



From the Principal:

Date:
Issue: 32 Of 09
15th October 2009

Spiritual Anorexia

There seems to be an increase in the level and intensity of violence among young people these days. Binge drinking, using drugs or high-caffeine energy drinks to help a person have a 'good' time often leads to a party ending in a brawl, or even one person getting king hit by an out-of-control party-goer, which leads to tragedy and distress for all involved. The Police Commissioner, Simon Overland said recently that there is one 'one-punch homicide' in Melbourne every month. As we see in the media, there are many other attacks on a young people that leave them traumatised, scarred or disabled for life. What is behind this intense rage that leads to violent attack on another person?

I am just as concerned by the addictions that many of our young people have to computer-based activities, from violent games to social networking. As I have written before, there is a loss of essential social sensitivity for those who spend hours alone with a computer, in a cyber world where they have the delusion of control and interaction.

Melbourne psychologist Michael Carr-Gregg was quoted in the Age (1/10) as follows: ***"With respect to religion, it's not popular to say this, but as a secular psychologist I'd like to say that the research is overwhelmingly clear that many of the young people who engage in (anti-social) behavior are literally spiritual anorexics. They have a hole in their soul. They believe in nothing."***

I believe this is true. Young people are starving for spiritual reality, for beliefs and values that provide genuine, healthy relationships and give a sense of meaning and purpose to their lives. In fact, we are all searching for such a way to live. The French philosopher, Blaise Pascal, is often quoted as saying, ***"There is a God shaped vacuum in the heart of every man which cannot be filled by any created thing, but only by God, the Creator, made known through Jesus"***.

Christian education is designed to meet this need. Churches and homes are meant to be vital witnesses to the abundant life that faith in Christ and living in obedience to His words can bring. Unfortunately, we don't always achieve our aims. It concerns me that as adults what we model is not a true reflection of a Christ-like life. In our homes, churches and school we often focus on filling that 'God-vacuum' in our lives with things, material goods and immediate gratification of our senses, rather than working on relationship and living to serve others. If our children see rich Christian living modeled at home, church and school, then they may be more inclined to explore and embrace a life-changing faith. If the same old selfishness, lack of forgiveness and aggressiveness that they see in the people around them and in the media can be seen at home or school or in church, then they will reject it.

I look at the life-style choices being made by some of our students and I am worried. Are we, Christian parents and teachers, failing to meet the spiritual nutrition needs of this generation? Are we guilty of not practicing what we preach? No doubt we fail our children many times, because none of us are perfect. Kids accept this, but not if we don't acknowledge our mistakes and show repentance and commitment to growing in our relationship with God. Jesus said, "By their fruit you will know them." He meant that people would judge the authenticity of our faith on the fruit of our lives. I ask myself, what kind of fruit is my life producing? In the end, I can get buildings built, and run a financially successful school, but it means nothing if students are not being introduced to Christ in ways they can understand. Our school must be about the transformation of young lives, not just the transfer of knowledge. We must work together to achieve this, as God gives us strength and love for one another. **Stephen Leslie**