement seat of God. We need to keep this in our minds. What will it profit our young people if they gain the whole world yet lose their soul?
5. The Saviour hasn't changed. He still doesn't despise little ones (Mtt 18.10) and invites them to come to him. (Mtt 19.14)

3. What needs to

We do, Christians in Education.

1. **We need to be better.** We have a responsibility to do what we do well because we are doing it in the name of The Lord Jesus.
 2. **We need to be more enterprising.** We are here for *'such a time as this'* (Esther 4.14) so we have to use the opportunities we have: The Equalities Act and our protected characteristic, the opportunity to set up schools, taking the lead in creating a 'new normal', the realisation over the last two years that exams are not all that matter and a young person's worth should not come down to just that; wellbeing, mental health, and the fact we are now a pluralistic, multi-cultural society. We no longer need to go to the world. The world has come to us.
 3. **We need to be braver.** Some in education have a bunker mentality. Others have sold out. Neither is an option. We have to be *'unashamed of the gospel for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.* (Romans 1.16).
 4. **We need to be more loving;** the only offence should be the gospel.
 5. **We need to be more prayerful.**
 6. **We need to be more united.** To stand together and be the Christian voice in education over the next 5 years.
- A lot has changed.
The eternal things haven't.
We need to.

As John Stott said, *'Don't blame the meat if it goes off, blame the salt'*. Who knows what God might do in the next 50 years?

Character Virtues for Christian Schools

A response to Ofsted's 'Review of Sexual Abuse in Schools and Colleges (2021)'

Chaplains

Heads

Parents

Staff

Governors

Pupils

Supporters



Professor Mark Pike PhD is CEO of Emmanuel Schools Foundation, which provides Christian-ethos schools of character for around 8000 students. He is Visiting Professor of Education at the University of Leeds, and co-author of the recently published book for schools and families: 'Narnian Virtues – Building Good Character with C.S. Lewis' (The Lutterworth Press, 2021)

Ofsted's **Review of Sexual Abuse in Schools and Colleges (2021)** reports that sexual harassment in schools is far more prevalent than most school leaders think: unsolicited, explicit, pornographic material routinely appear on teenagers' phones; 'nudes' are demanded via social media and homophobic and transphobic bullying is rife.

Wise leaders of Christian-ethos schools will want to act decisively to address these issues, rather than underestimating their prevalence or being in denial. But how might we educate young people to exercise self-control¹ and to treat others in ways they would wish to be treated themselves?² Our vision statement at Emmanuel Schools includes these words: '*Founded on faith, hope and love, and inspired by Christ, we pursue excellence in character development...*'³. We seek to follow Peter's injunction, '*add to your faith virtue*' (2 Peter 1: 5), and not only tackle specific behaviours, but also help students to practise the Christian virtues that underpin their development of good character.

Being of good character applies to every area of life, sexual and otherwise.⁴ According to C.S. Lewis, '*Chastity is the most unpopular of the Christian virtues*', as the Christian position on sexual relations is, '*Either marriage, with complete faithfulness to your partner, or else total abstinence*'.⁵ For C.S. Lewis, '*The Christian idea of marriage is based on Christ's words that a man and wife are to be regarded as a single organism – for that is what the words "one flesh" would be in modern English*'⁶, which is the historic position of many churches including the Church of England⁷. But C. S. Lewis was also realistic and pointed out that those who are not Christians, '*cannot be expected to live Christian lives*'.⁸ In preparing students for life in modern, plural, Britain⁹, there must be no stigmatisation of children based on their home circumstances. While research¹⁰ shows that children are most likely to thrive when they have two parents who are married to each other and mature enough to raise

children, it is important for Christian-ethos schools to reflect sensitively that stable, caring relationships, may be of different types. Staff may benefit from high quality training to help them deal with instances of bullying – whether related to gender, sexuality, ethnicity, religion, or any other protected characteristic¹¹ – by supporting character development and not just behaviour modification. C.S. Lewis reminds us that while chastity matters, Christian charity is the most important virtue for followers of Christ.¹²

