

## Welcome to 2015

TCFNSW trusts that you had a happy Christmas and are experiencing a great New Year as well as appreciating the reduction in your membership fee for 2015. This year will see continuing politics around the national curriculum and the implementation of SRE in NSW. But for most teachers the issues will be at the school level as they seek to teach well.

Our first *TCF News* has an article about promotion in which some difficult questions are addressed and advice for Christian teachers given. As an area of concern across the profession in both government and non-government schools it is timely to open the discussion. In fact your experiences both positive and negative or, simply an expression of your concerns might be worth putting on paper for future publication. Please consider a few words and send to the office.

Also this month we have not one but two reviews of the book *Captains of the Soul* as an appropriate consideration leading up the Centenary of Gallipoli. In addition there are a few dates for your diary including professional learning about teacher standards, a final report on work in India and a tale from the bureaucracy.

May 2015 be a year of great blessing as we act in education to promote a Christian philosophy on education.

John Gore

## Promotion: An elusive goal?

Most teachers will consider or seek promotion during their teaching career. Achieving that goal is more difficult than most teachers think and often I hear disappointment, frustration and criticism of current merit promotion practices.

Remember, no system is perfect and some of the issues include:

- **Merit selection to get the person you want**  
One criticism is that the panel chair selects a panel that will agree with what they want for the position and this predetermines the outcome providing the panel follows correctly all the procedures.
- **Need someone young and progressive**  
More experienced teachers are often bemused when younger and inexperienced teachers get promotion positions. There has been a desire to get younger people into promotion positions and sometimes the criteria are written to promote such applications. This trend gives capable and enthusiastic young teachers and executive the opportunity to make their mark but in some cases the lack of experience just makes life more difficult for the teachers they supervise.
- **Too old and inflexible**

Teachers generally do not embrace change easily and there are many excellent teachers who have faithfully fulfilled their duties but found that when they apply for promotion they have been unsuccessful and eventually given up applying. Promotion is not a right. Those seeking promotion need to be at the cutting edge of curriculum and pedagogy, enthusiastic to implement the latest requirements of their employer and able to lead and enthuse others. It is therefore important that those who seek a career through promotion do so as soon as they are ready. Procrastination can see you pass your use-by date.

For those thinking about promotion, here are a few tips and insights into the system as practiced in both government and non government schools.

### **1. Do your homework**

When a position is advertised find out everything you can about both the position and the school. Ask if there is someone relieving in the position, how long they have been doing it and if they are likely to be a candidate? Often schools favour a person from within the school who has already demonstrated that they can handle the position than to take a risk on an outside person. However, the relieving person may not be doing a great job and the position is really open to someone from outside. So find out all you can about the school and the position.

### **2. You need more than a CV.**

Keeping your CV up to date is a basic requirement but applying for a position requires more documentation. Depending on the position being applied for, you will need to address criteria. Failure to address any of the essential criteria means that you are culled before any serious consideration of your application.

When addressing separately each criterion, keep the statements short making sure you don't go over any minimum word prescriptions and use concrete examples wherever possible to demonstrate that you meet the criteria and don't simply just know about it. One way to get around any lack of experience with some criteria is to include in each criterion a paragraph about how you would act when in the position.

Remember that the aim of the application is to get an interview so each of the essential criteria must be addressed satisfactorily and probably any other criteria as well. Most applications need a letter of application which should be brief drawing attention to the name of the position being applied for and listing the inclusions in the application to show that it is complete.

### **3. Choose referees carefully.**

Referees are important. After a successful cull you will have an interview. Most procedures require the selection panel to speak with referees. Your immediate supervisor should be one of your referees and depending on the position being sought select someone who will enhance your application by being in a similar or higher position. Talk with your nominated referees to ensure that they will support your application and then give them a copy of your application. Too often positions are lost when the selection panel talks with a referee and find them unsupportive or indifferent to the application or haven't seen a copy of the application. Don't take their enthusiasm for granted. They must be able to answer the panels question and reinforce your application.

### **4. Think ahead**

If you are seeking promotion make sure your principal knows and ask if you can fill in any relieving positions that might come up. Certainly talk with your principal about other jobs

and roles within the school that you could do to help an application for promotion by allowing you to demonstrate criteria for higher positions.

### **Final note**

Christian teachers are often caught between duty -being a good teacher - and self promotion. In a perfect world, good teachers and potential leaders would be recognised and promoted. But we do not live in a perfect world and if Christian teachers are to be influential in education then they must play the game, but play it with integrity - don't make false claims and pray. In the end you need to be where God wants you.

