

Appointed & Anointed

3rd–8th August 2008.

All of the following comments tell the same story; this is a 'not to be missed' course.

"I have a new passion to see the children grow into 'complete' people. I am excited to get started."

"Every teacher should do this course."

"I had come on this course expecting a theoretic and academic approach to curriculum. Instead I had a complete life change, way beyond my dreams and expectations. I can only give glory to God for a Spirit-led course."

Regents Park Conference Centre, Nantwich is once again the setting for A&A. The course is open to experienced teachers, Heads and Deputies, as well as those just starting out in their careers.

Brochures are available **NOW** in your school. Do you have time this summer to be challenged, inspired, encouraged, developed, transformed and blessed in your teaching? If so, book onto this year's course.

Cost: £250pp*

*A £80pp non-refundable deposit is required for residential bookings. There is a £30pp surcharge for non-CST member schools or non-CST Friends.

For more information or to book your place, contact Therese at the CST office on: 01905 759740 or office@christianschoolstrust.co.uk

Ofsted...

"It provides pupils with a sound and imaginative education which prepares them well for further and higher education and for life in the outside world."
Covenant Christian School, Stockport.



The beautiful surroundings of Regents Park Conference Centre, Nantwich.



19th–22nd February 2009.

We are already planning our 2009 conference which is called 'From Desktop to Destiny'. The following comments are from delegates of our 2007 Conference 'A Time to Build':

"These sessions gave an especially clear focus and shared the vision of CST and how to move forward as a unit not as individuals."

"Plenty of space to interact and hear God."

"Worship was glorious!"

"Great to get together with the schools and really looking forward to forging deeper relationships with them."

We will be looking at how we can develop ourselves as teachers working at the desktop (real and virtual), whilst maintaining a focus on directing our pupils towards the destiny that God has for them and our nation. There will be some programme changes to previous years to allow for more unstructured time (especially around mealtimes!) and to adjust the meeting schedule.

Standard single/twin room: £170pp*

En-suite single or double: £220pp*

Day visitors: £50pp*

*A £50pp non-refundable deposit is required for residential bookings. En-suite rooms are limited and will be allocated to the earliest bookings. There is a £30pp surcharge for non-CST member schools or non-CST Friends.

Please put this event in your diary **NOW** and let's make this our best ever conference! Brochures will be available in September.

For more information or to book your place, contact Therese at the CST office on: 01905 759740 or office@christianschoolstrust.co.uk

Diary dates.

'Ways of Knowing'
Bradford Christian School
Friday 9th May 2008

The King's Centre, Oxford
Saturday 10th May 2008

Appointed and Anointed
Regents Park, Nantwich
3rd–8th August 2008

Heads' Day
Oakwood Court, Coventry
Monday 13th October 2008

'From Desktop to Destiny'
CST Conference
19th–22nd February 2009

WingSpan

Christian Schools' Trust

The magazine of the Christian Schools' Trust

Issue Number 18. Spring 2008

Riding the Waves with Teenagers.

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Riding the Waves with Teenagers.

"Teenage binge-drinking 'causes misery for thousands of families'" is the headline of an article facing me today as I sit down to write these words about helping teenagers through the emotional pressures of this stage of life.

For a number of decades teenagers have had a rather bad press. Teenage is often associated with awkwardness, surliness and lack of respect; many consider it a difficult stage of development for both the teenagers and the adults who have to live around them. This perception is however unfortunate and incomplete. For many years I have worked with teenagers in rugby teams, cricket or athletic teams, drama productions as well as in the classroom and at home. Again and again I have found teenagers to be loyal, diligent and enthusiastic, capable of hard work and discipline, they can be great fun to work with and very rewarding. So why is it that we have such a negative view in our culture of teenagers?

At The River School we believe teenagers have been misunderstood in our society. Sadly they have been treated as children although they are no longer children. In a Jewish family, the Barmitzvah is a festival celebrated when an individual is twelve years of age, marking the end of childhood and the transition to being a young adult. This is highly significant. In our society the school leaving age is sixteen and the government is considering raising it to eighteen. This denies the teenager the freedom and responsibility to choose their pathway in regard to work, study or career.

