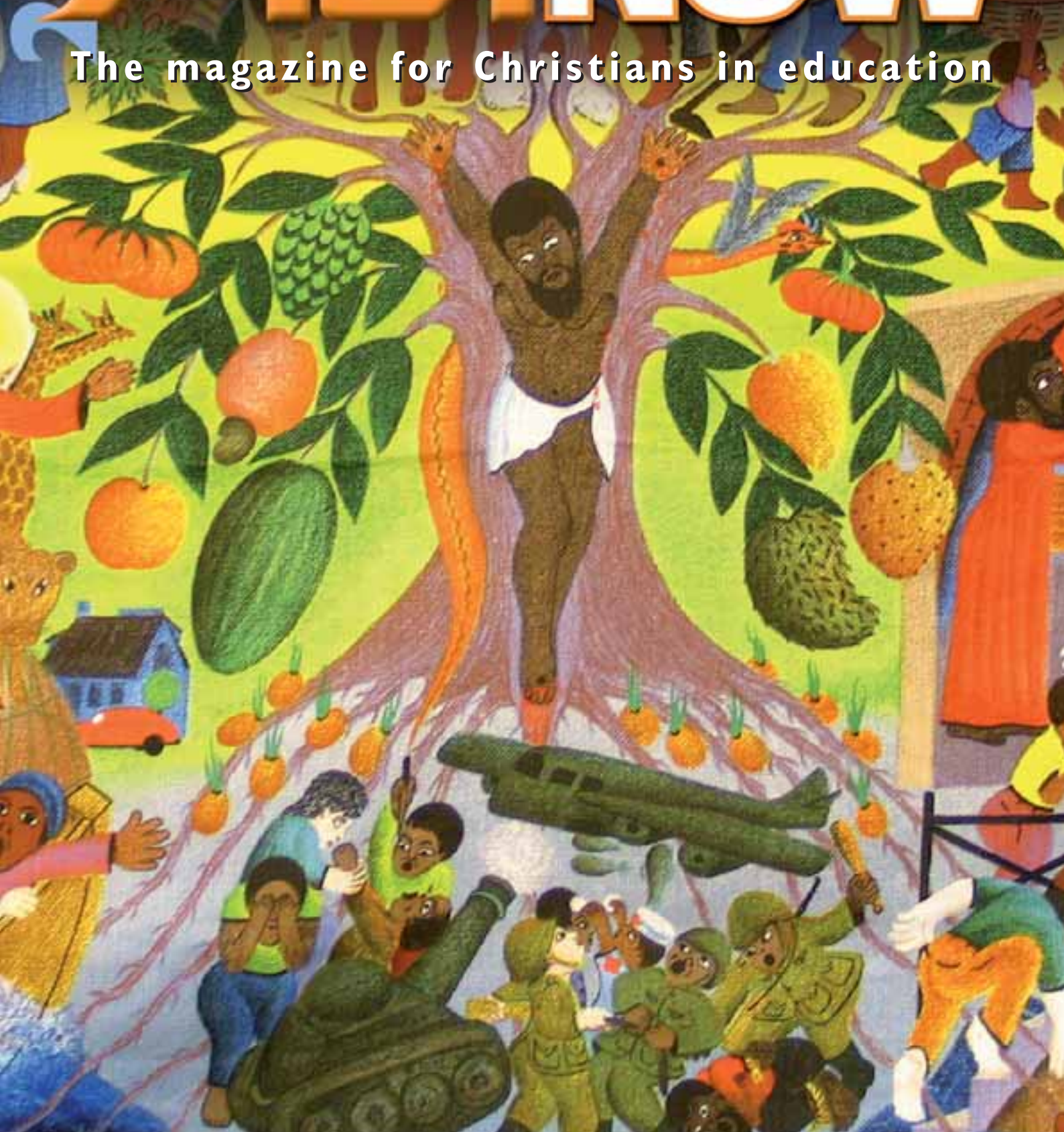


2010
SPRING/
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ACT NOW

The magazine for Christians in education



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Editor's observations

... from everlasting to everlasting
the Lord's love is with those who fear him,
and his righteousness with their children's children –
with those who keep his covenant
and remember to obey his precepts.

Psalms 103:17-18

Welcome

As this is my first *ACT Now* editorial I would like to thank all members who have welcomed Clive and myself since we took up office in September 2009. You will have gathered from previous correspondence that ACT is facing challenges at this time, and is going through a period of transition. So it's time to refer back to our core values. Our name uses three key words, which together encapsulate our *raison d'être*.

Christian This is about Jesus Christ, the Son of God, who died instead of us, so that we can be saved, live knowing His power in our lives, and have assurance about the future.

Teachers ACT is for all those whose professional interest lies in education. ACT includes classroom support staff, local authority officers, specialist and peripatetic teachers, those working in early years settings, in specialist units and colleges.

Association ACT derives its very being from its membership. ACT *is* the members. It is through association that we support each other, and enable much to happen which couldn't happen if we remained apart. So, here are three biblical aspects to association:

- By Association, encourage one another. *'He died for us ... Therefore encourage one another and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing.'*
1 Thessalonians 5:10,11

- By Association, pray for one another. *'And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the saints.'*
Ephesians 6:18
- By Association, build each other up. *'Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen.'*
Ephesians 4:29

Why Membership Director?

My job is to build upon and enhance communication amongst present and future ACT members. Everyone needs to feel valued and cared for. Really, I cannot do this without you, the members, so here are five ways to enhance your ACT membership experience:

- Ensure you are properly connected to ACT. If you have access to a computer make sure you get ACTuality, the new free email update service. – see page 8.
- Pray for the ACT family. Use the helpful prayer diary which comes with this issue of *ACT Now*. Watch out for prayer requests responding to specific situations in the weekly news bulletin, ACTuality – see page 8. *'The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective.'* James 5:16
- Tell Christian colleagues at school and education colleagues at church about ACT. Cards are available – see page 8. Get them to taste and see what ACT is doing and saying on behalf of the Christian community in education. Our finger in the wind estimate is that less than 5% of Christians in education are signed up ACT members. In order to be effective in our work we need to grow.

Contribute to ACT Now

This magazine seeks to encourage readers in their spiritual and professional lives. If you have an angle on a topical educational issue from a Christian perspective, wish to share personal testimony about what God has done in an educational setting, review a book or film, share a lesson plan or classroom resource, please contact the Editor: editor@actupdate.org.uk or 01727 840298.

Presentation and submission

Before you start you are strongly advised to discuss your idea with the editor, direct line 0845 370 2212, who will be pleased to suggest the most effective way of proceeding. See www.actupdate.org.uk/actuality/Writing_for_ACT_Now.pdf for a useful guide. All contributions should be submitted in electronic format and must carry the author's real name and

contact details. Please include: (i) a brief biographical note about the author, 50 to 80 words in length; and (ii) a portrait photograph of the author.

Photographs and illustrations

Photographic prints should be sent as unmounted originals, clearly labelled on the back, giving a photo caption, title and contact name. Digital photos should be sent as JPEGs unmodified from camera or scanner at the highest resolution available (preferably 300ppi). As a rule, the minimum file size is 800kb; however files 2mb or larger are preferred. Illustrations and logos may be included where these are relevant. Line drawings should be in black ink on white paper. All other artwork should be provided as a plain original without lettering or numbering.

Editing and copyright

The editor's decision to publish or reject material is final. The editor reserves the right to edit or amend the content, grammar and style of all items. Once accepted for publication, an article becomes the copyright of the Association of Christian Teachers unless it is reprinted with the permission of another publication with prior copyright.

ACT Now deadline for the Autumn/Winter 2010 edition:

All material should arrive at the ACT Office no later than 15 June 2010.

- Get in touch with your Local Contact – listed on page 34 and 35. Find out what's happening locally.
- Tell your national Directors, Robert and Clive, what kind of support you think Christian education professionals need in order to survive and succeed in today's education scene.