John Gore

## **Living a life under God's calling**

### **A review of Michael Gladwin's book *Captains of the Soul* by Jonathan Bailey**

(Jonathan Bailey graduated from the University of Western Sydney with a Bachelor of Arts in History, Politics and Philosophy and a Master of Teaching in the secondary years of schooling. He teaches History at Redeemer Baptist School.)

The book, 'Captains of the Soul' by Michael Gladwin, is the first official historical account of the formation and activities of the Australian Army Chaplains Department and is included in 'The Australian Army History Collection'. This is an exciting book and is unique because it is an official account of Christianity in public life in Australia, written historically and based on well-documented sources.

Gladwin's book strikes an easy balance between historical facts about Australian army operations and moving accounts of the ways in which chaplains have functioned in the midst of those operations. Each chapter follows a regular pattern that naturally progresses from details of the conditions the army were fighting in, then onto a description of the roles of the chaplains collectively, often telling of the individual efforts of chaplains in each theatre of war. This has the effect of setting the actions of the chaplains against the background of the conflicts the army was involved in, which makes the work of the chaplains stand out.

What is refreshing is the tone that Gladwin adopts. Gladwin is not pushing an agenda nor stretching his sources to prove a point. He chooses to report what is preserved in the historical record and does not try to make strained connections between the facts and the narrative that he is constructing. This makes Gladwin's book approachable and assists the credibility of its tone.

One aspect of this work that I was not prepared for was the way it hit me spiritually. Implicit in Gladwin's account is the idea that the chaplains were extraordinary because they were willing to go beyond their prescribed duties and make themselves available to help the soldiers with whom they served. As a teacher, that says something profound to me about how our Christianity should be expressed in our profession. There are many examples in this book of how the practical assistance given by the chaplains was the first step in a soldier's journey of faith. That is how a Christian teacher should affect their workplace. Gladwin describes the Chaplain's primary concern as making Christ attractive, and that is also how we should serve in our classrooms.

This book has the potential to achieve a large audience. It would easily accommodate readers who are interested in Australian army history as well as amateur or academic

historians searching for particular details. The wide appeal of the work derives from the way in which Gladwin mixes the big picture history of war and world events with the personal accounts of those caught up in the middle of the mess of human conflict. Aside from anything else, this book should remind us that no matter how much the world around us goes out of control, God stands sovereign over it all and does not fail to provide help to those who seek Him.

## ***Captains of the Soul* - A history of Australian Army chaplains.**

### **Book Review by Daniel Ridley**

(Daniel Ridley graduated with a Bachelor of Arts and Master of Teaching in 2008. He teaches English and History at Redeemer Baptist School.)

'Captains of the Soul' chronicles the contribution of Christian men and women in a sphere of life that is often portrayed as godless and lacking in moral restraint. Similarly, the notion of war and its psychological impact upon both its victims and perpetrators typically conjures up soulish questions of life's meaning and purpose. Too often the devastating nature of war has shattered confidence, leaving many believing that suffering and death disprove the very existence of God. The real stories documented within the pages of this book, however, convey a very different message.

Michael Gladwin begins with the notable story of Hugh Cunningham, a Presbyterian padre, who started his ministry in the army during the Second World War. It is from Cunningham's own story that the book's title, 'Captains of the Soul', is taken. Ironically, the title 'Captain of the souls of men' was given to Cunningham by Japanese guards in a POW camp so that the honoured role of the padre could be identified since, up to that point, padres wore no badge of rank. The title attributed to Cunningham by the Japanese summarises the contribution that chaplains have made to our combat forces—not just in that war but also across the scope of conflicts in which our military have been involved. From the eighteen Australian chaplains who served in the Boer War to the hundreds of multi-denominational padres who are currently serving alongside Australian forces in over fifty worldwide peace-keeping missions, Gladwin's account is a narrative of hope and life faithfully rendered by godly men and women.

At a significant time when, as a nation, we celebrate the centenary of the Gallipoli campaign, this book is a welcome addition to all the military stories that are surfacing in our bookshops and on our television screens. 'Captains of the Soul' acknowledges the terror and loss that war has brought to Australians. But this history also reminds us of the redeeming hope of the gospel and the committed men and women who fearlessly and unashamedly remained true to their faith whilst providing pastoral care for their mates in battle. In the name of tolerance and acceptance, Australia's historians and media too often reduce the presence of Christian service in public life to nice religious charity. Thankfully, Gladwin's book is an admirable exception. He has accurately detailed the enduring service of Australian chaplains who have faithfully guarded, guided and sustained the souls of men in otherwise potentially soul-destroying experiences in war.

