

Angles

The Magazine of AASSH

Anglican Academy and Secondary School Heads

May 2015



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AASSH CONFERENCE 2015

'Leadership that builds talent and lights fires'

23rd to 25th September 2015

Ramside Hall, Durham

Including guest speakers:

- The Bishop of Durham, the Rt Revd Paul Butler
- Baroness Sally Morgan
- Professor Gerald Pillay (Vice Chancellor Liverpool Hope University)
- Canon Rosalind Brown (Durham Cathedral)
- Revd Nigel Genders (Chief Education Officer and General Secretary National Society)
- The Bishop of Ely, the Rt Revd Stephen Conway

Welcome to Angles May 2015

The theme of this year's Conference was "Christ at the Heart of Leading Change". It was a challenging theme. Generally we're not too happy about change: it's unsettling to find they've changed the goalposts, altered the rules, and even re-designed the field. The great Conservative Prime Minister Lord Salisbury summed it up. "Who wants change? Things are bad enough as it is."

But our Conference speakers were clear: Christ embraces change. As Stephen Kurtz makes plain in his inspiring keynote address, everything Jesus did and said was about bringing about change so that "your will be done on earth as in heaven". Change lies at the heart of Christian hope.

What does that say about the way we lead our schools?

Canon Anthony Cane, speaking of the journey of faith at the Conference Eucharist, helpfully compares the rucksack of things we expect we'll need for the road - our vision, pre-conceptions and plans - with the actual challenges

we find en route. He pictures Jesus also having to adapt his own sense of mission as he travels on the road that leads to death and resurrection.

Elsewhere, Irene Bishop tells her own story of growing up against the odds, Bishop John Pritchard gives an anecdote about meeting the Messiah, Trevor Cooling challenges us to explore a Christian pedagogy, and Paul Kennedy speaks of starting out as a new Head, and Alasdair about life after Headship.

The election is unlikely to stop the pace of change. But I hope you find in this edition of Angles plenty to challenge as well as encourage you on the journey.

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Making all things new: change and renewal in school, city and self

By Stephen Kurtz

1. Introduction: The Challenge of Change

I am passionate about church schools and their unique potential, and, as a former Church school pupil, teacher, governor and parent I believe in their unique power to shape and change lives - not just of pupils but teachers, support staff and the communities in which they are located.

Churches are not especially noted for doing change well. But the truth is that the leadership of any Christian organisation - be it a church or a school - is actually all about being agents of change, specifically the change of *new creation*.

This phrase in the title: 'Making all things new' occurs in Revelation 21 and the biblical theology of new creation deals with the *true* nature of the Christian hope. This theology can dramatically shape both the agenda of our Christian schools and the way in which we go about

implementing that agenda.

But ask pretty much any Christian or indeed non-Christian what the Christian hope is that you are much guaranteed to get one answer: 'Going to heaven when you die'. This confusion and vague thinking about the idea of Christian hope results in Christian schools not being nearly as effective as they could be and missing trick after trick in terms of integrating their Christian faith to every other aspect of school life.

What I've come to realise (and chiefly with the help of biblical scholar Tom Wright) is that 'going to heaven when you die' is, at best, inadequate short-hand for the Christian hope presented to us in the Bible and doesn't get anywhere near its full richness. And that if we can see what is there *instead*, it changes everything. So what is there instead?

The Biblical picture of the Christian hope is that of New Creation, of a New Heavens and a New Earth

and Resurrection at its heart. Get that straight and it becomes much clearer *why* the Christian agenda is 'Your Kingdom come ... on *earth* as in heaven'. And from that point we then find loads of *connections* to this issue of bringing about change in our schools.

So how do we get this picture of the Christian hope clear in our heads? Here are the basic building blocks...

First, we must shift from the way in which we often understand the relationship between heaven and earth. The Enlightenment gave us a cosmology that said that if God and heaven exist at all they are far removed from the earth, with God having pretty much left us to our own devices. That remains the assumption of a lot of people, including, I think, most western Christians. Even charismatic Christians when they pray for God to intervene are unwittingly buying into that paradigm.

But the *biblical picture* of the

cosmos is very different. The Bible presents Earth and Heaven, rather than being far away from one another, as equally present realities that interlock and intersect. Earth is that dimension of present reality we most obviously experience; Heaven is equally part of present reality but contains the spiritual realities that surround us all the time but which, normally speaking, we don't see. Earth and Heaven are not faraway places but present realities.

Once we've got that clear, we can then see that the whole of the Bible is about God's project to bring these two realities of heaven and earth more fully together. The story of Israel in the Old Testament shows God starting the process that will lead to this. So the Temple in Jerusalem is established as that special place where heaven and earth intersect and God's presence can be found. At other points in the Old Testament story the veil between heaven and earth is drawn

back and people like Jacob or Elisha or Isaiah are able to see those spiritual realities that are around them but normally hidden. Things in the story of Israel of course go badly wrong but that hope remains of God fulfilling his plan by coming in person to restore that creation, to bring together, fully and finally, heaven and earth so that, as the prophet Isaiah says 'the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the LORD as the waters cover the sea!'

For Christians this supremely occurs with the coming of Jesus Christ.

That's why Jesus so often spoke about bringing the kingdom of heaven or God, bringing God's sovereign rule to earth as *it was in heaven*. That's what Jesus' healings and other signs were all about - they were signs the life of heaven breaking into the earth. The supreme sign of God's future breaking in through Jesus was his resurrection from the dead when in his very person God's new creation broke into this world, changing it forever. When Jesus ascended into heaven forty days later it was so God's Spirit could then be *everywhere* bringing more of God's sovereign rule, more of his new creation into the world, more of his live-giving transforming change through his followers. The Holy Spirit is given, in other



words, to make us agents of that new creation, agents of this Godly change - people in and through whom this new life continues to break into this world.