The double challenge facing ACT members

The first challenge faces all who work in education, and that is change: changes in curriculum, examinations, school management, Ofsted frameworks, the working day, holiday patterns, new forms of school, eg Academies and Trust schools with new terms and conditions. Rumoured financial cutbacks will mean uncertainty and, quite possibly, redundancy.

The second challenge is peculiar to Christians, and that is to live and work for Jesus Christ. We need to engage in the debate about religious freedom – and win it for Christians in education. Reports of teachers in difficulties because of their Christian witness are disturbing and disheartening, so Christians need wisdom in how to be effective disciples.

The role of ACT is to articulate to government, policy makers and the public at large what added value Christians in education can bring to society.

- Christians are real people who want the very best for their pupils.
- History shows this. Christian schools have a long pedigree.
- Parents often want their pupils taught in what they perceive to be Christian schools.
- Initiatives to remove the Christian faith from schools would, if successful, end in tragedy.
- Christians are concerned about the Cinderella zone of the curriculum: underpinning values which shape the people we are and the way we live our lives.

Thank you for being an ACT member, to whom this magazine is dedicated. ACT members often find themselves, ordinary people, doing extraordinary things, with the power of God in their lives.

Robert Hall, ACT Membership Director

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Clive's column

Dear Members,

I am delighted to have been given the opportunity to join ACT as Director, Strategy. I work for ACT one day a week. My background is 32 years in primary education, the last sixteen of those as Head Teacher of an urban primary school. I completed my time in school in August 2009.

My job with ACT is crucial and urgent. I have the task of examining everything ACT does and to ask the questions, 'Why are we doing it?' and 'How are we doing it?' I have the task of implementing change where needed.

I have begun to build upon and initiate relationships with other Christian strategic partners, and thank them for their support and prayers.

My other main task for ACT is to build up a Christian voice for members, on education related matters, in the media.

As we enter an election period I will be seeking some answers from all three main parties on educational, religious and spiritual matters. I will, of course, share the responses with you.

I thank you in anticipation of your prayers for the future format of ACT, for Robert and myself.

The work you do in and with schools from a Christian perspective is vital to the lives of children and young people across the country. The work ACT does must support and encourage you in that vital work.

I hope you will get in touch if you have a question, comment or wish to offer help.

- Let's make sure, together, as we go forward, that every school in this country is being prayed for.
- Let's make sure that as Christians in education we can continue to share aspects of our faith.
- Let's make sure God continues to have his place in our schools.

Bless you.

Clive Ireson, ACT Director, Strategy

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What I did last

One might be tempted to count down the days until the long summer holiday. I am certainly looking forward to the coming summer but even now I feel the urge to recall my adventures in August last year, more specifically, my adventures with the aptly named Capital Kids 2009.

What is it?

Capital Kids is a mission organised by London City Mission. It runs over two weeks during the summer with the aim of bringing the gospel of Jesus in a fun and non-threatening way, whilst remaining faithful to the Bible, to London's 5–10 year olds regardless of their faith, background or wealth. This is done by running fun days at various locations. Each day runs from 10.30am until 3.30pm and includes arts and craft, outdoor play, singing, praise, Bible stories, small group discussions reviewing the story and lunch time entertainment.

How did I hear about Capital Kids and why did I sign up?

I discovered Capital Kids whilst browsing on London City Mission's website. I have always loved



Ijeoma Nwaneri lives in London and is working on a part-time primary PGCE at the Institute of Education, University of London.

children's work and wanted to do Scripture Union summer camps and missions since university but was generally tied up over the summer. I really wanted to do something this year and I was particularly interested in Capital Kids, because, as a Londoner, I am especially keen on reaching London's children and am a fan of London City Mission's work in general. Furthermore, being part of the Capital Kids team would mean working with and learning from people who have been serving London and London's children for a long time. In the end, my CRB came back the week before Capital Kids' start date, just in time! This was something I asked God for if He wanted me to do it. I also felt encouraged to continue putting God's kingdom first in how I use my time. So with both of these nudges, I confirmed that I wanted to be part of the team!

What happened?

On the first day of the two weeks the team met for team building and training. The team consisted of twelve people with a range of experience, from very little to lots, and from different countries and backgrounds and ages. There were folks from the USA, the Netherlands and Northern Ireland, and whilst some were entering university others were nearing half a century. We all, except two young dads, lived together at the team base in Bermondsey!

The team worked together to run eight fun days with the theme 'Who's in the House?', two in Wimbledon, two in Tottenham, two in Bermondsey and two in Peckham. We also ran two Sunday services at churches which hosted the days, and joined and sang at a community barbeque organised by one of the churches.

A typical day consisted of about an hour of free play, both in the morning and afternoon, followed by the children then coming to the main area to sing, play some games and then watch a 'live link' of Mr Big's journey around the world to find God. The videos cleverly hinted at a need for a story. The stories included Zacchaeus, The Two Builders and Our Heavenly House. After each story there was small group time.



Action shots from Queen's Road

summer...

I got to tell two stories: Zacchaeus and The Gospel with Kevin the Coconut. This was daunting at first as there was a range in age and attention spans, and I was sometimes worried that the story might be too long but if I quickened it up, I might speak too fast. These concerns encouraged me to pray and practise and it was encouraging when God answered! All team members had a small group or shared one, and were responsible for this group for the two days. The small group was a positive challenge. In one group, I had church kids and unchurched kids. In another, I had a very interactive child with a reserved child. In one group, I had a very disruptive child together with a very composed child. I really enjoyed the opportunity this diversity provided to develop general leadership and pastoral skills. I feel that I have grown in love for misbehaving children. My teaching placement was at times taxing due to managing behaviour, and it was encouraging to hear children at fun days say or show that I understood them and that I identified with them. Furthermore, something I distinctly remember is that God helped me to jump out of my comfort zone for the final location and take a small group of five to seven year olds. I initially felt that the questions were complex so I had been sticking to the older kids. It is amazing how one can sense God more in weakness. My co-leader and I were able to explain things and refine the questions to be age appropriate and it was truly enjoyable.

Were there any key memories or praise points?

- The amount of planning and organisation that had gone into each day. Everything flowed! Praise God for his favour and the Capital Kids' chief leaders!
- The team was fun and I learnt a lot from them.
- A ten year old girl in my small group openly said this was the first time she had heard Bible stories and it was something she liked about the day. I was sincerely surprised by this and challenged not to presume things and, moreover, that God is using us to reach a generation.
- A very behaviourally challenged boy was in my small group. He was very playful with me and



Our van



First team dinner

wanted to gain my attention. I really thank God for meeting him and being able to be patient and really love and learn from him. It was an answer to prayers after having some disruptive children in my school teaching class, and thinking I need more experience with them and how to love them. He hugged me on the last day, which pleasantly surprised and touched me. It really encouraged my heart to know that the fun days were open to all types of children. I am so inspired by this! Yes, praise God for the local centres that regularly open their doors to all types of children.

Prayer points

- For all the children who came: that God will bring them to places where the seeds will be watered. Pray for the workers at Christian centres and clubs and for more volunteers to support them.
- For Capital Kids 2010. For the planning of the two weeks and the recruitment of team members.

Why not consider joining the Capital Kids Team for summer 2010? You don't need to be an expert children's worker but you do need a love for God and children! Would your church or area like to host a fun day?

For more information go to the London City Mission website: www.lcm.org.uk

'ACTuality has been a great help to me to be able to post info to my Head to keep him posted on certain issues. Thanks so much. Keep it up this year.'

'Thanks for this new communication initiative.'

'ACTuality is great. Loads of information. I wish it had been thought of years ago. Thank you.'

'Thank you so much for doing all the work of finding all these pieces of information.'

'Can I thank you for all the work and dedication that goes into the production of the ACT updates. They are a most encouraging and positive addition to the ACT provision, supporting Christian teachers who can feel very isolated in their own work situations.'

'Thank you for the update. The article on trade unions is most helpful and an example of how ACT can advise Christian teachers without prejudice.'

ACTuality

What is ACTuality?

