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Welcome to the 54th issue of the CViE Newsletter.

In this edition we have included an update on preparations for the upcoming National Conference 2022 and the need for helpers to ensure the smooth running of the event.

We are pleased to include two contributed pieces.

Firstly, a reflection on the "Challenges of technology in schools".

Secondly, "Being an influence in the workplace" and has been written as an encouragement to young people and others in the challenges they may face at work.

Finally, we include a review of a book by Dr Eryl Davies *A Christian's Pocket Guide to Understanding Suicide and Euthanasia*. This short book provides an excellent overview of these sensitive and complex issues from a Biblical perspective. It will help the reader navigate these topics and answer questions they may face in church, the workplace or at school.

2022 CViE CONFERENCE – Saturday 24th September



In the Lord's goodness, the plans for the CViE National Conference 2022 year are progressing well. This is due to be held on Saturday 24th September at the *The King's Centre, Coppard Gardens, Chessington, Surrey KT9*. We used this venue for the first time in 2021, and although we incurred some additional costs in doing so it proved to be ideal and we received many positive comments about the excellent facilities.

This year John Denning (Christian Institute) will be speaking on "**Issues in Education Today**" and Sharon James will be speaking on "**Worldviews in Education: Standing on Biblical Truth**". There will be a full programme of activities for the 5-18 age groups. We are also looking to have a range of exhibitors covering the educational choices of home, Christian and state education.

Once again we are hoping to continue with the *Cultivate a reading habit* scheme. All those attending of school age will be entitled to receive a voucher, up

to the value of £10, that can be used at either the Gospel Standard Trust Publication or the Christian Bookshop, Ossett stalls (or others yet to be confirmed) that will be present at the event. We look to the Lord for the continued funding of this venture.

Further information about the conference can be found on the Events page on the CViE website which will be updated with full details as these become available

We look forward, if the Lord will, to welcoming you all to the conference in September.

CONFERENCE VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

We do rely on volunteer support to ensure the smooth running of the day. As in previous years, we would make a plea for helpers to become involved with the crèche, the children and young peoples' activities, and assisting with 'marshalling' and ensuring people are in the right place. If you are able to help, please contact us.

The Challenge of Technology in Schools



This piece is based on thoughts relating to the blog post in April 2022 on the CViE website "Digital dangers: "Be sober, be vigilant".

The issues we are increasingly seeing are –

Children more used to **living in 'virtual reality'** than the real world. This can come across in the way they interact with others (both verbally and physically). Whilst increased physical violence from exposure to films and video games may be limited, 'low – level' deteriorations in behaviour are much more common. I have dealt with some extremely nasty cases of online bullying that have come under the term 'roasting' where children are unable to differentiate between teasing/ 'banter' and downright bullying/ abuse. Other cases where children who behave perfectly well in school, have turned into 'keyboard warriors' at home, pouring out the most vile language/ threats and aggression. In a world where games can be restarted or lives 'reset', some children feel that simply saying 'sorry' or 'I didn't mean it' are perfectly justifiable explanations to attempt to justify extremely unkind comments or behaviour.

Decreased memory – children's activities now are largely screen-based entertainment which require only very short retention but also provide instant gratification (particularly in the form of gaming). It has become increasingly obvious that this is having a negative effect of children's resilience (ability to complete longer tasks) but also their ability to retain learned information.

The word 'no' – the biggest challenge I believe we faced following lockdowns as a result of the pandemic was children not accepting adults saying 'no'. Teachers are fed up of hearing 'but my parents let me'. During lockdown, it was extremely tough on families, with many trying to work from home and

manage/ entertain children. In search for an easy life – social media, games and films became easy 'babysitters' and children developed the ability to get what they wanted as parents looked for an easy life. Although linked to the COVID pandemic without a doubt the reduced social interaction between families is having a huge knock on in schools and in children's wilder development.

Peer pressure remains a huge issue and perhaps is one that Christian parents need to be most aware of (their children not being immune to it). The biggest increase in Internet based problems this last year have been from children aged 7 – 9. Children being allowed to access games, films and social media far above their age range and then discussing it at school. So many times, parents have come to us and started "I know I shouldn't have but I gave in and now this has happened....". Parents allow children to access 13 or 16 age-related apps but then expect schools to pick up the pieces when they invariably go wrong!

