

## **TCFNews JUN 2012 Vol 55 No. 3**

### **The President's Report 2012**

The more things change, the more they remain the same in schools. These institutions are still about educating children from teaching the basics of reading and the practicalities of getting along with others to finding a job or career path. However, they do seem to be even more impacted by the demands of Governments for improved results measured by external tests such as NAPLAN; the implementation of new programs such as the 3Ls in kindergarten; the fractious implementation of the ever evolving *National Curriculum*; the demands of new funding models and changes to state employment legislation. Many of these items affect the schools resulting in unbalanced teaching programs and a general shortage of time to do things properly.

The other great change in education has to be the impact of technology with “chalk and talk” replaced by electronic whiteboards and the internet. Digital communication opens up so much of the world to students and fundamentally changes the way we all access information. Teachers are scrambling to integrate the use of personal electronic devices such as *iPads* into their teaching, while the different educational systems struggle to maintain their networks. Chalk and slates may have gone but pencils and paper still have a significant role to play in schools, for now.

Over the next few years the other significant change to schools will be the retirement of 25% of existing teachers. This will open up schools to a cultural change with young, energetic graduates filling our classrooms and maybe some of those very experienced casuals finally securing permanent positions. These teachers will be fresh faces with new ideas, comfortable with digital communication.

In all this, relationships with students, parents and colleagues will still be the critical entry point for Christian teachers to show and explain the difference knowing the Lord Jesus makes to their lives. We are still allowed to witness in schools and give an answer for the faith we have. TCF still has a role to exercise in this education world supporting Christian teachers and in challenging the values and attitudes both directly and indirectly taught in it. We all need to be involved in thinking critically and Christianly, about what we do in schools. Defining our understanding of the issues and working out a response of faith is something Christians need to do in any profession.

Harley Mills