ACTuality is a new provision from the Association of Christian Teachers. Towards the end of each week during term time we issue an email bulletin containing news of events and training and reflections which relate to the issues which impact on Christian education professionals. Using ACT's extensive network capability, we gather and distil this information into a convenient web page. Many of the briefly described items contain hyperlinks to other pages stored on the ACT website and external web pages, enabling members to select the information which interests them. ACTuality embraces issues from a wide perspective: early years foundation stage through to post sixteen.

Why ACTuality?

We live firmly in the days of instant web-based communications. By contrast, newspapers and magazines have become most suited to reflective material and cannot respond quickly to topical workplace issues. For example, I am writing this over the Christmas period. The editorial, design and production timetable for *ACT Now* is formidable. Of course *ACT Now* is a very valuable resource

and has a feel of permanence. It can be picked up and put down at any time. You may be reading this on the train, on the beach or in the staff room. On the other hand, an electronic channel such as ACTuality can be highly responsive to situations in schools. For example, it's important for members to know quickly how the new Ofsted framework is working. Education professionals need to know the issues and the latest thinking, even if sometimes they don't like what they hear. Only then, are they best placed to give a robust, thoughtful and spiritual response.

ACTuality comes in the simple form of a text email delivered directly to your computer email inbox. You can open it at leisure. Click the link into the website and simply scroll down the items to find topics which interest you, and click for more details as appropriate. You can do all this at your leisure. Website statistics reveal that members read ACTuality at every hour of the day and night, except between two and three am! Not so surprising when you remember that our members work right around the globe.

And the best thing is, it doesn't clutter your house; no need to store or recycle. When you're done, just

Email alert to members most weeks



The ACTuality web page



delete. Previous weeks' bulletins are archived on the website, so that nothing is lost.

ACTuality includes relevant news from the DCSF, Ofsted, QCDA, TeacherNet and other government and non-government agencies as appropriate. There are hot links into education news stories which consistently inhabit the national daily newspapers, and it's good to see what's being said even if the stories are not the whole truth. News on issues around child poverty, trafficking, diplomas, Academies and Trust status are included, so that Christians can be better informed. ACT works with partner organisations such as The Evangelical Alliance (UK), Scripture Union and the Stapleford Centre, so ACTuality reflects news from partners too. We also include prayer requests and biblical quotations to inspire and encourage.

Members who are planning to provide training and support initiatives, or who are involved with local agencies working amongst young people can, and do, submit items to share with members. ACT already has a facility for advertising job vacancies on the website, and ACTuality can draw members' attention to specific vacancies.

How to receive ACTuality

The simple way to sign up for this completely free service is to go to www.actupdate.org.uk/actuality and click on the subscribe link. Just give us your name and we'll add you to the list. Of course, recipients are able to unsubscribe at any time. Please do encourage colleagues, friends and church members who have an interest in education to sign



The 'Get a slice of the ACTION' postcards.

up for ACTuality. If you send them a copy of the email, they will have access to the on-line sign up process.

Seated at breakfast at a Christian conference a few months ago, I got into conversation with a teacher. As you might expect, I mentioned the Association of Christian Teachers. 'I didn't know there was one', was her reply. If you'd like to make this experience a bygone myth, then share ACTuality with other Christians in your school, or other education professionals in your church. To support you in doing this, ask for a supply of 'Get a slice of the ACTION' postcards. Ring the ACT office 01727 840298 or email act@christians-in-education.org.uk

'It's good to be in touch with ACT. At 83 I don't have much contact with schools and teachers these days!'

'This is a terrific service I greatly appreciate!'

'Thank you for adding me to your circulation list. I am i/c pastoral care and student counselling and my students are mainly from the mission community and so the support will be most welcome.'

'I have appreciated using the link www.actupdate.org.uk/actuality.html Thank you!'

'Another brilliant edition of the "ACTuality" bulletin. Great stuff!'

'Delighted with ACTuality; it is an excellent device to keep lively interest in ACT and in Christian education generally.'

'... a good diverse group of news items and ideas to provoke thought.'

Examples of various websites



Caring for God's world together

Beverly Evans, for A ROCHA UK, describes this Christian environmental and nature conservation movement. Beverly is A Rocha's Marketing Manager. It's her job to inform the Christian community of A Rocha UK and the work it does. And, by the way, the name is Portuguese for 'the rock'.

A Rocha UK is a Christian environmental and nature conservation charity. We believe that caring for creation is not an optional extra for Christians, but part of worship, discipleship and mission.

We help individuals, groups, churches and communities think about their use of the environment and help them to develop practical ways to care for people and the planet, both locally and globally.

Through our projects and our growing national network of A Rocha Friends, we aim to provide education, support and opportunities for everyone to be involved with caring for God's world. From making small changes in our own lifestyle to volunteering at one of A Rocha's practical projects, there is something for each of us to try.

In April 2010, we will be launching our GCSE RE Education Pack, entitled 'Whose World Is It Anyway?' This six week course is presented on DVD with downloads and accompanying student booklets. The launch comes after successful trials conducted in schools over the past 12 months – see the next issue of *ACT Now* for further details and a review of the materials.

A range of A Rocha's educational material, much of which can be downloaded free, can be found by visiting arocha.org.uk/resources. We would also like to invite you to become an A Rocha Friend.

Becoming an A Rocha Friend is free and we will send you a booklet about A Rocha, our magazine three times a year and our monthly enews so that you can learn more, find out what others are doing and join in. To become a Friend of A Rocha, please send your full name, address (including post code), phone number and email details to uk@arocha.org

or post your details to us at:

A Rocha UK
FREEPOST (SCE 13093)
Southall
UB1 3BR

You can also take a look at our web site
www.arocha.org.uk

Get inspired, get informed and get involved – see what you can do to change the world!



Response to the Consultation on the GTCE Code of Conduct

The General Teaching Council for England, is the professional body for teaching. Its overall purpose is to work in the public interest to help improve standards of teaching and learning. The GTC recently consulted on a change to its Code of Conduct. The proposed amendments were widely reported and debated in the national press. ACT's Company Secretary and Trustee, Colin Broomfield, an experienced former Headteacher and previous Association of School and College Leaders, ASCL Executive member, was tasked with assembling ACT's response. We believe, from informal feedback, that ACT's response was influential in the final outcome.

The Association of Christian Teachers is a non-denominational Christian membership organisation of about 1,500 members, which provides professional and spiritual support to Christians engaged in pre-school, primary, middle, secondary, special, college and university education in England. This response to the consultation is from the ACT Board, composed of teachers and other education professionals elected by the members.

Summary

SECTION A a welcome for the principles of the Code of Conduct.

SECTION B a specific concern in the light of recent events.

SECTION C some specific proposals to overcome potential difficulties.

Section A

ACT welcomes a Code of Conduct that sets out the high standards which those in the

The eight principles of the Code, and many of its component statements, derive from specific Christian principles

ACT welcomes a Code of Conduct that sets out the high standards which those in the education profession expect of themselves

education profession expect of themselves, and which members of the public expect of the profession. It welcomes the GTCE's affirmation of these high standards, particularly at a time when standards in teaching are often in marked contrast to the standards displayed in other areas of public life.

2 ACT draws attention to the fact that such standards for teachers are derived from Christian principles, and that when proper training colleges for teachers were first established over 150 years ago, the majority were set up by the churches whose Christian leaders did much to establish, on Christian principles, the professional standards expected today. Thus the eight principles of the Code, and many of its component statements, are derived from specific Christian principles such as love, care for others, integrity and respect for God's creation, and not just from the secular humanitarian ideals which have subsequently been based on them. Christian teachers should also be motivated by specific faith teaching relevant to the principles of the Code of Conduct; for example:

PRINCIPLE 1 The wellbeing of children at the heart of professional practice (Mark 10:14, Luke 9:48)

PRINCIPLE 2 Professional standards (Titus 2:7)

PRINCIPLE 3 High expectation for learning (Proverbs 22:6)

PRINCIPLE 4 Respect for all, regardless of race and religion (Luke 10:30-37, Acts 10:32-35)

PRINCIPLE 5 Respect for parents (Exodus 20:12, Ephesians 6:1)

PRINCIPLES 6 AND 7 Respect for colleagues
(Romans 12:3-8)

PRINCIPLE 8 Standards of honesty and integrity
(Psalm 51:6)

Section B

3 ACT welcomes the fact that part of the Code's intention is to promote respect for religion and belief, especially at a time when religious belief is often demeaned in public debate.