## 2015 Diary dates

### 9th May *Up to Standard? Getting ready for BOSTES accreditation.*

**Speaker:** Janet Donaldson - Senior Policy Officer/Teaching Standards with BOSTES.

9.30am to 12pm at Redeemer Baptist School, Parramatta

### 9th May **Annual General Meeting.**

1.30pm at Redeemer Baptist School, Parramatta

### 26-28th June **Getaway at Kihilla, Lawson.**

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## India finished

It is now seven years since Elizabeth and I first went to India to visit some schools run by Operation Mercy (Mobilisation) India which were created for Dalit and Backward caste students. In that time, there has seen many successes and many failures. We have tried to establish a world class education system in very difficult circumstances with few resources, poorly trained teachers and massive cultural restrictions. Today I am noting that our work can never be finished but we are calling an end to it so that Indian educators can take charge of the systems and training that we have introduced and develop them further.

What we have been able to do is:

- train science teachers to use experiments and equipment in the teaching of science
- deliver professional learning for principals in educational management
- set descriptive standards for schools to achieve in 12 areas of schooling
- develop a school evaluation process against these standards
- train Indian educators in the evaluation process
- develop a Bible based moral education curriculum for Grades 1 to 10
- develop student workbooks for moral education for Grades 1 to 5
- develop teaching activities for teachers of moral education Grades 6 to 10
- develop achievement standards based on student work samples for English, Mathematics, Science, Hindi and Social Studies for Grades 1 to 10
- developed a training module and school presentation module on standards-referenced reporting
- train Indian presenters to deliver professional learning to 104 schools about the standards-referenced reporting

We have laid the best foundation possible and geared all our work to the culture of the Indian schools, but for it continue and develop the Indian officers must carry it forward. Over recent months I have been unwell with another two stents placed in my heart and complications from the operation for other parts of the body which threaten to recur through long air travel.

If our health holds out, we will visit again but the work is finished. We want to thank those who have encouraged us, prayed for us and those who have given funds for the work. We have been self funded and the work we have done in India was at no cost to OM India but

we appreciated the gifts including from TCFNSW which brought hope to individuals and families in particularly difficult situations.

Many thanks.

John and Elizabeth Gore.

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## **Something funny happened on the way to the office**

(The second in a series of stories that owe their fame to bureaucratic practices.)

### **2. It's Tom.**

It's March 1998. The phone rings and the voice says, *It's Tom.*

Without any idea of who Tom might be and not wishing to offend, just in case it's someone I know, I reply. *Good to hear from you Tom, how can I help you?*

His reply was: *I got my material back.*

Now I was in real trouble. What material? I don't recall sending any material back to anyone. Perhaps someone on my staff had. By this time I have worked out that Tom is a good age. So I ask.

*What material was that Tom,* and he replies, *My account of what happened to me during the war.*

Now I knew that I had nothing to do with it so I innocently asked when he had sent it. His response was mind blowing, *1956.*

Yes, that's right 1956. Apparently he sent it to the Department in 1956 and had only just received it back 42 years later. What could have happened? The only explanation was that after years of change and restructuring someone had found the material, seen an address and returned it after realising that it was all handwritten and personal memories.

I explained to Tom that I had no knowledge of the material and gave him my theory on what might have happened. I then volunteered to have a look at it if he sent it in. Not surprisingly, he was apprehensive but having given my contact details he agreed. The material arrived a few days later.

Tom had fought in World War 11 in the Pacific and had been captured by the Japanese and become part of the Burma railway. His material was personal, explicit and graphic about the ordeals that these prisoners experienced. While excellent for the history researcher, it would not be able to be used in any substantive way for school education. If a resource was prepared on these events, parts of his material could be used.

So I contacted Tom and explained that we were not at present preparing resources on this subject but would like to keep his work so that it could be referred to should a resource be prepared. He agreed.

For some years I continued to get the occasional call from Tom - *It's Tom* he would say and I now knew who he was. *I'm just checking that you still have my materials,* and I would assure him that we did.

In the years following this event a number of other people offered their personal war accounts and an unofficial file was established to collect them. Probably this file still exists somewhere in the Department. When the next person finds it, I hope they appreciate the material but don't try and send it back because the chances are that the authors are no longer alive. The State Library or Australian War Memorial might be interested.

John Gore

Website: [www.tcfofnsw.org.au](http://www.tcfofnsw.org.au)

Email: [tcfofnsw@exemail.com.au](mailto:tcfofnsw@exemail.com.au)

