

## Teachers Christian Fellowship - The President's Challenge - 2013

What would you say are the main roles of TCF? Two that come readily to mind are to challenge, and to encourage. To **challenge** Christian teachers in their roles as teachers to be Christian, and for Christians to challenge the educational world to its need to believe and trust in Jesus for salvation. To **encourage** Christian teachers, parents and students in being Christian in a non-Christian society dominated by the gods of self-rule, materialism, the body beautiful, pleasure, retirement and other false hopes or empty religions.

Christian teachers can make a huge impact within a school by striving to act in a manner which Christ their Lord would approve. Their actions won't be motivated by their own self-interest but rather from love and concern for the well-being of those they teach and work with. As well, they need to take every opportunity to lovingly explain the reason behind their actions always pointing, not to their own worth, but Jesus and the incredible debt we will always owe to him. Our Australian society shies away from talking about faith and belief so that we need to steel ourselves and be more upfront about our motivation, about Jesus our Lord, the King of kings. Christian teachers not only need to walk-the-walk but also talk-the-talk to colleagues and when given the opportunity, to parents and students. What good is being a dedicated, self-giving Christian teacher if no one knows that it's because of Jesus. Give the glory to him!

Our society has so many false gods promoted as worth following. What an opportunity for us in an educational setting to examine some of these. Use your opportunities with wisdom and discernment to challenge these popular views in the staffroom and the classroom, pointing people back to the one true God. People cry out for justice in ravages of war and the infighting of politics but can't see the logs in their own eyes that say they are just as guilty, that they too, need to repent and be forgiven. Show up those false premises for what they are but also spread the better way of hope in Jesus. What is the good of reaching retirement age if you are suffering from a debilitating illness or could die tomorrow? He who dies with the most stuff leaves it behind for others to have or dispose of! Where do you place your hope for the future - in God or things? I know which I'd bank on.

TCF needs more Christian teachers willing to be involved in challenging and encouraging each other and their schools. We mustn't listen to society's view that we are all individuals and have no collective responsibility to each other within our career. Many young Christian teachers don't want to belong to anything that involves commitment. We are all called to belong to the body of Christ where we find ourselves.

Christians can still also be Christians in state schools! They can express their faith sensitively within the departmental guidelines, run ISCF groups and with the permission of their principals, even teach SRE classes. What a great opportunity to challenge and encourage others to belief and faith. Christian teachers are needed just as much in the state schools as in Christian schools. Our mission is to the world, not just part of it and now with many older teachers reaching retirement age there are more opportunities for them to do so.

What can you do in TCF to challenge and encourage others in their faith in the one-true-God?

H. Mills.