ACT naturally expects its members to respect professional standards and expectations, that they do not abuse their position of trust with students, and maintain a proper balance in presenting all issues in the classroom. This does not, however, require teachers and others working in education to forgo entirely their individual rights to hold religious beliefs. For Christian teachers, for whom we speak, their Christian faith requires them to live out their belief in their daily lives. To behave otherwise would be hypocritical and in conflict with the Code's core value of honesty and integrity. ACT affirms the right of teachers to express and live out their personal views on a range of matters such as lifestyle, religious, moral, scientific and other beliefs provided this is done in a balanced context and with proper respect for the views of others. The Code itself affirms the importance of respect for religion and beliefs.

4 Members have, however, expressed concern that principle 4 as it stands may possibly be misused to restrict and limit the sincere and non-harmful expression of religious belief in the professional context. Such concerns are not lightly expressed, but are based upon recent examples where such restrictions have been imposed upon Christian professionals seeking to express beliefs which are in no way detrimental to others but are fundamental to their Christian faith. The examples cited are:

- The case of nurse Caroline Petrie suspended by North Somerset Primary Care Trust for offering to pray for a patient. The trust cited the Nursing and Midwifery Council Code requiring 'personal and professional commitment to equality and diversity', in terms similar to principle 4 of the GTC code.
- The case of Pilgrim Homes, a Christian care home, whose funding was withdrawn by

Brighton Council which claimed that it failed to comply with 'fair access and diversity' policies by refusing to question elderly residents about their sexual orientation.

- The case of Lillian Ladele, disciplined by Islington Council for refusing to conduct homosexual civil partnership ceremonies, whose case was upheld by the Employment Appeal Tribunal because to do otherwise would 'send the wrong message to staff... about its commitment to equality'.
- The case of an experienced foster mother whose approval to foster was withdrawn by a local council because a girl from a Muslim background expressed an interest in Christianity while in her care.

In the first two cases the public bodies had to withdraw their complaint and suffered embarrassment and loss of reputation; the fourth case is still under review. These are examples of the misuse of well-intentioned codes, mistakenly applied.

Finding a way to express potentially conflicting rights is extremely difficult

- 5** Public debate in this area is only just coming to terms with the difficult issue of conflicting 'goods': desirable 'rights' which may nevertheless conflict. We do not blame the GTCE because it has not yet addressed this issue adequately, though we hope it will now do so. ACT affirms the importance of promoting equality, in the sense of valuing people equally, of valuing equally as people, those who hold different opinions, and of understanding and appreciating different views.
- 6** There are, however, unexamined confusions about promoting and valuing diversity as such, with which many Christians, and people of other faiths and none, have serious difficulty. If we are truly to value beliefs, we must understand and appreciate those who, because of their beliefs, may not be able to accept that some diverse opinions or behaviours are acceptable. Indeed, the teaching profession already refuses permission to promote certain diverse views such as the acceptability of race hatred, slavery, or holocaust denial. Finding a way to express potentially conflicting rights is extremely difficult. We simply suggest that the language used in the Code needs more careful examination, and to be used more

ACT welcomes the fact that part of the Code's intention is to promote respect for religion and belief

'Respect for individuals who hold different views' suggests a more helpful way forward than 'valuing diversity'

cautiously, if the GTCE is to avoid the kind of embarrassment and damage to reputation recently experienced by other bodies, and if teachers are to avoid the distress and harm of unjustified criticism experienced by other well-intentioned professionals.

Section C

7 ACT believes, therefore, that Christians, and others who hold strongly to values without threatening or demeaning others, need greater protection from the possible misuse of the Code. The principle of protection from undue pressure for those who do not wish to teach RE or attend collective worship has long been recognised. ACT suggests it is time that similar protection from pressure is offered to those who wish to express their beliefs within a professional code for teachers.

8 We make two very specific suggestions for consideration:

8.1 That the words ... 'and value diversity' be removed from principle 4. Recent examples have shown the potential for confusion and harm, where the desire to promote diversity has itself been used to prohibit diversity. Bullet point 5 of principle 4 already makes this point in a more helpful way. Core Values, bullet point 5, speaks helpfully of 'Respect', and it may be that 'Respect for individuals who hold different views' suggests a more helpful way forward than 'valuing diversity'.

8.2 That the GTCE considers how it can improve its existing guidance, for example by indicating what the Code is not intended to prevent. Appendix Two, 'interpreting the Code of Conduct', is already helpful in indicating one set of parameters, by exemplifying instances of the kind of completely unacceptable behaviour which the Code is intended to deal with. In the light of recent experiences it might also be helpful to give similar instances of behaviour which would not be likely to lead to action under the Code.

For example, principle 4 might include something on the lines of: 'The GTCE is very unlikely to take action where: a teacher has

expressed their own personal beliefs within the context of a balanced presentation of an issue; where a teacher's personal beliefs make it impossible for them to promote (as opposed to present) a particular point of view; or where a teacher in demonstrating their positive commitment to the Code's general principles has done in this in a way which is influenced by their personal beliefs.'

Conclusion

ACT hopes the GTCE will consider carefully the potential for harm to its own reputation, and that of teachers potentially at risk, if some changes are not made, and offers the above constructive proposals as a first step in resolving a difficulty which has implications not only for the GTCE but in the wider field. We trust that it will be possible to avoid the risk of more serious legal challenges which might otherwise arise.

■ Colin Broomfield, Director and Trustee, on behalf of the Board of ACT



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Thanks to Carol

Richard Wilkins, a former ACT General Secretary, writes to mark the retirement, after nearly 23 years, of the Association's longest-serving employee, Carol Horne.

'Membership' was the core of her job as it has been the core of ACT's existence, and she tried to know as many of the members as she could, individually

Carol Horne started working in the office of the Association of Christian Teachers at the end of April 1987. At first sight, this might not have seemed a huge job. The only work she had to manage was her own. The General Secretary was the only other staff member based at the office.

Working conditions were not plush, and equipment was primitive. The office was a dimly lit room in a basement under a bookshop in St Albans. Carol received all telephone calls, opened post, typed letters from my ponderous dictation, circulated committee and other group papers, typed minutes, reports, press releases and articles. She issued requests for annual subscription renewals, and recorded and banked the returned cheques; similarly with occasional financial appeals. She kept the books and compiled financial reports for the Treasurer. She organised the termly mailing to ACT's members. She administered conferences and exhibition displays. These are just the tasks I can remember.

Ten years before Carol came, soon after I began working for ACT in the Scripture Union building, a senior colleague said to me 'The trouble with ACT is that it's the wrong size. It's too big to be run by teachers in their spare time, and it's too small to pay for an adequate number of staff.' The membership was the same size then, and the full-time staff equivalent of Carol was three. However, IT had entered our lives by the time Carol came. We had a BBC B computer, and our 2,300 membership records were kept on four 5.5 inch floppy disks. Searching and label printing were slow.

We moved quickly into the PC world, so to speak, and Carol has been superb at making a long succession of new computers and software do what we needed them to do. Thanks to showers of blessing that the Lord rained down on ACT in 1989-90, we were able to employ an additional part-time secretary. Nevertheless, significant electronic machines always far outnumbered staff, and this paradoxically focussed ACT's human interactions. If you telephoned ACT, Carol was nearly always the person you first spoke to, and she was very often the only person you needed to hear. We didn't do recorded lists of keypad options. Welcoming, caring, knowledgeable and laterally-thinking, Carol knew your question's answer or someone else who could answer it. Callers would frequently be surprised and encouraged to be recognised by name, sometimes only voice, by Carol whose memory for such attributes was outstanding. 'Membership' was the core of her job as it has been the core of ACT's existence, and she tried to know as many of the members as she could, individually.