- 1 'Sex Education – Self Control and Sales Resistance', Chapter 5, in Pike, M.A., *Mere Education* (The Lutterworth Press: Cambridge, 2013).
- 2 Pike, M.A. & Lickona, T. *Narnian Virtues: Building Good Character with C.S. Lewis* (The Lutterworth Press: Cambridge, 2021)
- 3 Ethos Statement, available at: <https://www.esf-web.org.uk/about-us/ethos-statement/>
- 4 Mark, O.E. (2018), *Educating for Sexual Virtue: A Moral Vision for Relationships and Sex Education* (Oxford: Peter Lang).
- 5 Lewis, C.S. (1952), *Mere Christianity* (Glasgow: Collins), Book 3, Chapter 5, p. 86.
- 6 Ibid., Book 3, Chapter 6, p. 93.
- 7 Canons of the Church of England Section B: 30 *Of Holy Matrimony* 1. 1. The Church of England affirms, according to our Lord's teaching, that marriage is in its nature a union permanent and lifelong, for better for worse, till death them do part, of one man with one woman, to the exclusion of all others on either side, for the procreation and nurture of children, for the hallowing and right direction of the natural instincts and affections, and for the mutual society, help and comfort which the one ought to have of the other, both in prosperity and adversity.
- 8 Lewis, C.S. (1952), *Mere Christianity*, Book 3, Chapter 6, p. 99.
- 9 Pike, M.A. (2017) 'British values and virtues: schooling in Christianity and character', *British Journal of Religious Education* 41(3) 352-360
- 10 Lickona, T. (2013), 'Educating for Character in the Sexual Domain', *Peabody Journal of Education* 88 (2), pp. 198-211.
- 11 Equality Act 2010, available at: https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/pdfs/ukpga_20100015_en.pdf
- 12 Lewis, C.S. (1952), *Mere Christianity*, Book 3, Chapter 5, p. 92.

The Myth of Neutrality in Education

Heads

Staff

Pupils



Tim Dieppe is Head of Public Policy for Christian Concern. Tim started working for Christian Concern in 2016 following a successful career in fund management. Tim is married with two children. He holds a degree from Oxford University and an MA in Theology from WTC Theology.

C.S. Lewis wrote: "There is no neutral ground in the universe. Every square inch, every split second is claimed by God, and counterclaimed by Satan."

It is helpful to be reminded of this Christian perspective on the spiritual battle that is raging over every aspect of our lives. Sometimes Christians fall for a myth of neutrality, as if there is a neutral perspective on some issues or subjects. This is often true in education where people believe in a 'neutral perspective' on how we educate or on certain subjects. It is worth exploring this a bit more to examine what is meant.

What would a neutral education look like? Can you be neutral on the existence of God, for example? Well, if your school decides to be neutral on the existence of God then we should recognise that it will be actively teaching the children that belief in God is not important. That is what the children will learn. When you look at it that way it doesn't look so neutral after all! How about morality? Can you be neutral on morality? Hardly! All schools need to enforce some level of moral standards. The question is whose standards? Can you really be neutral on sexual morality, for example? What about religions or worldviews? Do you want your children to be taught that it doesn't matter which religion or worldview you adopt? Finally, of course, no school can be neutral on the value of education. But what will you teach children is the value of education?

My parents valued education and sacrificed to send me to a good school. They also took me to church, Crusaders, and youth groups. At secondary school I picked up the worldview that science can explain everything. No one explicitly taught me to be an atheist, but I saw that as the logical conclusion of what I was learning. Consequently, for a period of my teenage years, I became a hard-line atheist. The school probably

thought they were being neutral, but teenagers can see through that and follow the consequences of what is taught. Teachers should appreciate this.