The Christian hope is that God will one day complete the process of new creation. Romans 8¹, Corinthians 15¹, Thessalonians 4 and Revelation 21 tell us that Jesus will one day return, the dead will be raised with those belonging to Jesus given new resurrection bodies precisely in order to enjoy to the full that creation that has simultaneously been totally renewed and restored. Resurrection, New Creation, New Heavens and New Earth - that's the Christian hope and understanding it

changes everything about the way we run our Christian schools.

2. How do we respond to this re-cast picture of the Christian Hope?

It's my belief that this view of Christian hope changes *everything* because of the clarification it brings to the Christian agenda. If a school understands the Christian hope to be that of 'going to heaven when you die' it will struggle to integrate its Christianity with the other aspects of its school life. Art, music, drama and academic work will stand *alongside* its Christian ethos rather than embedded within it. But when

the more biblical understanding of the Christian hope - of 'new creation', of 'new heavens, new earth' - that integration suddenly becomes much easier and more natural. How might this be true in our Christian schools?

In the first place it gives theological depth to the desire for people to develop their full potential. Most schools want this, but what gives Christian schools a huge advantage is our vision of the *resurrection*. Resurrection is about people becoming one day, fully and finally what God made them to be. So, St Paul and others in the New Testament call upon followers of Jesus to do everything possible to allow the Spirit to change them in the present towards that person that God is one day going to make them fully and finally in the New Creation. At the school attached to my church we've recently gone over to the strap line '*Becoming the People God made us to be*'. Everyone in school - pupils, staff and support staff - are encouraged to discover and foster their unique gifts and talents as they work towards becoming that person God will one day make them in their entirety. We are establishing the ethos of the school as a whole as everyone constantly changes to become steadily more and more

the place and the people that God made them to be.

Second, this sharpening up of our understanding of the Christian hope provides a far more holistic approach to school life.

We're told that God made the world and declared that it was good, and gave it to human beings to steward and rule over. The very reason he sent Jesus and the Holy Spirit is so that we could be restored into people who could finally *fulfil* this calling. And once we grasp this, we can see how every single part of our school's life - from its sport to its art to its maths to its science - can be seen as teaching our young people to worship God because it *all* forms part of the good creation that God has entrusted to us and provides us with Holy Spirit to do better. So Sports Day, School Concerts, Musicals and Plays and even (or particularly) Exam Time take their place within the worship which we are called to offer to the God who made us and is changing us into the people he made us to be.

Third, a theology of new creation gives weight to *Christian communities* living as advanced signs of the future which God intends for his world.

The New Testament vision for God's future is of one, united people - of every age and colour

and social class - working and stewarding God's good world. The Christian community anticipates that reconciliation through its relationships now. That's why assemblies and collective worship are so vital as well as celebrations on occasions such as End of Term services and Carol Services, and particularly Eucharists or Communion services. The sacraments make total sense in the context of God taking parts of the present creation and, with his people gathered in community, filling the bread and wine and those gathered together with his presence as advance signs of that future which he is one day going to bring when the whole of creation will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the LORD as the waters cover the sea. And that's the perfect context for leading a school forward in the various challenges it faces.

This sets a clear agenda for change in our schools: every single bit of change in a Christian school should be able to be justified on the basis of it bringing a little bit more of God's future for this world into the present, and in particular encouraging every person within that school to be led by God's Spirit into becoming, more fully, that person God made them to be.





3. What is the Head Teacher's role in all this?

The school's principal theologian.

That might sound a bit grand and intimidating as well as potentially undercutting your chaplain or head of Religious Studies! But I do believe it's vital that the overall leader of the school is able to articulate its Christian vision in a clear and practical manner, and offer a running commentary of how all the different aspects of school life take their place within this vision. It's actually less about conveying complex theology than having a clear grasp of 'how God is going to make it all end up'. It's about having the imagination to see where God is leading the school and the words to articulate this. Constantly explaining and interpreting to the school community how each and every part of its life relates to this overall vision is, I think, a particular challenge but also a wonderful privilege that is given to the Head Teachers of Christian Schools.

The role of being an encourager:

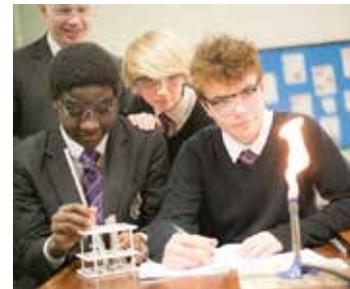
perhaps the most important role for a Head Teacher - and any leader - particularly if she or he is going to introduce change effectively. And once again, against the background of new creation encouragement

takes on both a charismatic and sacramental nature. It's *charismatic* because it's about being given a vision of what the school or individual pupil or teacher or member of the support staff is intended to become by God in the new creation. It's *sacramental* because it's about being given words by God that work to bring some of that future into the present. Encouragement is about giving people the courage to become more fully that person whom God made them to be - often by responding well to the challenge to change - and if Head Teachers could become better at this - particularly with their staff as much as pupils - our schools can be transformed.

But you need to be pretty secure to be able to do either of these tasks effectively, which leads to my last point.

Be an example of change yourself.