Carol Horne, never keen on having her photo taken, at work in the office some years ago.

Carol and her husband Michael are deeply involved in the music ministry of their church. Songs of faith must have fortified her for some of ACT's anxious times, but the organisation for which she worked so hard provided experiences of faith's reward. 'The wrong size' it may have been, but God has kept it and its service secure through all 39 years of its existence. Carol's long service has been truly priceless. Her responsibilities were varied enough, and often heavy enough, for all of the three staff members who had once borne them together. But for 22 years she has carried the administration with unfailing loyalty to ACT, its members and the Saviour we all represent. She has routinely travelled second, third and fourth miles in their service. We owe her, at the very least, many thanks, and we wish her a happy retirement.

■ Richard Wilkins

Arthur Jones comments on the work of Carol Horne

When someone retires there is always a mixture of sadness when saying goodbye but joy in anticipating a well-earned rest.

This was the case when, at the 2009 ACT Day, we formally said goodbye to Carol Horne who, for 22 years, worked for ACT, managing the vital office operation. At times it was difficult to see where Carol ended and ACT began, such was her commitment to the Association. Over the years, she worked with four 'Directors' and a substantial number of Trustees. It was a delight to be able to acknowledge Carol's work for the Association of Christian Teachers at the ACT Day 2009 in London. Carol certainly has had to endure the ups and downs of office life, many a budget crisis, and a urgent move of premises, at the same time embracing new technologies. Indeed, there have been times when Carol has been the glue which held the Association of Christian Teachers together. And we have to thank Carol for working longer than perhaps she would have liked in order to see ACT through a period without a Director. Certainly we owe Carol a debt of gratitude. As you know, the Trustees invited ACT members to contribute to Carol's leaving gift. The response was fittingly generous and I was delighted to be able to present it to Carol on your behalf.

■ Arthur Jones, ACT Chairman of Trustees

Carol Horne writes to members after ACT Day 10 October 2009

Dear Members,

I should just like to thank those members who contributed to my retirement present which I received on ACT Day 2009. It was a wonderful surprise to receive such a generous gift and I will choose something which will be a reminder of my days with ACT. It has been a privilege to work for ACT all these years and I feel very humbled that God placed me there to support such an important organisation, and working with the membership I have got to know

many members through the years, and have very much appreciated the letters and kind words and support which you have given me.

I pray that ACT will go from strength to strength in the coming years and continue to be a voice for Christians working in education.

Again, many thanks for your most generous present.

God bless you,

Carol Horne



OPPORTUNITY KNOCKS

Curriculum for Excellence is the title of a fundamental rethink of Scottish schooling which is currently under way and will roll out until at least 2016. Richard Coton, Head Teacher of Monifieth High School, Dundee, sees it as the greatest opportunity in 30 years to develop a system of education in harmony with Christianity.

The story behind the Values of Curriculum for Excellence, or CfE, is interesting and significant. Whereas every other part of the architecture of this vast scheme has been endlessly drafted and redrafted, the Values arose out of a single conversation among the original core planning team. They'd been hard at work for many days and weeks when someone pointed out that CfE had not yet been based on a coherent set of values. More or less immediately, someone else in the group suggested the four Values on the Mace of the Scottish Parliament:

- Wisdom
- Justice
- Compassion
- Integrity.

The idea commanded immediate support. There was no further debate.

A Christian world-view?

An unambiguous statement of moral absolutes, at the core of Scotland's radical new approach to education; in a relativistic culture, how remarkable is that? And such superb values too – recognisably biblical. You have to ask 'Whose hand is behind that remarkable turn of events?'

And make no mistake about it, the moral lead within the new curriculum is a central factor. Do you remember the Life skills approach to Social Education in the 1980s? 'Education must be morally neutral. We'll help you develop tools for life, but how you use these skills is entirely up to you.' Young Adolf could easily have got top grades: after all, he was extremely skilful! OK, I'm pushing it, and I'm certainly not saying that the average conscientious teacher took things so far along the relativistic road. But the new world of Curriculum for Excellence is refreshingly different. In line with an increasingly common international trend, the new Scottish curriculum is defined in terms of outcomes, not inputs. This offers greater flexibility and a more professional role for teachers, and at the same time provides clearer focus. And that focus has led teachers to ask a fundamental question, 'What is education for?'

The answer in Scotland is given firstly in high-level terms. We should be helping young people to develop in four areas described as Capacities:

- Successful learners
- Confident individuals
- Effective contributors
- Responsible citizens.

Note the holistic view of education and the clear moral lead. You cannot be a successful individual

Curriculum for Excellence is designed to put Scotland at the forefront of educational development world-wide

unless you also learn how to serve others and play a responsible role in the world around you. Sitting beneath the four Capacities are very precise Experiences and Outcomes, arranged in four levels for ages 3–15, with a senior phase beyond, defined significantly by external examinations. Curriculum for Excellence is designed to put Scotland at the forefront of educational development world-wide, and is certainly attracting a great deal of attention internationally. We need to celebrate the remarkable fact that so much of it is in complete harmony with Christianity.

Experiencing tomorrow – today

I am really blessed to have been given the opportunity to lead a school that has so many great pupils and great staff. As a result, we've embraced Curriculum for Excellence with immense energy and commitment. We've implemented the Level 3 outcomes, complete with major interdisciplinary elements, a year ahead of the government's timescale, which envisages roll out of Level 3 in secondary, and Levels 1 and 2 in Primary, in August 2010. Consequently, we're now almost half-way through our new S1 course. For us, therefore, tomorrow has already arrived. While we've made mistakes, and are still on a sharp learning curve, it does mean that we can share our experiences with others.

What have we learned? Well, firstly, the bedrock of Curriculum for Excellence is not the Outcomes. It's actually much wider, spreading out to a radical view of what twenty-first century schools should be like. You could say that Curriculum for Excellence is about two things: Doing School Together and Making Sense of Learning, which pretty much embraces everything that a modern school is about. Like many schools, we have been looking at these areas for several years, so in a certain sense we've actually been doing much of Curriculum for Excellence for a decade. One thing

You could say that Curriculum for Excellence is about two things: Doing School Together and Making Sense of Learning

that nearly everyone is agreed about – the title, Curriculum for Excellence, is deeply misleading. What we're involved with embraces everything from management structures and governance to purposes and pedagogy. Particularly for those outside Scotland, it may be helpful to analyse what we are doing in terms of these two organisers. After all, we are all concerned with learning and community.

In practical terms, Doing School Together or Community, means giving pupils loads of responsibility, both in the classroom and in helping run the school. That, by the way, can be a great opportunity for Christian pupils to have an influence. It also means working in partnership with the wider community – which gives superb opportunities for local churches and Christian organisations to work in partnership with the school and serve it. If you haven't done so already, send today for a copy of CARE for Scotland's DVD 'Keeping Faith in Schools: How Churches are Making a Difference'. It really opens up exciting possibilities, and is just as relevant outside Scotland.

For our school, Making Sense of Learning includes a major restructuring of parts of the curriculum around interdisciplinary projects which we've found our pupils respond to most positively. Real-life contexts have always been pursued by teachers, but the new Experiences and Outcomes really point you in this direction. Have a look at the CARE website for a series of School Case Studies which give a whole range of practical ideas. The case studies are actually linked to the Draft Outcomes, but they all work just as well with the final Experiences and Outcomes. They are also equally relevant to other educational systems. If you look at them now, there'll be at least one or two which will save you work as you develop the curriculum – and will help you legitimately introduce your faith into a wide range of contexts, both primary and secondary. You'll find them at www.care.org.uk. Click on Parliaments/Assemblies, select Scotland, select Information and Resources, select School Case Studies, select Secondary Case Studies.