All students will naturally be asking the big obvious questions: Where did the universe come from? How did life begin? Where do we get our values from? One schoolteacher actually told my son, when he asked, that life came from the mud in the ground! There are no neutral answers to these questions. If you don't answer them directly, students will draw their own conclusions from what has been omitted or included in curriculum and will reach their own answers from how and what they are taught.

I was privileged to speak on the subject of '*The myth of neutrality in education*' at Christian Concern's *Further Up Further In: Going Deeper 2021* conference for Christian teachers. There I was able to go into more depth about how there is no neutrality on any of the major subjects that we teach in schools. A video of that session is available on request. If you are tempted to think that maths, for example, is neutral then take a look at what I said about that!

The apostle Paul wrote: "*So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.*" (1 Corinthians 10:31). Therefore, we can and should educate to the glory of God. Furthermore, we can and should teach every subject to the glory of God. Anything less is not properly Christian education. Anything less is not neutral, it is actively avoiding giving glory to God as we should. This will send its own message to our children.

There is no neutrality in education. Every subject is claimed by God and counterclaimed by Satan. Satan knows what a crucial battleground education is. Christians should be alert to this too. Surely therefore, we should actively seek to glorify God in every lesson, in every subject!

“Flourishing or Failing” for teachers and parents

Parents Staff



Steve Beegoo
Head of Education at Christian Concern



The reason why I wrote this booklet is because parents need answers and help. It can be read in less than an hour!

In our schools, we can support Christian parents by highlighting what the key issues are for our children, and what can be done about them. I explain six key areas in terms of the current hinderances and what can be done to help.

One of the key areas regards devices. YouTube, Netflix, TikTok, films, media, gaming, Facebook, streaming, constantly demanding advertising, all incessantly being reached for by us and our children; a constant, instant, servant, living in our pockets. Servant or Master? Entertain me! Titillate me! Communicate with me! 'Like' me! Respond to me!!! The content is *always* educational to some degree or other. Think about it; those conversations shape children's understanding of relationships, and the content shapes their understanding of the world. And, for so many children, the parent's present, potentially becomes the primary

source of their pollution. For example, the damaging hinderance of widely distributed pornographic content cannot be underestimated¹. How sad that the playful, unconcerned, freedom of childhood relationships is being stolen. Invaluable innocence being swiped, as they swipe.

But there is hope. We can train our children. It is possible to direct our young people to use the technological tools of the 21st century for the Lord. But as with any sharp tool, wise and age-appropriate exposure from parents is essential. Regular monitoring, sharing of passwords and 'friends', time limits, and encouraging a balance of other activities must all be put in place for flourishing in this area. But this requires attention and resolve. It also requires good modelling from the grown-ups! Parents must recognise they are the gatekeepers to their home, and should be those who guard the doors and the windows (pun intended), so children are not left to their own devices². The unfettered modern-day global circus and playground available on the internet, and eventually the metaverse, is just too dangerous to give them their own free ticket to explore. As our children grow and mature, teaching them to discern what they watch and who they communicate with, becomes essential to prepare them for life. We must point them towards discernment, not experiment.

As school staff we can help parents, the primary educators of children, to see the issues and know how to address them. If copies of this booklet can help you, your church or your parents please do contact Christian Concern to get a hold of some!

Hindrances	Helps
Pressed parents	Peaceful parents
Toxic teaching	Effective education
Distracting devices	Monitored mobiles
Consumerist culture	Cultural commentary
Casual congregations	Churches for children
Enemy enticements	God's grace

1 <https://www.issueab.org/resource/effects-of-pornography-on-adolescents.html>

2 Left to Their Own Devices?: Confident Parenting in a World of Screens Paperback – 19 May 2017; Katharine Hill: Care for the Family Publications

Book reviews and resources for schools

Chaplains

Heads

Parents

Staff

Governors

Pupils

Supporters

Free Bibles For Your School – Here's How!

For over 80 years GoodNews (formerly known as Gideons UK) has offered the free gift of a New Testament and Psalms (now including Proverbs), to school pupils across the UK, through assemblies and RE lessons, regardless of their faith or of no faith.

