

Another Day

Biblical reflections for busy teachers



Getting It All Together

"In him (Christ) all things hold together." Colossians 1:17

If we look in our postal or email address books, we find names curiously juxtaposed by alphabetical order, people sitting side-by-side in our lists who know nothing of each other and who would have perhaps very little in common with one another if they were ever to meet in person. What holds together all these different people? It is the relatedness of each of them to us who have compiled the list in which their names appear that gives coherence to the whole.

Our children and young people move from lesson to lesson through the school day, from maths to art to history to language to physical education. It is very important that they learn to see the differentiated aspects of reality, that they learn to analyse. But where do they learn to see the whole as well as the parts, to synthesise the different curriculum subjects together into a larger whole? We have become fairly expert at 'thinking the world apart', but when do we 'think it together' again?

The Colossians passage from which the above quotation comes says that everything was made by Christ and for Him and that, in Him, everything holds together. It is the relatedness of everything to Him as its Creator, Maintainer and Goal that gives coherence to the whole. This is not some mere god-of-the-gaps in our present scientific knowledge but the Lord of the Universe who is above and behind everything that is.

How can we help to show this in the classroom? Parker Palmer writes, "Good teachers possess a capacity for connectedness. They are able to weave a complex web of connections among themselves, their subjects, and their students so that students can learn to weave a world for themselves."* We can look for opportunities to make links across the curriculum, to look at a topic from a range of subject perspectives, to relate to those we teach as whole people but, perhaps most importantly of all, we show it by living lives that have a wholeness that comes from Christ.

Living Lord in whom all things hold together, help us to show this connectedness in our relationships, our teaching and our whole lives. Amen.

* Parker J Palmer, *The Courage to Teach: Exploring the Inner Landscape of a Teacher's Life*, (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1998), p. 11.