As I mentioned at the start, however, the biggest shift brought about by Curriculum for Excellence is a broadening of our view of what education is all about. The emphasis on Health and Wellbeing, the Four Capacities, the underlying messages about



Continued on page 20



Going to work in Kazakhstan

From Southend to central Asia. ACT member, Peter Tryon, describes moving outside his comfort zone to a former Soviet republic and ninth largest country in the world.

Tien Shan International School, TSIS, is in Almaty, Kazakhstan. The school provides low cost, high quality education for the children of expatriate families who work in the region. TSIS has an excellent reputation as an academic school, and has a strong philosophy of leadership and character development. The school currently has just under two hundred students on roll, from reception to year twelve.

Why did I choose to teach overseas?

Before I started my PGCE, I had a desire to use teaching to serve God overseas. I believe God's calling was revealed in my desires and interests. I love meeting people, going on adventures and experiencing different cultures. After completing my PGCE, I spent two years teaching at Southend High School for Girls, Essex. I really enjoyed working at this school. However, I knew it was the right time to act on God's calling. I handed in my notice of resignation before having the necessary funding to go overseas, and God showed His faithfulness, as within five months I had received generous support from friends, family and colleagues. I actually

Since teaching at the school, I have developed more as a professional than I have in any other stage of my career

received more money than I needed for one year, so I am now in my second year.

What has teaching at TSIS been like?

Serving at TSIS has been an enriching experience. Since teaching at the school, I have developed more as a professional than I have in any other stage of my career. As a science teacher, I enjoy practical work. However, money, resources and facilities are available, but they are limited. This has provided an excellent challenge to deliver engaging lessons, along with the opportunity to carry out more dangerous experiments. I have found it challenging to adapt to an American-based curriculum used at the school. One of the most striking differences is the high expectation of parents and students. For example, the grade boundary for an A is 90–100%. This does not necessarily mean the standards are lower in British schools, because assessment is a very different process. Teachers design the tests used for assessment. When students graduate from the school, they receive a document called the school transcript that lists their grades in specific subjects and this serves as evidence to gain university places. The advantage of this system is that teachers are able to assess specific learning objectives fairly and at a level that is appropriate to the students in the class. The disadvantage, however, is that assessment is not standardised with other schools.

The atmosphere amongst staff and the wider community is encouraging and inclusive. I have been able to build many relationships with people from a diverse range of cultural backgrounds and enjoyed some really good food too! The community is comprised of Koreans, Americans, Canadians, Australians and South Africans. Most importantly, I have found it necessary to depend on God in many ways and I have been able to witness God's faithfulness in my life. As well as meeting my financial needs, God has also given me many opportunities to build great friendships and become involved in other exciting ministries such as helping at a special needs orphanage and teaching at a Bible study for young professionals.

Where next for me?

Malaysia has been on my heart for some time and just recently God has opened the door for me to work there. In August 2010, I am undertaking a head of chemistry position at an international school in Malaysia. This is a secular school and a paid position. I am hoping to save money in order to attend Bible College.

Would you be interested in teaching at Tien Shan?

I would strongly recommend TSIS to anyone who is prepared to serve God overseas. The school recruits qualified Christian teachers from around the world, all of whom serve as volunteers. If you would like to work in a dynamic, exciting and caring, international community please contact recruitment@tienshanschool.org

What institutional challenges is TSIS facing?

We are in the ongoing process of applying for accreditation with the Council of International Schools, CIS and the Association of Christian Schools International, ACSI. The process of



Snowboarding is a hobby Peter took up last winter and he loves it!

accreditation will ensure that the curriculum is recognised as valid when compared to other schools. In order to gain accreditation the school has to ensure, firstly, its curriculum is well documented and implemented, and, secondly, the school must upgrade its campus.

How does TSIS develop its curriculum?

It is essential for TSIS to have an internally standardised curriculum. An internally standardised curriculum means that all teachers in the school are teaching relevant concepts to an appropriate level and assessing these concepts in a fair and consistent way. Over the past years, teachers from around the world have been working on curriculum documents to ensure that the curriculum is internally standardised. I have enjoyed working with colleagues on staff training days to develop the curriculum documents and ensure that the programme of study is standardised across the school. The rich variety of teachers' educational backgrounds and experiences ensures that the curriculum is comprehensive, challenging and varied.

At TSIS we aim to integrate a Christian world-view into the curriculum. The real challenge for teachers is working out specifically what a 'Christian curriculum' entails. When I am involved in the process of lesson planning and curriculum design I find it helpful to consider three principles of Christian education:

- Christian education should encourage and guide the pursuit of truth in all academic disciplines. God has created a universe that is logical, ordered and comprehensible. Therefore all truth, not only theological truth, is valuable and worth learning about.
- Christian education should inspire a sense of excitement, awe and wonder in students. The Bible teaches that God's sovereign attributes



Peter grimaces as a butane rocket goes off with a bang!

are apparent in creation. Therefore studying the beauty and complexity of creation is also a process of learning about the Creator.

- Christian education should encourage the objective study of world-views that contradict Christian values, principles and beliefs. If students are to be prepared for success in a cynical world they need to learn to think for themselves and clearly communicate the reasons for their hope.

What is the building project?

TSIS is currently situated in a building that is short of space and does not meet earthquake safety regulations. The building also lacks facilities that are necessary for accreditation. However, the school is currently in the process of constructing a new building. Our current situation:

- Sold the current property and now renting it for school use.
- Purchased land outside the city as a site for the new school.
- Designing the building and campus.
- Started digging at the site.



The current campus is pleasant but crowded.

- There is enough money to build the main school campus.
- There is not enough money for staff housing, which is important since the school is a long way outside the city.
- There will also be great costs involved in furnishing and equipping the school.

If you would like to give financial support to the building project please contact: buildingcommittee@tienshanschool.org

Opportunity Knocks – continued from page 17

how pupils, staff, parents and the wider community relate to each other – all these lead to a holistic view of education which is much closer to the Bible than Scotland's, and Britain's, traditional tendency to over-emphasise the mind. It's no coincidence that one of the key hothouses of the Enlightenment was in Scotland. We may feel comfortable in the familiar cultural legacy that it has given us, but like all heresies, the Enlightenment was always a subtly dangerous distortion and over-emphasis of just a part of God's truth.

Get praying!

So, are schools finding Curriculum for Excellence easy to implement? And will life be easier in a year's time? To be honest, the answer to both questions is probably, 'No'. Curriculum for Excellence is a fundamental rethinking of what school is all about. The underlying architecture, the thinking and the rationale is coherent – don't let the doubting Thomases tell you differently. But with

something as big as this, it's probably inevitable that communication and roll out have not been as smooth as we'd have liked.

You may not be able to control the national picture, but you certainly can be salt and light in your school. Change is always stressful, and most countries' schools are facing major changes to respond to what is happening in our societies. So – if there's more than one Christian staff member in the school and you don't have a regular prayer meeting, get going right away! If you already meet and pray, be encouraged: it's the most important single thing you can do to support all your colleagues and your pupils. If there's only one of you, get your House Group/Bible Study Group praying for the school. It really is the most important thing you can do.

And don't forget to pray for your Head Teacher, too. Why not ask him or her if he/she would like you to pray for particular aspects of your school's development? Who knows, your Head Teacher might be grateful for all the help he/she can get!

■ Richard Coton

If you would like a copy of the Chaplaincy Policy mentioned in this article, please send me an email. moncotonr@monifiethhigh.angus.sch.uk

You may not be able to control the national picture, but you certainly can be salt and light in your school

Finding a distinctively Christian education for today: a reflective view from the classroom

This is a lecture by ACT member, Tim Pearson, who teaches at Birkdale, a Christian independent school in Sheffield, England. Here, Tim works towards a theology of education based on the Christian concept of love. He begins by explaining the Christian world-view of love, the starting point for our thinking about education. He then describes how our educational response is to Generation Y, the most secularised generation yet. The right response, he believes, is 'world-view education' in which students are taught about the fundamental importance of belief commitments, granting them freedom from secularised thinking and thus greater autonomy. Following the insights of a postmodern theory of knowledge, Tim comments on the way education is inevitably 'value-laden'. He challenges us to think about cross-curricular Christian ethics as a response to this. Lastly, he points to a tension between theology and education. A biblical world-view expresses that human nature is ultimately flawed; we need God to be good and to be wise. A Christian education will need to present this idea but in a critical, educational context. At the same time, Christian teachers will hope to create the possibility for *metanoia* – a 'change of mind' – in their students.