If a Head Teacher is going to lead change effectively within a Christian school, she or he has also got to embody that change towards what God intends *us* personally to be in the New Creation rather than just promote it. That includes making time to prioritise your own spiritual growth into the person God made you to be. But it's not just personal and private because being prepared to share with your staff and pupils



and students your own development as a person and being honest about challenges and opportunities is, I think, an effective way of modelling what you are seeking to promote.

Conclusion

So, Christ at the heart of leading change? There's much more, very obviously that could be said. It's primarily about being so clear about the vision that God has given us for the Christian hope of 'New Heavens, New Earth' that we are able to lead and encourage these Christian communities called Schools to being places where God's Kingdom comes 'on earth as it is in heaven' ahead of that day when Jesus returns, the New Creation is made complete and the whole 'earth is filled with the knowledge of the glory of the LORD as the waters cover the sea'.

Taking the leap

Paul Kennedy gives his thoughts on taking on headship

Whenever I talked to a Headteacher about making that step myself they all said the jump from Deputy Headship to Headship is the biggest one you will ever make. It sounded a bit like explaining to a Year 11 student how hard AS courses were going to be. And, much like a Year 11 student, I didn't believe them! I loved being a Deputy Head and thought I had seen and heard most things that would face me as a Head.

I was appointed two and a half years ago and can now say they were right! Holy Trinity is an 11-18 mixed comprehensive in Crawley and we face the issues that urban schools do. We are multi-faith, multi-ethnic, multi-language, multi-pretty- much-anything-



you-can-think-of, and we are not oversubscribed by any means. The school had been judged 'satisfactory' three years before I arrived and we were inspected within my first six months and 'required improvement'. The drive

for improvement was the priority. Could I manage this and retain the Christian ethos, balance all those things that make us an outstanding Church School and raise standards quickly? You are probably all shouting "YES!" But with the

loaded RI gun aimed at you and GCSE results dipping, it is difficult remain focused.

As a new Head I think that was the biggest challenge I faced.

Not all new Heads will face this particular challenge, but someone or something will challenge you very quickly. I had never experienced a change of Headteacher in any school I worked in. It is an unusual event. Colleagues will be used to the old Headteacher, good or bad; some will want the status quo as 'we don't do change here'; others will be longing for a fresh start. Decide what the school has that you will never let go, what you are willing to compromise on, and what you want to change. This takes time: do not be afraid to take stock for as long as you need to. I watched and listened for my first half term



and only intervened if necessary. The urgent headlines of day-to-day school came and went but I learnt the common themes that ran through the school. These themes are where you will make the difference.

Finally, I think it is natural to be overwhelmed at first! You may be in a school you have never worked at before arriving as its Head. Everyone assumes you know everything already, even what the pink form B72 is for and where Room G16 is. Don't be afraid to say, "I don't know" and ask for help. Contact other local Heads, go and have a coffee - they

have all been there. You must also remember that you were not appointed by chance but because you are a skilled professional who can do the job! Pray hard and trust your judgment, you'll get it right most of the time. When you don't, say sorry and start again!

It is a big jump but one that is worth taking!

“Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be frightened, and do not be dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go.”

Joshua 1⁹

Grasping the nettle - meeting the Messiah

By Bishop John Pritchard

In this series Bishop John has been considering the kind of people we want our pupils to be when they leave school. The first article explored a framework of values rooted in the Christian faith. Here, he considers the second characteristic he would like to see nurtured in our young people: the ability to live well with others.

‘How then shall we live?’ is the crucial question in our crowded planet with its irascible population and exhausted environment. We have to live well with others or we shall die badly with each other. Our society is radically fragmented with everyone doing what’s right in their own eyes, and doing it by themselves, in front of a screen, joined at the hip (or ear) to a smartphone, and watching four hours of TV a day. But there are big issues out there - like survival, global security, cyber warfare, climate change, financial meltdown and so on. I have

four little grandchildren of 6 and under and as I look at them I think they may well be alive in 2100, and what kind of world will it be then?

Your schools are the laboratories and testing grounds for that future, and I know you care about that very much. You want to help your pupils live life on a larger map. We’re looking for a humane, sustainable society where people live together in peace and care about the common good. Even here, according to the Children’s Society, in the UK there are 3.5 million children living in poverty (after housing costs have been deducted.) At 27% that’s one of the worst levels of child poverty in the industrialised world. And 3 million children still die of malnutrition

every year around the world. Where’s the common good in that?

But I’m amazed at what I hear from schools and academies about the charitable work that our young people get up to. The planes flying to Africa must be full to bursting with young people going to build a school room in Uganda or help AIDs orphans in Lesotho. There are deep wells of compassion within every young person. And what you do is release that energy and help it become a habit, before the tentacles of a consumer society have persuaded them that all success is measured in money and competition is the way to get it. Competition has its place but it seems to dominate every area of life now. Heart bypass: ‘Double or triple?’ Competition can run

amok. But collaboration is another way to flourish. Recognising the irreducible value of every human life is another way to flourish. Loving your neighbour is another way to flourish.

Here’s a story: There was a monastery which had reached a very low ebb. The monks argued and didn’t pray well or work well together. It was an unhappy place and no novices wanted to join. So the abbot went off to consult his spiritual director about what they should do. They talked all day and didn’t get very far, but as the abbot was leaving his spiritual director said, ‘I don’t know what you should do, I’m afraid, but I can tell you one thing: the Messiah is living among you.’ This astonished the abbot. The Messiah had returned and was



living amongst them - amazing! So he went back and told the other brothers. They were puzzled at this information, of course. Who was it? Which one of this unlikely lot? Or could it even be me? So they began to treat each other with new respect and kindness - after all, the other person might be the Messiah. And bit by bit the quality of community improved - there was a new atmosphere of generosity and graciousness. There was laughter again, and joy, as they served each other and gave each their dignity. Novices were attracted again, and the monastery flourished. But they never did discover which of them was the Messiah.