These Testaments have been welcomed by schools as a textbook for RE, a resource for Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural development (SMSC), and/or a pastoral aid that offers advice and guidance, comfort, and hope.

As we are no longer connected to Gideons International we are finally free to welcome women as equal members, and have greater latitude in working with like-minded organisations such as TISCA.

We would be delighted to support your school:

- In meeting your inclusivity and Equality Act 2010 objectives, by offering pupils the best free resources on a key religious group, as Religion is a “protected characteristic”
- In your legal requirement to provide Religious



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FREE
RE Resources
including
Assembly Plans
and Lesson Plans!

Developed with
NATRE

Education for all pupils, which should be *'in the main'* Christian, by providing the pupils with a free Bible and accredited resources.

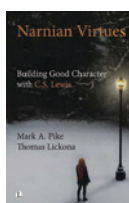
We offer the free gift a New Testament, Psalms, and Proverbs to every student, a Bible for every teacher's desk, library copies, and presentation testaments for every member of staff.

Our vision is that every student be offered a copy of the Bible. If you would like free bibles for your school – please get in touch by going to:

goodnewsuk.com/form/tisca-order-scriptures

We look forward to hearing from you!

GOOD NEWS for Everyone



Narnian Virtues: Building Good Character with C.S. Lewis by Mark Pike & Thomas Lickona

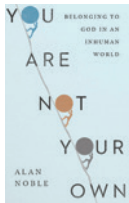
In this engaging and practical book, Mark Pike and Thomas Lickona show how C.S. Lewis' wisdom for nurturing good character, and his much-loved Chronicles of Narnia, inspire us to virtue. Drawing upon the Judeo-Christian virtues of faith, hope and love and 'Narnian' virtues such as courage, integrity, and wisdom, they present an approach to contemporary character education validated by recent research. An introduction to C.S. Lewis' thought on character and faith is followed by practical examples of how to use well-known passages from the Narnia novels as a stimulus for rich character development at home and in the classroom.

www.lutterworth.com/product/narnian-virtues/



'Introverts in the Church: Finding Our Place in an Extroverted Culture' by Adam S. McHugh

Do our school cultures naturally celebrate extroverts? Do introverts ever feel uncomfortable or isolated by the Christian ministries we're a part of? In this thought-provoking book, Adam McHugh raises some key questions which will make you be more analytical of the school culture you're in and more aware of the need to celebrate the unique contribution that introverts (whether they're pupils, your colleagues or you yourself!) have to offer in the Church and schools today.



'You Are Not Your Own' by Alan Noble

There are some books that connect so well with our experience of life that it's exciting. This is one of those books.

Noble analyses the assumption of today that we all 'belong to ourselves' and shows how, far from leading us to freedom it leaves us with a crushing sense of responsibility and exhaustion. His cultural analysis, especially about the role of technology, the need for self-creation and that all-too common experience of feeling frazzled is fascinating. This book explores the great comfort of belonging to God but, be warned, it refuses to give easy answers or quick solutions.



'The Power of Moments' by Chip and Dan Heath

In this brilliant book, Chip and Dan Heath explore the impact of moments: times of elevation, insight, pride and connection, and

argue for the importance of celebrating and creating these moments. Our evaluation of life isn't primarily shaped by everything we experience but, rather, it's defined by the flagship moments: the Speech Days, sports matches, the penny-dropping moments and the times of togetherness. If you're in danger of getting a bit cynical or feeling like school is becoming a bit 'samey', this book is inspirational and highly-readable and it will give you that boost to think outside the box and start to invest in moments for yourself and your pupils.

Walk Through the Bible – Bringing the Bible to Life!

The Bible – the world's bestselling book, but one that many children (and adults!) have misconceptions about.

Is it a rule book? A religious manual?! In a society where Sunday school is no longer 'the norm', how do we teach the next generation what it's really all about?!