This lecture was first printed in *TISCA News and Views* and is reproduced here with kind permission.

Our start point for educational thinking: the world-view of love

Let's begin with some theology. God is love. *'This is love, not that we loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be an atoning sacrifice for our sins'* 1 John 4:10. I want to construct something of a theology of education which begins and ends with this Christian concept of love. A distinctively Christian education will be distinctively loving.

I have a picture permanently up on my classroom wall: the 'hunger cloth' from Haiti. The picture encapsulates the Christian world-view. The key question for my students is this: 'Why is Jesus being crucified on the tree of knowledge?' The answer is: 'Human nature, once lost and corrupted, is now restored'. The concept of the God of love is, of course, absolutely central. So we have the 'sea of sin' below the tree, full of free human beings, corrupt and sinful. Yet the sin is drawn up into the tree by its roots. Upon it is the sinless Saviour, dying to end that corruption of sin. At the top there is a picture of heaven. There, Adam and Eve are restored. There is a wedding banquet, top right, Matthew 22; swords are beaten into ploughshares, Micah 4, and lions eat straw instead of lambs, Isaiah 11! Creation is restored. Interestingly, on earth now, in the middle section of the picture, the forbidden fruit has changed. Instead, we see the nine fruits of the Spirit. Connect with the Saviour, and your moral change begins in this life, as the Spirit lives in you. CS Lewis calls the love that is God 'gift-love', *caritas*. It is something unnatural, initially beyond our understanding. It is love for the unlovable.

So, if this is our start point, what should our approach be in education? When it comes to pastoral care, I think we know how a loving Christian approach works. We are understanding. We are unconditionally accepting, and, of course, love means discipline, too. But what about the subtleties of teaching and learning? How would a distinctively loving Christian approach make sense in terms of the education we provide?

On the front line would be RE lessons. Here the theology and ethics of our world-view of love can be explored directly: a kind of dialogue between student and faith tradition, developing certain skills and attitudes, bringing opportunities for personal development. So my main focus will be

How would a distinctively loving Christian approach make sense in terms of the education we provide?

the secondary school classroom and some of the lessons we use at Birkdale to present the Christian world-view in an educational context. But there are also broader comments to make about teaching and learning across the curriculum which will, I hope, be relevant to you, whatever your subject and whatever the age of pupil you teach.

Part I Understanding Generation Y

From the outset I would like this Christian education to be relevant to the culture of our students. So let's do some sociology before we consider our educational response. Let me introduce you to Generation Y, although many of you will know them well. First, came the post-war baby-boom generation. Then came Generation X – born early 60s to mid-70s – disaffected, soul-searching. Now we are teaching Generation Y – that's anyone born after 1980. My main source of information for understanding Generation Y is a collaboration between several Christian sociologists and theologians, a book called *Making Sense of Generation Y* (Savage, Collins-Mayo, Mayo and Cray, 2006, Church House Publishing). The authors admit to being quite shocked by what they found. What they expected was a group of young people with

In the sample of 15–25 year olds, the overwhelming feeling was that you do not need God, to be happy



The 'hunger cloth' from Haiti which hangs on Tim's classroom wall.

The relational aspect to Generation Y can be a good resource in the classroom

some sort of spiritual need – a 'God-shaped hole' as we might describe it – and ways of responding to this. They found that this was not the case. In fact, Generation Y are the most significantly secularised generation yet. In the sample of 15–25 year olds, the overwhelming feeling was that you do not need God, to be happy. They appeared to have no need for, and in their language they did not include reference to, a transcendent dimension to life. What they have replaced this with is a focus on immediate relationships: family ties and friendship groups. Despite the divorce rate, the unconditional acceptance of family plays a key role for Generation Y. Parenting has generally improved, according to the study. They are the mobile generation, for ever texting or going onto Facebook. For Generation Y, 'You are who you know'.

Now some of this is a very good thing. The relational aspect to Generation Y can be a good resource in the classroom. But is there a downside?

Life in the happy midi-narrative

In terms of world-view, there is something childlike about Generation Y. The researchers described them as living in a 'happy midi-narrative'. A meta-narrative is, of course, a 'big story' for giving life meaning. Generation Y haven't got that far. The way they think about meaning begins and ends with their day to day existence and immediate relationships, and they are happy. Interestingly, if they are not happy it seems they find it difficult to admit it. That may be one of the reasons why we have an increase in eating disorders amongst young people and in teenage suicide. If the 'happy midi-narrative' is inaccessible for some reason, resources for coping with unhappiness – beyond immediate relationships – are not readily found in Generation Y culture.

It is true that Generation Y's immersion into popular culture, film and music surpasses that of all previous generations. However, according to the researchers, they use media creatively to latch onto an ideal of happy existence which they then direct back to everyday relationships; even when the media concerned involve images and ideas of supernatural worlds: demons, ghosts, etc. These do not prompt deep questions about reality. These ideas are just the metaphorical backdrop to the soap opera story played out in front of them.

Formative not transformative

I wonder how far you recognise this picture. When I did some research myself, I found a significant percentage of those doing compulsory RE at Birkdale – just under 75% – who doubt that religion or faith can be a source of meaning and happiness. Here is a typical remark from one of my first year students: ‘You do not need God for happiness; you need family and people who love you’. Now I’m an RE teacher. I’m bound to have problems with people who are content with a ‘midi-narrative’! To use the jargon, their world-view can be formative, it can bring them meaning, but it cannot be transformative. It cannot change you, it cannot give you a view beyond the immediate, it cannot transform your circumstances. Of course, this is the opposite to Christian spirituality which continually reminds us of the other, the God of love, who saves us and transforms us.

So it seems to me that one of the significant by-products of life in the ‘happy midi-narrative’ is a reduction in freedom. If your world-view only demands that you consider the immediate, and you are trained not to ask questions about existence, about human nature, about what is of ultimate value, then you accept blindly the broad tenets of secular materialism presented to you, post-Christian Western culture.

They will undoubtedly be influenced by consumerism — life is good when you can base your identity on what you have

So, for instance, our Generation Y students will probably have a very reductive understanding of human beings – that we are in essence intelligent animals, the result of a cosmic accident. And that science, at least according to Dawkins, proves it. They will undoubtedly be influenced by consumerism – life is good when you can base your identity on what you have. Generation Y were shown to be significantly influenced by advertising, often knowingly, but then seem powerless to stop adverts from influencing their choices. Perhaps the relative affluence of Generation Y is the point here. At the same time, there are huge issues of social justice in our world today. Over 26,500 children die every day from poverty-related conditions (source: www.globalissues.org): one every three seconds. We’ve all heard the statistics. My point is, left where they are, living in the happy midi-narrative, Generation Y are not going to change the world.

Part 2

A Christian education for Generation Y

So what should our response be? Love! Go back to our world-view of Love, and we find that the start point is human freedom. The creation of free human beings as the *Imago Dei*, morally aware, this is where our meta-narrative begins. It is because we are made by a loving creator for relationship with a loving creator that freedom is so important. So, we have a theological imperative to maximise freedom in our Christian education. We also have an educational imperative to see students free from unthinking attitudes. The very idea of personal development, a key educational objective, involves helping students to understand themselves so that they can take responsibility for who they become. Therefore, our Christian and our educational purposes can combine on this point.