How then shall we live? Perhaps as if everyone we meet is the Messiah. The old Benedictine way - receive everyone as Christ. Not an easy message to get across to the average youngster in Year 10, but we nevertheless need to affirm the depth and value of every human life, as made in the image of God. Our pupils should emerge with the ability to live well with others. There's no GCSE in it, but it's vital in an Anglican education.

Christ at the heart of leading change

Ecclesiastes 3:1-11 and Luke 9:18-22

This is Canon Anthony Cane's edited address to the AASSH Conference at their Eucharist on 26 September 2014.

What might our Eucharist readings say for Headteachers today?

Ecclesiastes 3 makes us ponder what kind of time this is, for us and our schools, and indeed what our underlying approach to time might be. Luke 9, a little less obviously, might make us ponder the difference between what is given, and what is found. Jesus walks the roads of Galilee with a particular God-given mission, which he then works out in relation to what he finds on the way: a whole series of diverse encounters requiring a variety of responses.

The interrelationship of the given and the found, or, what is in your backpack as compared with what you come across on the road, is I

suggest fundamental to your role as Headteachers.

But first, what of our Ecclesiastes reading? Is this a time for weeping, or for laughing? And what is your underlying attitude to time?

I picture you in your office on a day when it has all gone wrong. An intractable staffing issue, perhaps. Unsupportive governors, impossible parents, and difficult pupils. Looking out of your window, your school feels like a prison, your situation catastrophic. Fortunately not every day is like this. Sometimes you can see clearly how your school to be, and have a clear sense of the steps to get there. The view from your window feels hopeful and sustaining.

As you proceed to implement your strategies, sometimes it may

be hard to maintain your morale. Will I ever be able to win over that group of staff? Is this plan really going to work? Will I be found wanting in some way? You have to steel yourself in the discipline of patience and above all, faith - faith that you really will get there. As you look out of your window, you find yourself praying and wishing for a shortcut, that somehow everything could come right in an instant; in essence, that God's kingdom (rather than OFSTED) would come. One morning, you witness a lesson which exemplifies everything you hoped education could be. The teaching is inspired, students visibly excited by what they are learning. Your mood is now not one of frustration or impatience, but of thankfulness for being involved in such a wonderful enterprise.

You realise that these different experiences at work, are relevant to all of your life. For all of life, not only school life, takes place within certain limitations of space, resources and time.

So what is your attitude to time? 'What are days for?' as the poet Philip Larkin asked. There is much to despair of in human life, and the Christian faith is not about turning away from that. But Christianity is also about purposeful action in tune with what we have seen in Jesus Christ, about waiting for what God has yet to reveal to us, and about the beauty and wonder that is our ultimate destination, of which we are sometimes given glimpses now.

As Heads, you carry with you a distilled sense of what education is, what schools should be, and

you have a job to do. This is what I mean, moving to Luke 9, by the 'given'. Day-by-day you seek to make your educational vision a reality - in an ever-changing context, both locally and nationally. You may find that what you thought you knew has to be adjusted according to experience. Sometimes this feels like unwanted compromise. But the experience of such adjustment, as what is given interrelates with what is found, is intrinsic to Christian discipleship. It was part of Jesus' experience too.

'Christ is at the heart of leading change.' In that case we'd better know who he is, and how he operated. In Matthew 16, Jesus asks two questions about identity. Some in the crowds think he is Elijah - not so wide of the mark, for Elijah is the one whose coming means the Messiah is near. Peter, however, affirms that Jesus is the Messiah and it shocks him when Jesus then speaks of suffering and death.



The Jesus thus addressing Peter is assured; his understanding of his God-given mission seems complete. But it is not always so. In Mark 7 he tells a woman that he has been sent only to the people of Israel, and so cannot heal her daughter, a foreigner.

Given things, it seems, will come up against found things. Jesus comes up against a mother who will not give up, and he has to decide if this is of God, or not. And if it is, he will need to readjust his understanding of what he is about, and achieve a fresh integration of the found with the given. In conversation with the persistent woman, he has a significant change of heart - salvation may be extended to the Gentiles after all.

It may be that the significant educational changes of recent years have required adjustment on your part. You have had to consider what really is non-negotiable in your educational approach, while remaining open to what may be being revealed for good in the new educational landscape.

This is tricky territory. Earlier this week, I heard Anne Holt, our new

Diocesan Director of Education, say that for her the fundamental responsibility for the education of children properly belongs with parents and communities. I agree with her, and yet for me that immediately raises



questions about the increased power of both the secretary of state, and academy chains aspiring to control large number of schools. A visiting professor of education recently suggested that academies and free schools

are leading to 'fragmentation, favouritism and failure'. Others want to argue that on the contrary, increased autonomy and independence are enabling schools to take responsibility and improve standards.

celebrate the wondrous process of learning at the heart of what our schools are about.

In all this, staying focused on the Christ who is at the heart of leading change, requires a proper integration of the given and the found. If what you experience on the road, if what you find, overwhelms your hard-won educational principles, something has gone badly wrong. If on the other hand, what and who you encounter on the way never cause you to rethink, never teaches you anything new, then things have gone awry in a different way.

So is this a time to weep, or a time to laugh; a time to break down or build up? Or all of the above simultaneously? What a privilege to lead church schools with Christ at their heart, the Christ who is both sent by God, and also ready to find God in all he encounters on the road. The Christ ready to face the suffering of which he spoke to Peter and the resurrected Christ who goes on ahead of us, calling us home. To Him be the glory, now and always.

