



Dear Friend,

Welcome to *TEC Connects*. Your monthly newsletter! You will find that it is filled with educational information, helpful hints and tips, events, news and even some product offerings. Our focus is *connection* and we want to bring value to your passion for Christian Education so please, please share your feedback and suggestions with us. Perhaps you have a great event, photo, story or quote you would like to share with us... please do send them in. We also love to hear your questions and comments, so stay in touch.

We hope you enjoy this month's *Connects*!

[info@theexcellencecentre.org](mailto:info@theexcellencecentre.org)

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## **OPPORTUNITY** by Tina Lamont

March is shaping up to be a month filled with

Professional Learning opportunities. It started on the very first day, March 1. This is when Sonya Hemsley, Belinda Nunn and I journeyed to New Zealand to be encouraged by our New Zealand Christian Educators. We travelled to Christchurch, Dunedin, Auckland and Tauranga. TEC with a team from PHCS will be attending the Visible Learning conference March 16 and 17. Another breath and it is off to Hillsong Colour Conference March 20-22 and finishing the month March 31 with a scholarly conference at St Andrews Cathedral School.



The brain cells will certainly be stimulated and there will be much collaboration and reflection concerning Christian Education thinking and practice. What refreshes me is that these times allow us to work out what direction we want to take and who can help us on our journey.

Can I encourage you to step out of your context, meet with other Christian educators, and be blessed! We truly have been this month. There is something very special when you come together with your Christian brothers and sisters with a shared passion and common purpose.

May God bring much fruitfulness to your labours as you continue to serve Him.

We will share much of what is happening over this month on our website so check out our events and other resources.



**Image:** Middleton Grange School, Christchurch NZ

(L) to (R) School Captains, Belinda Nunn (TEC), Tina Lamont (TEC), Andy Van Ameyde, Board Chair and Richard Vanderpyl, Principal.

[To view more photos from the 2017 New Zealand trip click here](#)

**RESEARCH**



# Thinking about Jesus when it matters

## ***Guiding our Children to Include Jesus in their Life-Issues Decision Making***

**By Dr Thomas Smith, Research Consultant**

Recently I was presenting some research to a group of parents. We had been talking about research done with Years 3, 7 and 10 carried out in 2016 on how children resolve life-issues, especially moral ones. The parents were deeply impacted by this, and wanted to know how they can help their children think Christianly.

A basic Christian school belief is that God guides people about how best to live and relate with others in this complex world. For example, Psalm 16:10-11- says that God guides his people away from the “Pit” and into the “path of life” (NRSV). Also, Jesus said that unlike those who would steal from us and destroy, He came that we might have life and have it abundantly (John 10:10 RSV).

Many parents at our school desire to see their children follow Jesus and His teaching and so experience His abundant life. An important time for parents to invite students to include Jesus is when their child is faced with an unresolved life-issue. Children are often seeking a good answer to their dilemma when under pressure and parents can help their children. A child may be disturbed by the way his or her friend is being bullied in a sly way, or a teenager may want to go to a party where there will be popular peers who take party drugs. These are golden opportunities to reflect on Jesus’ way, rather than simply to give advice or blunt direction.

[Read more of this research article here](#)

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## **IS A STILL SOUL STILL ACHIEVABLE?**

***by Stephen Fyson***

Do you enjoy poetry? Do you find reading poetry laborious? Does that include the Psalms?

It seems that in my life, reading poetry, including the Psalms, is a test as to the stillness, or

otherwise, of my soul. I think it is a test because we live in a world that applauds busyness and productivity, even in many of our Christian stations of life.



Two things have brought this to mind recently. The first was reading through a book of poetry written by a friend with whom we shared a house while studying at Regent College, Vancouver.

Peter Stiles' book *Trumped by Grace* showed me (again) how we can view the everydayness of life deeply, if we simply sit still and let it touch our heart and minds and souls.

And then a copy of *The Dark Night of the Soul*, by St John of the Cross, came across my desk.

Here is a classic line of heart-searching truth from it:

*The first step of love makes the soul quite ill, but this turns out to be to the soul's advantage... This illness is not terminal for it ends in the glory of God. During this illness the soul loses its taste for sin and everything else that does not come from God, for God's own sake... (p. 111)*

Let's encourage each other to not give up on stillness of the soul. Both of the works above are commended as a way to regain the appetite for a quietness of heart that hears that still small voice of our loving God.

Why not check out some of Stephen's other writings in our weekly ['Care Conversation' Newsletter](#)

## WHAT'S HAPPENING



TEC is pleased to partner with [Hillsong Evening College](#) who are leading a 7 week Leadership Course for staff on site at Pacific Hills Christian School in Australia. Currently 20 staff from the Dural campus are participating in this course based on John Maxwell's book *"Developing the Leader Within You."*

If you would like more information about this or similar courses contact us at [info@theexcellencecentre.org](mailto:info@theexcellencecentre.org)



The next meeting of the Scholarly Christian Educators' Gathering (SCEG) is on Friday March 31st at St Andrews Cathedral School in the Sydney CBD.

After the success of our last meeting, we are again considering the topic of "Faith Formation in Christian Schools" - how do young people come to Christian faith, how do they grow in their faith, and how can they overcome challenges to their faith? And how does faith play out in different kinds of Christian schools?

The draft program is looking excellent:

- Dr Amy Orr-Ewing (Oxford Centre for Christian Apologetics): "Postmodern challenges to the gospel"
- Dr Justine Toh (Centre for Public Christianity): "Why apologetics is little (or a lot) like falling in love"
- Rev Jenni Stoddart (Abbotsleigh) - A school chaplain's reflections on reaching young people today
- Dr Richard Edlin (Edserv International): "Secularism and the Trojan Horse of Religious Neutrality"

- Peter Muddle (Covenant Christian School): "Does God love maths? Experiences in teaching mathematics Christianly"
- Dr Stephen Fyson (The Excellence Centre, PHCS): "Generous Orthodoxy: How Generous and Orthodox can Christian Schools Be?"
- Prof James Dalziel (The Excellence Centre and Morling College) "Faith and contextualisation: Paul in Athens"

**Registration is now open for the SCEG meeting on "Faith Formation in Christian Schools" at St Andrew's Cathedral School, March 31st from 10am-3:30pm.**

**See: [www.trybooking.com/OYTE](http://www.trybooking.com/OYTE)**

TEC would like to thank the support and assistance of St Andrew's Cathedral School, Sydney. Australia.

**There is much happening in the life of TEC so keep a watch on our website [www.theexcellencecentre.org](http://www.theexcellencecentre.org)**

## CONNECT WITH TEC



**Blog posts by Dr Ted Boyce:**

[Developing Beliefs & Values in Children](#)

[God's Revealed Plan In Human Relationships](#)

[Beyond Expectations](#)

[Teach to Learn](#)

[Unity and Diversity](#)

[Developing Minds](#)



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