Ten years ago I came across a presenter doing the 'Walk Through the Bible' programme in a local primary school. I went to watch a lesson, and was amazed that so much could be taught in such a short space of time, leaving the children inspired and excited about what they had learnt. I thought it had to be one of the most effective ways of teaching the storyline of the Bible to the next generation that I'd seen.

'OT Mini' and 'NT Mini' are educational programmes specifically designed to help 9-11 years old uncover the grand narrative of the Bible, through storytelling, actions and drama, leaving the children with an experience of

the Bible they will never forget! It covers part of the curriculum for the school, uncovering key features of the Jewish and Christian faiths, as well as the history of festivals and celebrations. Teachers often comment on how much they have learnt as well!

I trained with 'Walk Through the Bible' to present the lessons and I am so thankful to be able to use this tool, which brings the Bible to life and inspires faith through simply 'walking through the Bible' with them. Last week as I was leaving a class, a ten-year-old boy who had told me in Lesson One that he 'wasn't religious and doesn't believe in God', said to me; 'Miss, I really hope this is all true because Jesus sounds amazing'!

There are presenters all over the UK regularly visiting schools - and always room for more presenters to train! 'Walk Through the Bible' also do the programme in a variety of other settings, including for adults and youth. Visit www.bible.org.uk for more information or contact the office on 01255 871000 to see if there is a presenter in your area.

Robyn Welsby

Christian schools' worker in Wales



Chaplains and school leaders gathered virtually in November 2021 (courtesy of CCE – the Centre for Chaplaincy in Education) to explore how chaplaincy might engage with environmental issues. Dr Joshua Hunt, from Boost Felixstowe, where he is the full-time chaplain to Felixstowe School, shared the following with us...

Digging Deeper into the Environment

Chaplains Heads Staff Governors Pupils



Dr Joshua Hunt

Chaplain to Felixstowe School at Boost Felixstowe

Whilst the environment is a hot topic at the moment, to embed environmental activism into chaplaincy, it needs to be based on a firm theological foundation, not as a trendy add-on or a guilt driven afterthought!

Chaplains explored together a 'theocentric' understanding of humanity - that we are a part of God's creation, but have a special responsibility to guard and protect it from destruction. Sometimes to fully grasp this responsibility, we need to go on a personal and spiritual journey. There are easy things we can all do to reduce our carbon footprint, but if we are to fully embrace protecting ecosystems, species, and humans from the effects of climate change, it may require us to make some deeply unsettling personal choices and sacrifices. If we're all honest with ourselves, we probably already knew that buying a hybrid car and switching to oat milk wasn't going to cut it anyway.

Chaplains also explored the published research around climate change. In 2009¹, when young people in the UK were asked about climate change, they responded that they didn't think it would affect them, and even if it did, the effects would not be felt for some time. In any case, young people also reported that they

thought science would find a solution. Fast forward to the present day, and UNICEF² research shows that 95% of children are worried about climate change, with 89% of children thinking that not enough is being done to tackle it. That's a huge change in just over a decade.

Whatever our reasons for engaging with environmental issues, whether it's theological, ecological, or purely to engage with what concerns young people the most, it is imperative that chaplains are involved in climate action in some way, shape or form.

The final section of this workshop was practical tips, sharing ideas and resources, whilst trying not to be envious of other school chaplains' perfectly landscaped gardens and orchards!

Wouldn't it be amazing if every school could have a chaplain engaged with the climate crisis, and equipped to support young people and school communities to navigate their way through it?

- 1 Forest Research, 2009
https://www.forestresearch.gov.uk/documents/810/Would_You_Believe_It_Report.pdf
- 2 Votes for Schools and UNICEF, 2021
https://www.votesforschools.com/site/assets/files/2483/votesforschools_-_cop26_data_report.pdf



You can find out more about Felixstowe School Chaplaincy at www.boostfelixstowe.org.uk

You can find out more about other events run by the Centre for Chaplaincy in Education at www.centreforchaplaincyineducation.co.uk

Revd David Prior

Chaplains

Heads

Parents

Staff

Governors

Pupils

Supporters

Robert Court

TISCA Chairman and former Head of Birkdale School, Sheffield

Revd David Prior, a member of TISCA's Council of Reference, passed to glory on 22 June 2021 at the age of 80.