AMEN

Embedding an Anglican Ethos

Andrew Day The Northumberland Church of England Academy.

Our Anglican ethos is central to the improvement of the Academy. Our Chaplain is pivotal to the process - our strapline “Inspiring achievement; Encouraging compassion”, and the values that emanate from that, are at the heart of instilling in our children and our staff a sense of purpose and an understanding of the purpose of God in our community.

The Academy, previously ten schools - first, middle, secondary and special, was established by the Church of England in partnership with the Duke of Northumberland's Estates, to provide education in Ashington, Newbiggin-by-the-Sea and Lynemouth, areas of significant disadvantage. The predecessor

schools had, for most, underperformed in the years prior to the Academy and were failing to meet fully the needs of the communities they served. Two of those schools were Church of England schools, but the rest were not; work has had to be done to assimilate them into the family of Church of England schools. The Academy exists on six sites across the three towns and straddles three parishes and two constituencies.

It has been the Christian ethos and the values of kindness, forgiveness, humility, bravery, determination, honesty and responsibility that have reinforced all that we do to improve. It is these values which we espouse that enable the discussions that nurture the behaviours we need and inspire all of us to be the best we can be.

Our Christian practice has developed during the year

starting with every major event being an Act of Worship, an opportunity for the Academy to celebrate, in Christ, its successes and achievements. We have not adopted a proselytising approach, preferring to witness the transformative power of Christ through daily acts of worship, Morning Prayer, Eucharists, Easter and Christmas celebrations. Our houses are named after some of the Northumbrian saints (Aidan, Cuthbert, Hild and Oswald); their feast days become a period of reflection on the works that they performed to spread the Christian message.

Our parish priests play an active role in the life of the Academy - they are a presence on all of the campuses and their churches are often an extension of the Academy's worshipping life. Indeed, in one case, one of the Academy's campuses has become the church!

Our children are accustomed to the Bishop of Newcastle being a regular visitor to the Academy - indeed in one week this year, we had no fewer than three bishops visit. Our Christian witness through Religious Education has also been delivered through new project work on “Landscapes in Faith” - a reflection on the landscapes, buildings and people that shaped the Christian world of the North East

The impact of an unobtrusive, yet firmly held and overtly witnessed Christian message has been that our parents, students and staff feel able to ask for prayers, confirmation classes, retreats, and some have gradually been drawn back to worship in their own churches. The Academy is charged with being a catalyst for change in our community - our Christian focus is imperative to that!

Out of the Depths

In her second article, recently-retired Headteacher Irene Bishop describes the power of education to transform the most disadvantaged lives as she turns around a failed school.

Our next battle was with the hearts and minds of the community to increase the number of students wanting to come to the school.

However, in September a Vice-Principal started who had been appointed by the outgoing Principal. She was very keen to be involved with behaviour - and was seen as part of the solution. She had been at the school for just three weeks - fifteen days - when she spoke publicly about the "broken education system failing children". The press discovered that she was keeping a blog about awful behaviour in other schools as well as this one. I won't go into detail but suffice to say that there was a hugely negative impact on the academy - particularly in the local press - just at the time that children and parents were choosing their secondary school.

In her speech and in the media since, she has accused schools of keeping poor children poor. Certainly

there is an attitude in some schools and by some teachers where there is an excuses culture that these children can't be helped - "it's the fault of their background, what can you expect, etc..." But I believe that the vast majority of people in education would agree with me that being poor or living on a council estate doesn't mean you don't have talent or academic ability, although it might mean that it is not nurtured. Society doesn't always see us as having equal value and that can make life harder for some people than others.

I would like to tell you one person's story of how education can overcome poverty and deprivation. It is a true story.

Renee was one of fourteen children. Her parents were unable to cope so all but the eldest and the youngest were placed in a children's home where they also received their education. It was a cruel place where children were beaten and allowed no individuality. Once Renee

and her friend decided that they wanted to curl their hair - so they used rags to make ringlets. The person in charge was so angry that she cut their hair very very short and told them that styling their hair was vanity and a sin.

Renee left school at 14 and worked in a factory. She met a soldier and they married and had two children, a boy and a girl. Sadly the father was abusive and his violence damaged his little boy so that he was left permanently deaf. Then Renee was abandoned and left to raise her two children (the youngest only 15 months old) as a single parent. Renee was very poor and constantly ill so that the two children spent some of their childhood in care, many times with foster parents and sometimes in children's homes. Sometimes the children were kept together - but other times they were sent to different places. One time when their mum was taken into hospital her son was sent to carers and the little girl was sent to a children's home on her own. It

was her birthday - she was six years old. She was shown to a dormitory - eight beds each side and a locker - put her new birthday presents away in her locker - a doll, a box of sweets and a book. After tea she went to her locker but everything had gone. She was very upset and thought it had been stolen - but when she asked she was told that the staff had taken the presents away because everybody had to share - the sweets had been shared out already, the doll was in the toy corner and the book with others on a shelf. Then she was told off for being selfish. Other things happened which were really horrible and unkind. She wrote to her mum saying she was unhappy, didn't like the place and wanted to come home. When eventually her mum was back from hospital and they were re-united she asked why her mum had not helped her. Renee showed her the letter that she had sent. It was full of crossings out where the staff had changed what had been written. So they had a special signal from then on - a

circle of kisses with a kiss in the middle - meant please rescue me.

But after that time it never had to be used and most of the carers were really kind. As soon as Renee was well she would have the children home again. She loved them fiercely and was determined that their poverty-stricken circumstances should have no effect on their chances in life.