They all have to follow a National Curriculum that clearly does not suit all; the system breaks down and the government is already resorting to a whole range of schemes to try and cater for individuals for whom school is not working. But the context of compulsory education denies the teenager the responsibility they should properly exercise and for so many this creates an atmosphere that dampens their natural and positive energy.

God created them to be exploring their destiny individually, creatively and responsibly in a way that compulsory education can stifle.

This results in a number of emotional tensions that make these years difficult for them and their parents. It is this that results in Rob Parsons writing a book about 'Teenagers' which sets out to help parents cope with these strange phenomena as though they were a nightmare.

This perspective on teenage has impacted how we have structured life in our secondary years at The River School. We now interview our teenagers in Year 8 and require them to consider if and why they would choose to continue their education here (with full co-operation of their parents). We cannot change the law of the land and we should not flout it, but we can look to treat our teenagers in a way that requires them to accept more responsibility for their lives and their future.

This creates a hugely more positive atmosphere in which we are working with teenagers who have opted to be in the school and with whom we aim to work co-operatively, to make the most of their God-given talents and to identify their calling in life. One of the stereotypical views of teenagers is that they are anti-authority. In fact they are no more so than any other members of the sinful human race: human beings are naturally inclined to want their own way and resent authority until they recognise that authority is from God and that we are all released and blessed by submitting to those whom God has placed over us. If this principle has been established as it should be in the first six years of life, it is no major struggle in teenage. However, if such attitudes have not been established in the early years of a child's development, it can be a significant struggle in teenage.

What then are the keys to steering teenagers successfully through this period of their lives? Sadly in the Christian family up and down the land, it seems that many teenagers go astray and do not, at least for a period of some years often, follow the Lord and the faith of their parents. This is a vital question therefore, to which there are a number of significant keys. These apply equally well to teachers as well as parents.

Ofsted...

"The school provides a good all-round education for its pupils. Pupils' personal development is good and they become confident young people."
Emmanuel Christian School, Oxford.

Key 1.

The integrity of the parents in their faith and their relationship with the Lord – if parents talk about their faith, talk about a relationship with the Lord, talk about following Him in their lives, but in fact they do not fellowship with Him faithfully, submit decisions to Him in their own lives, are not growing in their personal discipleship and the fruits of the Spirit, their offspring will find the faith of their parents is 'religion' and not reality. Hypocrisy will send our offspring into the world (see Deuteronomy 28).

Key 2.

The example lived out with them and before their eyes – do we seek God's will over family decisions by sharing the issues with them, praying with them, listening to the Lord with them and obeying before their eyes? When they are teenagers, do we encourage them to listen and do His will in their decisions following the example we have set?

Key 3.

Opportunities to talk to us – they will need us as parents to listen without us judging them or dictating to them out of our experience or insecurity. These chats will not always be on our terms or to our preferred timetable. They may just begin to open up at bedtime, theirs or ours! Listen, question, suggest! Do not be easily shocked, even when you think issues are serious. Try to explore them calmly as well as seriously. Such moments are very precious, they are not merely their excuse to go to bed late!

Key 4.

Family mealtimes – important occasions to chat and discuss matters. Sadly the family mealtime is under threat in Britain today, but as Christians we should aim to have a meal together each day with no television or radio intruding upon our time together. Begin the meal with thanksgiving and allow conversation to flourish.

Key 5.

Wholesome leisure activities – lead them into constructive hobbies and sports etc. When my older sons entered teenage, I introduced them to the sport of tennis and played with them, encouraged them to develop their skills and enjoy friendships around the sport.

Key 6.

Wholesome company – through wholesome leisure pursuits, Christian youth groups etc, try and steer them towards good friends of their own age.

Key 7.

Encouragement – my wife is a supremely positive encourager. She is exuberantly pleased and celebrates what our children have done well. Teenagers can be very prone to self-doubt. We do not want them to have a pride and confidence in themselves and their own prowess, but we do want them to have a security and deep confidence in knowing who they are as children of the Most High God, who has a unique purpose and destiny for them. They need to know that in Him they can be secure, strong, bold and positive. Encouragement is vital to counter the doubts and insecurities that the enemy would sow in their hearts.

Key 8.

Identify true values – in training our teenagers we will have times when we have to confront them and set clear boundaries. Don't fuss excessively about the trivial and superficial (purple hair, hair length, untidy desk!); even allow room for them to make some mistakes; teach them to carry responsibility for decisions, but stand firm on the eternal issues. Within the boundaries of your home and school, rule well!