Mental health – a big area and impossible to link purely to social media and the likes. Issues such as body image, emotional resilience and low-self esteem etc are definitely on the rise and social media is playing a large part in this. I recently taught a tailored lesson on body image following a concern from a parent. I was pleased with the theory that the children seemed to know and yet only a day or two later was dealing with a similar issue. Children can often give the right answers but applying it to their own lives and situations is much harder.

Do pray for teachers children, young people and parents in the challenges faced in schools. Also that those who fear the Lord might be helped in supporting others facing the attractions and distractions of technology and kept from these dangers themselves.

Being an Influence in the Workplace

Whilst at work recently, an email was circulated from our media department asking for views on posters that were to be displayed in some of our buildings etc as part of a campaign to highlight issues relating standards of behaviour in the workplace. There were some examples given using short phrases

commonly used by colleagues in the workplace that could be termed disrespectful, offensive, homophobic, bullying etc. One of the examples, sadly, used blasphemy as part of the phrase. I emailed the sender expressing my concern that the actual example displayed was offensive and

suggested alternative wording. However, I noticed that the poster templates were subsequently published on our intranet without deleting the blasphemous words. As I still felt unhappy and did not want to have copies of some of these posters displayed in my workplace with blasphemous expressions, I decided to email the original sender again. I kindly pointed out that I was disappointed that the wording on the poster template had not been amended and that blaspheming was unnecessary and offensive to those of the Christian faith. A colleague replied promptly to my email to apologise but said, "we need to reflect the real-life experience of colleagues using realistic language, however as the posters were still waiting to go to print we can take out the exclamation all together and simply just have the phrase on its own". I am thankful to say that, within just over an hour of receiving her response, the wording on the poster template had been updated and the blasphemous words were removed.

I feel thankful and humbled that my feedback was listened to and the offensive words were removed, just before the posters were sent to the printers. Although sadly I hear swearing/blasphemy so commonly used in the office environment and to my shame I don't challenge it, I felt this was something where I had the opportunity to challenge

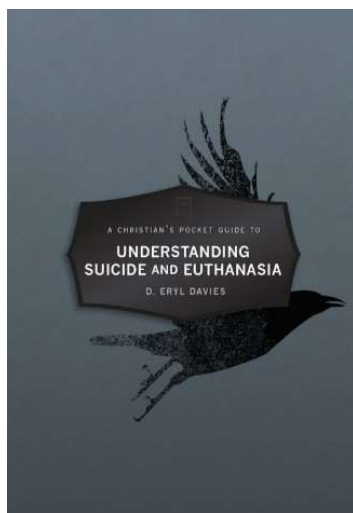
and influence, particularly as this poster was likely to have a wide audience of potentially a few thousand personnel. It encourages me that although we (as Christians) may feel to be (and often are) in the minority in our workplaces, we can still try to be a witness in different ways and, as opportunity is given, to kindly point out those things that are wrong and offensive.

- Exodus 20 v 7 - 'Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain'.
- 1 Timothy 4 v 12 - 'Let no man despise thy youth; but **be thou an example** of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity'.

As the children's hymn says, 'Dare to be a Daniel! Dare to stand alone! Dare to have a purpose firm! Dare to make it known'.

Comment: At CViE we are always pleased to receive contributions from our supporters about real life experiences. Hearing about the issues people have faced and how the Lord has helped them deal with these can be a huge encouragement to others to stand firm on the Word of God in education today. In addition, do let us know of any helpful materials and resources you have come across that may be beneficial to share.

Book Review – A Christian's Pocket Guide to Understanding Suicide and Euthanasia



Euthanasia and assisted dying are frequently in the headlines and I am sure you will have heard of high-profile cases such as Tony Nicklinson who campaigned to legalise euthanasia and assisted dying in the UK and Debbie Purdy who campaigned to prevent relatives from being prosecuted for supporting their loved

one to travel to Dignitas. Such cases often cause much debate but how as Christians can we respond?

There are several terms that you will hear throughout these debates and discussions:

1. Medically assisted dying – where the doctor provides the patient with a lethal dose of medication that they take themselves
2. Voluntary euthanasia – where the doctor provides and administers the lethal

medication with consent

3. Involuntary euthanasia – where the doctor provides and administers the lethal medication without consent

Davies sets out the key component in the debate which is 'the right to self-determination'. This 'right' underpins many of the key ethical issues that we face today – the focus is not on our Creator but on man, the creation. One of the key theories that is raised by those in support of euthanasia is consequentialism where no action is good or bad, rather it is the outcome that determines whether something is right or wrong. Davies then goes on to outline some of the key arguments that those in support of euthanasia will use – each topic is handled carefully and respectfully but in outlining these arguments he provides the reader with a Christian counter-response.