The three of them lived in a slum dwelling, a Victorian tenement building in South East London. Five families in one house, one on each floor - no electricity (only gas lighting) and no running hot water. There was an outside tap and one toilet down three flights of stairs shared by all the families. No bathroom of course so bathtime was a tin bath in the living room - the water heated on the gas cooker in aluminium buckets and shared with the youngest using it first, then the eldest, then Renee.

It was a very hard life. But Renee had faith - she believed in God, she believed in Education and she believed in her children. She had a vision for the future. Her daughter was an avid reader who would spend every waking minute from the age of 3 with her nose in a book.

Renee believed in her children and would tell people that her children would go to university. Renee believed passionately in the power of education and used her meagre salary as a cleaner to buy books and even an encyclopædia - even though they had barely enough to eat. Some said it was a waste and that she should make her children leave school and get a job, bring money into the home. But she was adamant. Sadly Renee continued to be ill this time with cancer. Her children, now teenagers, looked after themselves. But even when she was in hospital for months at a time she would insist that her daughter brought her schoolwork to the hospital to show her.

The son and daughter did indeed go to University. Both Renee's dreams were realised - but, sadly she never knew, because she died at the age of 46 when her children were still teenagers and before they had finished their schooling.

I am convinced of the power of education because I am that daughter - I was that little girl. Education gave me mobility; education gave me choice; education made me what I am today. Teaching is my life. As a teacher I know that I have made a

difference to children in my care, and as a Headteacher my aim has been to empower my teachers to make a difference to even more young people. After my mother died I was taken in by a young couple from our church who had three young children of their own. But as part of a loving community they gave me support and hope - what a difference they made to my life and achievements! - because they believed in education and they believed in me.

There are very many Heads and teachers who are working against the odds in challenging situations. Doing their best for the young people in their care. Striving to make a difference and improve the life chances of their students. But if you take notice of the media (and others who should know better) you would think most schools are failing their children.

Ofsted came to call at the academy just under a year after I first walked into the school. On the day that the inspector phoned we also had the news that one of our students had been killed the night before. The second student in six months to have been killed through gang violence.

Even in those circumstances and after a horrendous year - the improvements were obvious. The inspector proclaimed that the academy was a Good school with several outstanding features - they said that they saw no incidents of bad behaviour and that it was a pleasant place to be. The Ofsted report was glowing and gave affirmation to all of us. Now staff and students can be confident that they are part of a success story rather than a failure. They feel affirmed. I have nothing but admiration for them.

It is belief that helped us to turn the school around -

Belief in the staff

Belief in the children

Belief that we could do it

- underpinned by our faith in God which has kept us going even at the bleakest of times.

I look back at my two schools now that I have retired as my two children, my baby and my adopted teenager. I love them both and feel immensely privileged to have had the opportunity to work with wonderful staff and students. And I thank God.

Christian Ethos in Schools

By Trevor Cooling

The Church of England's Chadwick Review enunciated the challenging aspiration that a distinctively Christian ethos should permeate all aspects of school life.

Unfortunately the available research suggests that in reality we may be primarily responding to the latest government agenda, albeit that we appear to do that a little better than other schools. There are indeed good examples of Christian ethos influencing the culture of the school (e.g. in worship) and the curriculum (e.g. in religious education), but little attention has been given to pedagogy, which Robin Alexander has described as “the heart of the enterprise”. Ultimately it is the teacher’s approach to pedagogy that shapes the students’ experience of learning.

What If Learning (WIL) is a contribution towards developing a distinctively Christian pedagogy, which is for all teachers whatever their subject discipline (www.whatiflearning.co.uk). It is inspired by the work of David Smith who spent the early part of his career teaching modern foreign languages (MFL) in Derbyshire secondary schools and is now an internationally renowned academic teaching at Calvin College in the USA. The transition between these two roles was facilitated by a PhD at London University on spiritual development in MFL.

David’s interest in pedagogy was sparked by the early realisation that much of what he was achieving as a Christian MFL teacher was to prepare students for being effective tourists. Most of the activities that students engaged in

focussed on their being able to get what they wanted from awkward people who didn’t speak English whilst on holiday in their country. David has spent his career since seeking to offer a more Christian vision of MFL teaching which puts Christian concepts like hospitality at the heart of the pedagogy. The key to his approach is a renewed vision of MFL teaching alongside developing classroom practices that are designed to induct the students into that vision. For example, if MFL is re-envisioned as learning how to offer hospitality to the foreign language speaker, then one change of practice might be to focus student activities on the art of welcoming conversation rather than on survival as a tourist.

WIL is a resource that makes this approach accessible to all subject teachers. There are three steps.

1. Seeing anew which is the re-envisioning of the subject’s rationale.
2. Choosing engagement which focuses on the activities that students engage in.
3. Reshaping practice which focuses on the teacher’s own “habits of the classroom”. For example, David stopped using cartoons of foreign language speakers, which tend to stereotype, and instead used photographs of people in situations of human interaction.

Two questions are central to the WIL approach:

1. What sort of person do I hope will emerge from the experience of learning in my classroom?
2. What will my student’s imagine they are doing this subject for?



In a recent research project, we investigated how 14 secondary church school teachers used WIL. The main findings will be available in December and a book will appear in 2015. I will close with one example from a boys' PE teacher. When asked what they thought they were

doing in his lesson on the push pass in hockey, the students said "we were learning how to encourage someone else". The teacher had explained to us that he was perturbed at the impact of professional football culture on the students with its emphasis on personal glory. He wanted church

school PE to offer alternative virtues. So he decided to emphasize the role of PE in learning how to coach. In the lesson on the push pass, this was enacted by asking students to focus on teaching someone else how to make a pass, with their learning task being to note the strategy used to

encourage their partner in their learning.