Ofsted...

"The King's School Senior is a good school. The Head teacher, governors and staff are all highly committed to meeting the school's aims and these are met successfully."
The King's School, Senior, Eastleigh.

Key 9.

Uniqueness – all teenagers are different and unique and they cope with life and its challenges including the adolescent stage of development in different ways. Consequently we need to get to know them well so that we treat them differently according to their needs and personalities.

Key 10.

Prayer – Samuel said to Israel when they were asking for a king against God's best plan: 'As for me I will certainly not sin against the Lord by ending my prayers for you! Never cease to pray for them! Release them to God at the right time!

The foundations for a successful teenage are laid in early childhood through parenting and teaching, but even when these years have not gone well, God is able to redeem as we have discovered with some of our fostered teenagers. Progress is made with clear boundaries, much love, care and encouragement and above all the prayer of faith!

Timothy Crow.
Principal of
The River School,
Worcester.



Recommended reading.

Ross Campbell: How to Really Love your Teenager

Rob Parsons: Teenagers

“Most of us at some point will have considered the importance of discipleship. Our schools are not, as some would think, merely havens from a wicked world; they are communities where we feel able to teach our children and young people the truths of the Kingdom of God. Truths which will hopefully sustain, guide and inspire them as they go on to interact with society at large.”

Of course our schools do not function in isolation, but rather support the work of the parents and church in the task of bringing children and young people into a relationship with God, equipping them and then releasing them to serve the purposes of God in their generation.

‘Fix your eyes upon Jesus’. It goes on to say ‘...Look full in His wonderful face and the things of earth will seem strangely dim in the light of His glory and grace’. Our relationship with God is of paramount importance if we are going to hear His voice for a way forward. How can we disciple

every aspect of school life, including the curriculum and learning styles. Obviously if you have a small school God will give you a different but equally valid approach; God loves variety.

Ofsted...
“Pupils are self-confident and have high levels of self-esteem. There are clear rules which enable pupils to distinguish right from wrong and to develop a strong respect for the law. The Christian ethos of the school is very evident.”
Gateway Christian School, Ilkeston.

and humility into the mix. These are concepts which we revisit time and time again, in the hope that they become part of our students. They are character traits which are essential to Christian leadership.

Discipling Teenagers in the Christian School.

It sounds exciting doesn't it? There are days when it causes me to leap out of bed and embrace the working day with a real sense of anticipation. However, there are other days, which I am sure you can identify with, when discipleship seems to fade into the background and the constraints of teaching, exam preparation, discipline, OFSTED and a whole host of other things clamour for our attention. Now don't get me wrong, as a Head teacher, I want our pupils to succeed academically and to be well rounded young people; but that alone is not enough. It is not the vision that God has put in my heart or indeed many of your hearts.

others into something we don't have ourselves? The second thing is the importance of having others around us who will hold us accountable to the task. It might not be fun being pulled back on course, but personal experience has shown me that sometimes we need a voice that shouts louder than OFSTED.

One of the things we have done at Immanuel to encourage discipleship is to structure our school according to how the different age groups respond in their walk with the Lord.

We have a Lower, Middle and Upper School and this gives us opportunities to stretch our pupils' faith in the ways which are most appropriate to them. God has spoken to us about having a different ethos in each part of the school and we hope that this will enable us to motivate our pupils in their walks with the Lord. As we are talking about teenagers I will only elaborate on the Middle and Upper Schools. In the Middle School (Years 5-8), we feel God is telling us to focus on 'A Sense of Adventure', whilst in the Upper School we are focussing on 'Preparation for Life'. Somehow I am hoping that these different approaches will permeate

We have also built additional time with or for God into our school day. That doesn't mean we have forgotten the concept of Christian worldview being emphasised in all our lessons, but it does give us space to read our Bibles, pray and talk together. It also gives us time to pursue what we call our 'Faith into Action' programme, where we can consider in more depth the world from a Kingdom perspective.

Obviously when it comes to discipleship, knowing the truth contained within The Bible is essential, as is learning to hear the Holy Spirit and understanding the collective wisdom contained within the Church. When our youngsters leave us they must understand Kingdom principles so they can choose not to compromise. They need to have the ability to discern the signs of the times, like the men of Issachar and they need to be able to function like Daniels as leading statesmen and women in an alien culture.