I got to know David and his wife Rosemary as friends when he was rector of our church at that time - St Michael's, Chester Square in London. Previously, he had served churches in Reigate, Surrey and in Cape Town before becoming vicar of St Aldate's in Oxford. His inspirational preaching was always firmly based upon what he called the "treasure" of God's word. So also was his prolific writing which includes "The Church in the Home", "Bedrock" and two volumes in the IVP The Bible Speaks Today series - 1 Corinthians and Joel, Micah and Habakkuk.

As the Director of the Centre for Marketplace Theology, an initiative by Christians working in the City of London, he was able to think and write perceptively about the relationship between faith and work. In later years he enjoyed spending winters as Chaplain of the Christ Memorial Chapel, Jupiter Island, Florida. Here he could enjoy golf at an exclusive club which, to his great delight, accepted him as a member but not some high-profile professional golfers.

We shared a love of cricket, and one day while watching a leg-spinner bowling in a test match David was inspired to pen some thoughts on the Holy Trinity: *"The leg-spinner's stock ball represents God the Father,*

who created us to "feel after him"; the top spinner, which goes straight through, represents the direct activity of God the Son; the googly represents the surprising activity of God the Holy Spirit." Needless to say, so difficult is the doctrine of the Trinity that these ideas were met with a fair amount of good-natured criticism.

As a young man, David suffered from a bad speech impediment, a stammer. Towards the end of his ordination training, his college principal recommended that for this reason he should not proceed to ordination, instead recommending a form of therapy which employed a new drug. While this disappointment was whirling around in his mind, David found himself sitting in a congregation where Isaiah 32 was read: *"A king will reign in righteousness"* (v 1) and when he does reign, *"the stammering tongue will be fluent and clear"* (v 4). The college principal accepted that David had heard this as a specific word from the Lord and so should be ordained - without the therapy. The experimental drug, by the way, would have been LSD!

And did David succeed? This is what he wrote about success: *"Success, then, is to reach the end of our lives having achieved what God put us here to become, i.e. to be like his Son, Jesus Christ. Putting it like that underlines that we cannot achieve this by ourselves. We need the blessing and the grace of God."* So yes, he succeeded.



Rosemary and David Prior

TISCA is a member of the Evangelical Alliance (EA) and fully subscribes to its basis of faith, as illustrated below

Evangelical Alliance Basis of Faith

We believe in...



The one true God who lives eternally in three persons – the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.



The love, grace and sovereignty of God in creating, sustaining, ruling, redeeming and judging the world.



The divine inspiration and supreme authority of the Old and New Testament Scriptures, which are the written Word of God – fully trustworthy for faith and conduct.



The dignity of all people, made male and female in God's image to love, be holy and care for creation, yet corrupted by sin, which incurs divine wrath and judgement.



The incarnation of God's eternal Son, the Lord Jesus Christ – born of the virgin Mary; truly divine and truly human, yet without sin.



The atoning sacrifice of Christ on the cross: dying in our place, paying the price of sin and defeating evil, so reconciling us with God.



The bodily resurrection of Christ, the first fruits of our resurrection; his ascension to the Father, and his reign and mediation as the only Saviour of the world.



The justification of sinners solely by the grace of God through faith in Christ.



The ministry of God the Holy Spirit, who leads us to repentance, unites us with Christ through new birth, empowers our discipleship and enables our witness.



The church, the body of Christ both local and universal, the priesthood of all believers – given life by the Spirit and endowed with the Spirit's gifts to worship God and proclaim the gospel, promoting justice and love.



The personal and visible return of Jesus Christ to fulfill the purposes of God, who will raise all people to judgement, bring eternal life to the redeemed and eternal condemnation to the lost, and establish a new heaven and new earth.