Trevor Cooling is Professor of Christian Learning at Canterbury Christ Church University. For information about CPD on What If Learning contact him at trevor.cooling@canterbury.ac.uk.

And after Headship?

Alasdair Coates offers some salutary advice about retirement.



Don't do it my way.

A year into retirement, I can't tell anyone the right way to do it. Retirement is going to be different for everyone.

Retirement, for me, is an out-dated concept. After 21 years as an Anglican Secondary Head, ending with an over-subscribed 11-18 OfSTED Outstanding institution with nearly 1400 students and 200 staff, leaving was like falling off a cliff. Emotionally, it hit me hard. From 100 emails a day, numerous phone calls, knocks at the door, meetings in corridors - you know what it's like - to nothing, overnight. You can't gradually wind down as a Head - or I couldn't. Although thinking I was braced for it, with the most wonderful send-off anyone could have had, I was lost. Suddenly, having been at the hub of so much,

I was nobody. In fact, living at a distance from school, so bound up in school life that I had neglected relationships at church and in my own community, I found I was Harriet's husband, not even a person in my own right!

Method 1, continuing to use one's skills, was what I turned to, fondly believing that I still had something to give, and finding in Manchester Diocese a willing partner which made me feel very welcome very quickly. I am now a Diocesan Secondary Adviser operating on a consultancy basis, which occupies me about three days a week, though it varies. That, and my duties serving as a JP on the local bench, keeps me from under my wife's feet, but, more importantly (to me!), gives me a sense of purpose. This is not to be under-estimated, because I was in danger of feeling for a time as if my useful life had come to an end, a depressing outlook that was totally new to me. I had been told to prepare myself for retirement, and had tried to, even going on a course which made various practical suggestions, most of which I felt

weren't for me. Whilst this is, I am sure, the way to try to prepare one's self, I don't know what could have prepared me for the mental impact.

Method 2 was that of my closest colleague-Head, who retired a year before me. He threw away his working suits, dusted off his novels and sat down in his conservatory

daily swimming, attends Spanish classes every Tuesday morning, and is revelling in having time to himself. Perhaps one might call this proper, traditional retirement. It might even be right for me at some point.

One certainty is the need for good financial planning. You know you have a good pension, and may think

annual pension by £1 for every £12 taken. Those retiring think this would take only 12 years to be better off, but by the time you have paid tax on the £12 pension at 40%, it is more like 20 years. But then add the income you can get from investing the increased lump-sum, and you would never be worse off. Added to the fact that, should you demise in the meantime, your heirs and successors still have the lump sum but would lose half of the pension. Wesleyan is a specialist adviser for teachers, is a mutual and so ploughs back any profit to its members, was founded by the Methodist Church and has an excellent track record.

To be a bit fairer to myself, I have now started to enjoy retirement at last. I am reading more, we have travelled a lot, including a month in New Zealand and Thailand, and we are seeing more of our family and taking on new duties as grandparents. And I am happy to support AASSH however I can, firmly in the background to ensure there is no Yesterday's Man asserting how things used to be...

“Emotionally, it hit me hard. From 100 emails a day, numerous phone calls, knocks at the door, meetings in corridors - you know what it's like - to nothing, overnight.”

to read, and to trawl the internet to find and book foreign holidays, including an early, extended trip to South America. He loved it, and kept ringing me up through my final year at school to tell me how great it was. Another Method Two Head and former close AASSH colleague who has just retired has taken up

you know how to plan your finances. You may not realise that you can hugely increase your income as well as your capital with a wise lump-sum decision. A higher-rate tax-payer in retirement loses 40% of every £ over £42,000. But the lump-sum comes tax-free, and taking more than the standard amount only reduces

Committee Members



Dr Irene Bishop

Associate member
St Saviour's and
St Olave's School

Dr Irene Bishop
CBE has taught in

inner London schools for 42 years. She was Head of St Saviour's and St Olave's School for 19 years until 2013. The school's results have risen from 16.5% 5A* - C after her first term to 78% including English and Maths this year. The last four reports from Ofsted and SIAS declared the school "outstanding".

Dr Bishop's passion is education. She fiercely believes that every child can achieve and that it is schools and teachers that can and should make the difference. She has spoken at a number of conferences in the UK and in South Africa.



Alasdair Coates

Acting Treasurer
St Christopher's C.E.
High School

Alasdair was Head
of St Christopher's,

Accrington for 21 years, founding a Sixth Form, converting to academy and developing a valued spiritual ethos. A consultant for local dioceses, he believes high achievement flows from happiness, high self-esteem and a sense of spiritual purpose.



Andrew Day

Executive Director:
Northumberland
Church of England
Academy

Leads the NCEA,

an all-through, 2 - 19 academy, currently educating 2500 children on five campuses on the Northumberland coast. The academy is jointly sponsored by the Diocese of Newcastle and the Duke of Northumberland. Previously a teacher of English and History in both the independent and state sectors; Principal of an academy in London prior to taking up current post. His wife, Yvette, is the Headmistress of The Chorister School at Durham Cathedral.



Revd Nigel Genders

Church of England's
Chief Education
Officer

As the Church of

England's Chief Education Officer, Nigel has lead responsibility for the development of the Church's strategies and policies for education - in schools, colleges and universities, and in parishes, deaneries and dioceses - to promote the highest quality of educational practice and to promote and support the Church's voluntary work among children and young people.

