

Reporting

This month's *TCF News* has a reporting theme with the President, Secretary and Treasurer all reporting on TCF for 2017. There is also an important notice about this year's *Getaway* at a different time and location.

Reporting is a very important part of any enterprise because it is one method of accountability. Schools also need to report on student achievement to parents and through NAPLAN on literacy and numeracy. Recently, there has been much said about NAPLAN, but the problems with school education are deeper, as explained in last month's *TCF News* article *Going backwards: 20+ years of a focus on literacy and numeracy* which is now also on the website. The recent Gonski "blueprint" for change is commented on below as a postscript to the article.

A gong for Gonski

In the last *TCF News* I wrote about the problems of school education and what might be needed for reform, *Going backwards: 20+ years of a focus on literacy and numeracy*. Since then the Gonski report has been delivered and what a disappointment, given the radical nature of his first report that challenged the funding of schools and the share between sectors.

This report drifts into satisfying the political masters. It gives a "new" direction about individual learning targets expressed in levels of achievement divorced from grade levels. But it maintains the ability of governments to monitor school performance by schools reporting on student achievement of those levels. It retains an unhealthy focus on literacy and numeracy in which the levels of achievement will become the curriculum. It also underestimates the resources needed to change teachers and give them the support they will need. The problems are deeper and more widespread and need a radical multifaceted approach. Changing the assessment system without addressing other issues is a bit like changing deckchairs on the Titanic - watching school education go down from a different perspective.

John Gore

2018 *Getaway*

5th - 7th October at Stanwell Tops Conference Centre

Join us for a relaxing weekend of fun and fellowship at the end of Term 3. Enjoy the peaceful environment and magnificent views of the South Coast. Put this date in your diary and watch for details in the next edition of *TCF News*.

President's Report

Romans 1 (NIV)

¹Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus, called to be an apostle and set apart for the gospel of God— ²the gospel he promised beforehand through his prophets in the Holy Scriptures ³regarding his Son, who as to his earthly life was a descendant of David, ⁴and who through the Spirit of holiness was appointed the Son of God in power by his resurrection from the dead: Jesus Christ our Lord. ⁵Through him we received grace and apostleship to call all the Gentiles to the obedience

that comes from faith for his name's sake. ⁶ And you also are among those Gentiles who are called to belong to Jesus Christ.

¹⁴ I am obligated both to Greeks and non-Greeks, both to the wise and the foolish. ¹⁵ That is why I am so eager to preach the gospel also to you who are in Rome.

¹⁶ For I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God that brings salvation to everyone who believes: first to the Jew, then to the Gentile. ¹⁷ For in the gospel the righteousness of God is revealed—a righteousness that is by faith from first to last, just as it is written: “The righteous will live by faith.”

Paul understood the imperative to witness. He knew he had an obligation to preach the good news to non-Jews and Jews, Greeks and non-Greeks. And as we too are among those Gentiles (or the non-Gentiles) called to belong to Jesus Christ, we also have an obligation to call others to faith. People need to see our actions but also hear us speak. Declining to ever speak about Jesus at school is to deny him. TCF is about encouraging Christian teachers to share their faith and grow in obedience to Jesus Christ as Lord. This is our aim in a world, which often denies the existence of God and even represses those who express such a faith. We need to spur one another on to be faithful Christian teachers.

Teaching is a unique opportunity afforded to us to witness to students over long periods of time. It often calls for responses of love and forgiveness towards our students (and colleagues) - an unnatural response to adopt and sustain. Insults and disobedience in the classroom must of course be challenged but without taking vindictive retribution. Sharing your faith with students is possible but without manipulative control and within the directives of different school systems.

As Christians we see the curriculum very differently as well. Teaching children to read, for instance, is also supporting them in being able to read the *Word of God* for themselves. Training in critical thinking about life and the world will give students the skills to see the world as it really is but with hope rather than despair. Studying the design of the natural world will show God's hand of creation, while its decay will point to the need for its renewal. Revealing the perfect order of mathematics can lead to the perfection of God. Looking at the events of history will show the limited achievements and failings of mankind, crying out for a Saviour.

As a teacher you know some of the daily difficulties and challenges that your colleagues face. Therefore, you can provide support and an understanding Christian response. You are the one on the spot who can appreciate how difficult some classes and particular individuals are to teach, or the demands of the system and specific supervisors. You do know that the issue at heart is sin, as well as the practical steps that might be appropriate to take. Your focus on the problem will often be sharper than non-teaching Christians outside of school. You are the believer on the job, to act and pray.

As a Christian you also seek to honour God by working to serve others and not yourself - putting the good of others first. You are the one who should be willing to take on some of the thankless tasks as well as the glory ones. Your colleagues will know that you are interested in them and can be trusted. Your supervisors will know that you will diligently carry out their directives to the best of your ability. Over time, they will see that you will seek to honour rather than undermine them.

In all these things we need the support and prayer of other Christians since we are never able to meet the demands of teaching on our own. Fellow Christian teachers can help us in our role. TCF is about providing some of that support and encouragement. The Committee would appreciate your input to do this.

Harley Mills