Two of the key arguments that those who support assisted dying and euthanasia use include compassion and control. For each topic Davies explores both sides of the argument, using real life stories of those who have been affected – these are sad cases and evoke an emotional response from the reader and as Davies states help us to 'avoid glib and

superficial responses on our part'. He then explores the counter argument with compassionate and clear biblical framework. Davies acknowledges that it is not easy for those who are faced with a terminal diagnosis or who are suffering with pain, but he graciously points out how we need to approach with kindness. There is a whole branch of medicine that has been dedicated to looking after those who are terminally ill – palliative medicine.

We currently live in a world where the focus is on the individual – it is about living a life that focuses on our needs and desires and choosing when we die is seen as part of the individualistic outlook on life. Davies reflects that this cannot be the case as we are made in the image of God and that as the Creator of heaven and earth, He ultimately has control. Through sin the human race fell and part of our sinful nature is to rebel against God and His design for us.

Despite all the safeguards that are used in the argument for medically assisted dying, we can see how easy it is to fall down 'the slippery slope' using examples such as the Netherlands who have legalised medically assisted dying and euthanasia. In 2017, 6600 people were euthanised compared to less than 2000 in 2007 and what is even more heart breaking is that children over the age of 12 are able to request euthanasia in the Netherlands. This raises the concern that no matter what safeguards are considered by the government it is likely that these will disappear with time putting many vulnerable people at risk.

Suicide is a complex topic and is often little spoken about particularly amongst Christians – it is seen as an

uncomfortable and taboo subject. However due to the high incidence rate of suicide – 55000 suicides occur annually within the EU – Davies highlights that this is an important topic for Christians to be aware of and to discuss. No doubt most of us will be aware of or have heard of someone who has taken their life. Within this section Davies highlights some of the significant risk factors, including mental illness, drug and alcohol misuse and a history of abuse, that lead people to suicide and how we can support those who maybe struggling. As Christians we are to love our neighbours as ourselves and there are many who are going through significant turmoil who require love, a listening ear and prayer. Davies sets out a clear Christian response to enable the reader to help those that may be struggling and provides those within a pastoral role guidance on how to respond to those that may come to you with suicidal thoughts.

This book provides an excellent overview into the sensitive and complex issues of euthanasia and suicide. It sets out a clear biblical framework to enable the reader to answer questions that they may face in church, the workplace or school. At the heart of this book are those that are walking through deep and difficult pathways, whether it is due to their own physical or mental health or one of their loved ones who is suffering. It is therefore important that we are able to follow in Jesus's example and reach out to them in love and compassion.

Details: D Eryl Davies A Christian's pocket guide to understanding suicide and euthanasia (April 2020), Pages: 128, published by Christian Focus (ISBN 9781527104204), RRP: £4.99.

Upcoming CViE Events



NATIONAL CONFERENCE 2022

CHRISTIAN INSTITUTE: ISSUES IN EDUCATION TODAY
JOHN DENNING

WORLDVIEWS IN EDUCATION: STANDING ON BIBLICAL TRUTH
SHARON JAMES

SAT 24 SEPT
10:30AM to 4:00PM
The King's Centre
Chessington, KT9 2GZ

Creche | Refreshments | Bookstalls | Resources

Separate Sessions for Children & Teens

www.cvie.org.uk/events | Everyone Welcome | All if the Lord will



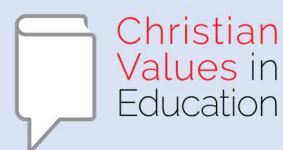
STATE EDUCATION:
MAKE A DIFFERENCE, BECOME A GOVERNOR!

November 2022 - Full details To Be Confirmed.

What is a school governor? What do they do? How do you become one? Does it make a difference? Is it a lot of work? This webinar will provide answers to these questions, practical guidance from a parent governor, and the opportunity for discussion. Event details will be published on our website shortly: www.cvie.org.uk/events If the Lord will

JOIN OUR ONLINE MEET UP

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