Nigel was ordained in 1992 and has served in a variety of parishes in London, Southwark and Canterbury Dioceses as an incumbent, area dean, and as a chaplain to two large state secondary schools where he taught 'Beliefs and Values' and led on spiritual development. His passion for the Church's role in education has developed throughout 23 years of ordained ministry. He was Director of Education for Canterbury Diocese from 2008-2012 and Head of School Policy for the Church of England from 2012-2104.



Elisabeth Gilpin

Chair

St Mary Redcliffe and
Temple School at the
Heart of Bristol

Elisabeth Gilpin is Headteacher at St Mary Redcliffe and Temple School at the Heart of Bristol. She was Headteacher of St Augustine of Canterbury Joint Roman Catholic and Church of England school in Oxford. She has taught Science in six other schools in Oxford, Bath and West Sussex. She worked for Oxfordshire Local Authority between Headships as leader of the 'Unlocking Potential' project jointly supported by a Farmington Fellowship at Harris Manchester College, Oxford. She loves salsa dancing.



Kathy Griffiths

Bishop Justus Church
of England School

Kathy is the
founding
Headteacher at

Bishop Justus Church of England School, a large secondary school within the London Borough of Bromley and the Diocese of Rochester. She is also the CEO of the Aquinas Education Trust. Before founding the school in 2004 she was Deputy Headteacher at schools in Bromley and Wandsworth and spent most of her early career teaching in inner London.

Kathy has also worked as an Advisory Teacher, Educational Consultant and Headteacher Professional Partner; she has served on numerous trust boards and advisory groups both locally and nationally and is a Foundation Director at a Church of England primary school.

Currently she divides her time between the Headship of Bishop Justus and leadership of Aquinas where she is responsible for developing the strategic direction and growth of the Aquinas Multi-Academy Trust.

Kathy is married with two children and a regular worshipper at St. Mary's, West Malling in the Diocese of Rochester.



Paul Kennedy

C of E VA Secondary School, Crawley, West Sussex

I became the Headteacher of

Holy Trinity in April 2012 having taught in schools of various flavours: VA, VC, comprehensive and secondary modern in the Bath and Wiltshire area. I was also a National Challenge consultant in the good old days! I am married with three young sons. My passions are music, guitars, Tottenham Hotspur and anything Apple.



Ros McMullen

David Young Community Academy

Ros McMullen is Principal of David Young Community

Academy in Leeds which is highly successful, adding significant value to the achievement of its students. DYCA opened in 2006 replacing 2 of the lowest performing schools in Leeds and it has the highest deprivation indices in Leeds. The Academy is sponsored by the Diocese of Ripon and Leeds. Ros is a catholic and is married with 3 young children. She can't remember what spare time is, but loves family holidays.



Eugene Moriarty **Secretary**

St Augustine's Church of England High School, Kilburn

BA (QTS) - Warwick University /MA Education - University of Hertfordshire/ NPQH - Institute of Education

Eugene is from a London Irish family and began his career as teacher of Physical Education and English. He has always had a keen interest in helping young people with barriers to learning make progress and during his career he has had the roles of SENCO, Teacher in an EBD Special School and Hillingdon LA Behaviour Support Team Manager. He was Deputy Headteacher at Quintin Kynaston School where he led on Inclusion. Eugene is in his sixth year as Headteacher at St Augustine's Church of England High School in Kilburn (Westminster). He has led the school from a good Ofsted in 2009 to Outstanding in September 2013.



Revd Alan Perry

St Edward's CE School and Sixth Form College

I have been the Head teacher of St. Edward's CE School and Sixth Form College since 2008. The school is on the

eastern edge of London in Havering and in Essex. The school serves a large area and we are the most diverse school in Havering. I often refer to the school as an Inner London School in an outer London Borough. St. Edward's was founded in 1710 before the National Society, so we have a very rich history. In 2014 we have started teaching the International Baccalaureate, which is a very exciting development for the school. I have been ordained since 2003 and find the role of Head teacher and Priest both challenging but ultimately very rewarding. I have been happily married to Sue since 1997 and we are both avid travellers and foodies. This year as it is rather a significant date for me, Sue and I spent three weeks in Chile and Argentina. All I can say is the steak and Malbec were sublime. I am on the Committee to ensure that the social side of our conferences, as well of course the intellectual, is of the highest standard.



Julie Roberts **Vice Chair**

Blue Coat Church of England School & Music College

Dr Julie Roberts is Head of Blue Coat Church of England School, Coventry, a mixed 11 - 18 comprehensive of over 1,400 students. Having achieved an 'Outstanding' Ofsted report in February 2010, the school converted to Academy

status in July, 2011. Julie is willing to share her experiences of the conversion process as a Church of England school.



Nick Taunt **Angles Editor**

Bishop Luffa C.E. School

Nick's first 20 years of teaching, from 1980, were in large community comprehensives. In 2000 he became Head of Bishop Luffa C.E. School in Chichester and National Leader of Education in 2010. Three grown-up children now in primary teaching, health and post-grad biochemistry. He has no idea where the science came from: he enjoys music, walking and the allotment.



Andrew Wilcock **Bishop Ramsey C.E. High School**

Andrew's career in teaching has taken him round the M25, starting in Croydon, then Crawley, Leatherhead, Guildford and now Ruislip, North West London where He has been Headteacher of Bishop Ramsey School in Ruislip, since 2002.

He has a wife who writes about food and nutrition, two teenage children and two dogs.



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- The Bishop of Ely, the Rt Revd Stephen Conway

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