Over the years at Immanuel we have felt God has given us key character traits to encourage within our young people, namely being faithful to God and having a servant heart and teachable spirit. I have recently felt that God has added integrity

So, how do we do it? Our young people are not machines that we can input into and demand set responses from. They are individuals with their own opinions, hopes and dreams. By the time they reach the Upper School they may even be questioning their faith in God. In fact, many of you teach children who have never had a faith in God. We can't force or make demands. All we can do is build relationships, love, inspire, motivate, model, teach, set boundaries, encourage, challenge, pray and trust the Holy Spirit to fan a flame within their hearts. Some will respond immediately, others we may never seem to reach; but we must remain faithful to the call that God has placed within our hearts, to raise young people who know God and are equipped to live within the light of that knowledge.



Fiona Norcross. Head teacher of Immanuel Christian School, Romford.

So, how do we avoid the distraction which comes from the multitude of demands we face in our schools? How do we fulfil what God has called us to be and do? They are big questions aren't they? I don't have all the answers, but writing this article has been a good exercise for me, as it has made me think the issue through.

The first thing that came to mind when I began to consider these questions was that old chorus,

The School of the Lion, Gloucester.

God will make a way, where there seems to be no way.

Throughout the 20 year history of The School of the Lion we have faced many challenges but these have always been followed by God's gracious and miraculous deliverance and provision. Never more so than the recent challenge to hold on to the school's current property, Beauchamp House, three miles west of Gloucester.



Our arrival on this site was itself the culmination of a long and stressful period on the brink of closure, so we already knew what it was to be crying out to God for rescue. It was understood from the beginning that we would need to sell the farmhouse that is part of the site (having only been able to buy the 3 acre site with the help of a massive short term bridging loan on the house).

With this in mind we started 40 days of prayer and were encouraged through Scripture to remember that this was a 'God fight'.

However, this proved to be harder than we had anticipated, and after over 18 months being marketed by a local estate agent, the house remained unsold by which time we had completely run out of money.

Some weeks on, we are still celebrating an 11th hour, 59th minute deliverance! The auction was called off right at the end – our faithful Father prevailed. We exchanged contracts on the house on Thursday 28th February at about 5.30pm with a lovely Christian family who share our vision for Christian education – the 'dream ticket'! God had rescued us from the brink of disaster.

Our responsibility to the bank meant that we had to arrange an auction and if the house didn't reach the reserve price necessary to enable us to pay outstanding debts, the auction would need to proceed on the same evening to sell the whole site. If the reserve price wasn't reached for the site, then effectively we would be insolvent.

The 3 acre site can now be developed for Christian education and training, and for many other Christian ministries in the days, months and years ahead. Once again the Lord has proved that what seems impossible to man is possible for Him!



Nigel Steele and happy pupils from The School of the Lion.

The Association of Christian Schools International is the largest organisation linking Christian educators worldwide, with a total of 1 million pupils in many countries around the world.

Their European work is based in Budapest and is led by Alan Brown, together with his wife Melinda. Alan was Principal of a Christian school in America for many years before taking on this wider role almost 10 years ago.

ACSI have their offices in a medium sized domestic house in the suburbs of Budapest. The building also includes accommodation and meeting rooms for small conferences. They have a few staff members who handle their administration across the whole continent. Much of their work involves arranging conferences for school leaders, teachers and pupils in national settings throughout Europe.

The benefit of being part of a larger organisation is that they have a wide pool of experienced educators and good quality resources to draw on. They work closely with local schools and educators to ensure that what they are doing is not only biblical but relevant and sensitive to each particular situation.

Mission is the driving force of all that ACSI do and they see clearly that God has given them the field of education to work in. I was impressed by their commitment to and focus on the goal of education being the growth of God's Kingdom in each nation.

There are quite a few Christian schools in Hungary and Romania and I had the opportunity to visit one of the larger Hungarian schools just outside Budapest. They are housed in a building that was used in the war as a sorting station for Jewish people on their way to concentration camps. The school has certainly redeemed its use for God's glory.



Alan and Melinda Brown.

