

Another Day

Biblical reflections for busy teachers



Nobody forgets a Good Teacher

"I am reminded of your sincere faith, which first lived in your grandmother Lois and in your mother Eunice and, I am persuaded, now lives in you also."
2 Timothy 1:5

We each of us have what David Ford calls in *The Shape of Living* a 'community of the heart', made up of those people who are most important to us.* They are the people who, for better, and sometimes too, for worse, have shaped and are shaping what we are and are becoming.

Parents and grandparents figure largely among them. So also do teachers. We can all remember some who influenced us deeply and for good, for, as the old Teacher Training Agency slogan put it, nobody forgets a good teacher.

The Irish poet, Micheal O'Siadhail, to whose wonderful works David Ford's book introduced me, writes in 'Foster-Figure' of the ongoing energy that the memory of an old teacher gives him:

"I probe the essence of this energy;
No blandishments or blind approval,
His unblinking trust enticed me,
Fingered some awareness of worth;
In his praise all is possible."[†]

The annual Teaching Awards remind us of this but, although we readily acknowledge it to be true of others, especially of those teachers who have helped to shape us, we are slower to believe that we can be the same kind of influencers in the hearts of those we teach.

Of course, we also remember those teachers whose searing sarcasm or thoughtless dismissal of our efforts have left us deeply scarred. The community of the heart is, sadly, not made up only of those who have helped us.

Some who have long since departed the rooms of our lives have left the lingering presence of a fragrant perfume but others have left an odour that lacks that fragrance. Paul talks in 2 Corinthians 2:15 of our being 'the aroma of Christ' and that was surely what Timothy's mother and grandmother were to him. May it be so of you and me among those we teach today.

Lord, it is not that we want them to remember us but that, in remembering us, they may remember you. May the faith that lives in us live in them also. Amen.

*David F. Ford, *The Shape of Living: Spiritual Directions for Everyday Life*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2004) p. 33.

[†]Micheal O'Siadhail, *Poems 1975 – 1995*, (Newcastle upon Tyne: Bloodaxe Books, 1999) p. 91.