It was good to begin to get to know ACSI and the people who are a part of it. I believe that as European Christians called to work in education we only stand to benefit from building relationships with those sharing the same goals and the same motivation. We are stronger together than apart.

Please pray for Alan and Melinda and the growth of Christian schools across all of Europe.

Graham Coyle, CST National Team Leader.

Ofsted...

"Parents are overwhelmingly positive about the school, and justifiably so; this is a good school. Its success owes much to the high level of dedication of the staff who strive to ensure that each pupil reaches his or her potential."

**Dolphin School,
London.**

We believe that God has acted on our behalf to bring the Kingdom into the education system and to influence it for good.

One of the HMIs said, *"This is a courageous enterprise – you have made educational history."*

At a recent Heads' Day, we welcomed Mohamed Mukadam, the leader of AMSUK (The Association of Muslim Schools UK) with Christopher Schenk and Meg Buckingham, two experienced HMIs who will be working closely with us and have given us much needed input and encouragement.

We will also employ other HMIs as Lead Inspectors but train our own Team Inspectors from both communities. The religious ethos of our CST schools will be inspected by

Christians with the aim of ensuring that our distinctiveness is evident in all that we do.

The word 'Bridge' reflects our vision to build greater cross-cultural cohesion, bridging divisions in society. We are working initially with the Muslim Schools but other communities may join us at a later date. We pray that we will be able to model a blue-print in the relationship between us. As Baroness Cox said recently, "We must build bridges not walls".

Julia Morgan, BSI Administrator.

Bridge Schools Inspectorate

Nearly three years after submitting our proposal to start a new inspectorate, we received permission in January to begin inspecting schools in September. God is truly faithful even though His timing and ours sometimes differ! Our sincere thanks go to those who have supported the initiative in prayer.

The Bridge Schools Inspectorate (formerly Faith Schools Inspectorate) will be one of four national inspectorates and will be government and Ofsted approved.



London Christian School.

Two new schools joined the CST family in September 2007, London Christian School and Spring Valley Christian School. Their situations could not be more different. Spring Valley nestles in the heart of the Lake District. London Christian School (LCS) is in Southwark, a London borough known for its famous food market, riverside penthouses, deprivation and teenage gun crime. A quarter of a million people are crammed into Southwark's eleven square miles.

Over-subscription to good state schools and the inflated cost of London's independent schools force many families to leave the city. The three families who founded LCS chose an alternative route. With the conviction that no education is neutral towards Christ, these families wanted a schooling that would complement, not contradict the Christian truths they teach their children at home. The freedom to create a Christ-centred school has allowed us to approach every aspect of school life from a new perspective.



Parents are encouraged to take an active role in their child's education. Mandarin-Chinese is our foreign language, in light of China's growing church and world influence. It is wonderful not to be tied to tradition, but only to God's Word. We hope this will continue even as the school matures.

The vision of LCS is outward-looking; to educate Christian children and to reach out with the gospel to unbelieving families. God has answered our prayers. In April we will have seven pupils – four are not from Christian homes. Finding Christian families has proved harder. Many churches in central London are network churches with members living all over the City's boroughs. This makes it difficult for any one church to get fully behind the school. Even so, we are grateful to God that the school has grown by 75% in six months. Approximately 40 prospective families have visited the school. Please pray these visits will result in enrolments (especially from Christian families!) for 2008.



God has richly blessed us. There are many skills amongst LCS parents and supporters – graphic design, printing, employment law, fundraising, Mandarin and music. God has provided finance, buildings and furniture. It is exciting to think back to the week before school started when our classroom was bare and a lively school seemed a distant prospect. But after six months the classroom has been brought alive by our happy children. Join us in thanking God for supplying every need.

We have a big vision for the future. We regularly pray that God would raise up workers for His harvest field from amongst our pupils. LCS aims to keep growing and to help found other Christ-centred schools in this sprawling city. There are approximately 1.5 million under 16s in London. For even 10% of them to receive a Christian education we would need 300 schools with an average of 500 pupils. There is much to be done, but as our children sing, "10, 9, 8, God is great!"

Amy Mullock, School Manager.

Ofsted...

"Very high quality social interactions are evident at all levels in the school. Parents, some of whom teach in the school, are overwhelmingly positive in their appreciation of it."

**Emmanuel School,
Walsall.**