So, we need to shock Generation Y out of blind acceptance of secular materialism. By the tenets of our theology of love, it is simply dehumanising to leave them where they are. And if there is any hope that they will move from a simple formative world-view of immediate meaning to a transformative encounter with the living God, the God of love, they will need to open their eyes to what philosophers call that ‘level of ultimate concern’ where questions of meaning and truth are explored. And they will need time to consider the answers by which they themselves are living.

Education and the postmodern understanding of knowledge

A philosophical diversion will, I hope, be useful here. Broadly speaking, education – along with the perceptions of the rest of the Western world – has moved from the modern to the postmodern. The best way to make sense of this is by looking at epistemology – the theory of knowledge. The modern way was to divide public knowledge – facts – from private, subjective values. The moderns believed that there were objective, absolute, unquestionable ways of building these publicly acknowledged facts. These came from science, from empirical testing and from the application of reason. Religious belief was typically relegated to the private world of individuals and their subjective truths – unverifiable and therefore seriously suspect. What happened next was that Western philosophers came to the revolutionary conclusion that, having thought about it, objective absolute knowledge free from bias and subjectivity

was impossible. So post modernity was born. And it makes perfect sense. Even a scientist working through a theory as objectively as possible, testing empirically, even she must assume that the universe will provide her with intelligible data. Then she must assume that her interpretation of the data is correct, she must begin with some basic assumptions or beliefs. In fact, knowledge requires belief – a foundation of presuppositions on which all knowledge is built.

This postmodern understanding of knowledge has changed the way we think about education. In everything we do, we can trace our decisions to a set of fundamental assumptions about the way the world works. And this is our world-view.

World-view education

So what difference does a postmodern theory of knowledge make? In fact, this is the essential start point for helping Generation Y to think for themselves. If beliefs, whether consciously held or not, always underpin the way humans make sense of the world, but Generation Y are happy to accept a secular view of the world unquestioningly, as if it is fact, we need some ‘world-view education’ in order to give them control over their own beliefs.

So, from the start of our curriculum, identifying beliefs and responding to them is of central importance, usually through picking apart the motives of a biblical or a Christian character. For example, we look at the moment when Saul becomes Paul because his world-view is turned upside down; or the words of Dietrich Bonhoeffer as he is taken away to be executed, ‘*Some will think this is the end, but for me it is the beginning of life...*’

However, in older students, this ‘world-view education’ becomes central. At the start of Y9, I use a simple idea from existentialism to get them

In fact, knowledge requires belief – a foundation of presuppositions on which all knowledge is built

thinking. According to Sartre, there are two kinds of people:

- the ‘authentic’, who think for themselves and take responsibility for their lives;
- the ‘inauthentic’, Sartre’s ‘herd’, the unthinking masses who follow along with the crowd.

We use a clip from the first *Matrix* film to illustrate this. Morpheus is instructing Neo about the nature of the matrix. He describes the mass of ‘inauthentic’ people stuck in the dream-world. Neo is clearly being taught about existentialism! However, there is much more going on in this scene. Look at the artist’s impression of the scene from *The Matrix* next to Piero della Francesca’s *The Baptism of Christ*. The imagery is equivalent: this is Neo’s ‘baptism’. Morpheus is John the Baptist – note the ‘baptistry’ behind them! The pigeon, frozen in time above Neo’s head, is obviously Piero’s dove! The marked difference is the image of Agent Smith, pointing a gun at Neo. I ask my students to find me the equivalent imagery in Piero. The answer is the River Jordan, which in the painting does not look like a river at all but a path to Jerusalem and thus to crucifixion.

Now, we can use the idea of ‘authenticity’ to explore the Christian world-view from which Piero was working. The key question to the students is: ‘Do we need a loving God to intervene in human history to restore human nature to its authentic state?’ And suddenly we are at the next level of



Artist's impression of scene from *The Matrix*



Piero della Francesca's *The Baptism of Christ*

discussion. It's not just, 'Do you make authentic decisions when you are out shopping?' It's, 'Are you an authentic believer? Are you in control of the beliefs that make you who you are?' So, a key component of our distinctively Christian education will be this kind of 'world-view education', challenging students to take responsibility for their beliefs.

Challenging some preconceptions

From this start point, we can deliberately set the content of RE lessons to challenge some of Generation Y's secular preconceptions. At several points in our curriculum we look at modern miracle stories in order to see the limits of secular psychological explanations for the supernatural, showing how psychology can become a belief system itself. We focus on questions of the origins of life. We identify the world-view behind Richard Dawkins' claim that evolution disproves God. A key argument in *The God Delusion* is this: if evolution tells us that life starts off simple and becomes increasingly complex, then you would need vast amounts of time to evolve a being as complex as God. Therefore, says Dawkins, you cannot say that such a being begins the process in the first place. In my opinion this is only slightly more sophisticated than the perennial first years' question: 'If God made the world, who made God?'

We also look at the problem of suffering, which is always a real problem for rich Westerners. The key idea here is that Jesus is present with Christians in their suffering. Guido Rocha's sculpture of the crucifixion is one of the most awesome expressions of this. Rocha was imprisoned and tortured in Chile for making a stand against human rights' abuses. His sculpture of Jesus is a picture of himself being tortured. So we present the idea that love can transform suffering.

The challenge of cross-curricular Christian ethics

RE lessons are the natural place for this kind of 'world-view education'. But, there is a broader educational point to make here. If a postmodern theory of knowledge is right, and we all make sense of the world through a world-view, a set of beliefs, then our curriculum subjects, all of them, are contained within a set of belief assumptions. So, walk into a classroom and everything matters. What you say, which textbook you use, how the curriculum is put together, how you punish, how you reward, whom you reward – all flow from a set of unwritten presuppositions. Education is a fundamentally value-laden exercise. Whenever

human beings interact, moral considerations are part of the equation. Ethics is everywhere.

If what we are doing is Christian education, I can see a challenge here. Why not, instead of some vague secular world-view underlying lessons, make an active step to reclaim the ethical context in which materials are used? Back in 1994, The Stapleford Centre began the Charis Project with just such an aim in mind. Instead of a maths textbook which teaches percentages with examples from the housing market, it makes the examples deliberately ethical, talking about charitable giving. They have produced textbooks on modern languages and science using the same kind of method. David Smith, one of the original Charis team, is still very much in the forefront of this kind of thinking. See pedagogy.net. Now, this idea is not completely alien to us. We already audit our curriculum for citizenship and PSE – essentially cross-curricular morality. Teaching moral responsibility has always been a part of British education. So why not cross-curricular Christian morality, where the ethic of love is more obvious?

If Generation Y are so philosophically and spiritually inept, they may need more than RE lessons to help them choose their values freely and adequately

Of course, our subjects in secondary school are now so compartmentalised that the idea seems virtually inconceivable. However, there is nothing stopping the Christian teacher from representing the Christian ethic in a classroom. In fact, cross-curricular Christian ethics is a lot easier at primary level. If a Year 6 history project on the Romans can be the context for a science lesson on Roman bridges, why not also make it a lesson in Christian ethics, looking at the dehumanising effect of Roman gladiatorial contests?

The real challenge is in the secondary school where subjects exist in their own right and the ethical context for education is arbitrary. If knowledge and skills are acquired as though life was lived in a moral vacuum, we cannot be certain that the end result will be morally responsible people. Our distinctively Christian education needs to claim this ethical dimension. It spells out the consequences of human decisions, it provides examples of Christian ethics in action across the subjects that we teach. If Generation Y are so philosophically and spiritually inept, they may need more than RE lessons to help them choose their values freely and adequately.

A tension between theology and education: the dark side of human freedom

There is a problem, however. Ultimately, there is a tension between education and theology. Our Christian revelation does not tell us that free-thinking, morally educated students can be trusted to change and improve the world. Freedom has always had a dark side. And this is an idea we will probably need the RE department to deal with. Christian teachers cannot rely on some romantic notion of noble savages, inherently good, waiting for the right context to civilize them! There is an inherent corruption in human nature, the result of the burden of freedom. Now, we need God. We need to be saved! The theology of love is clear: our nature can be restored by God only. Jesus hangs on the tree of knowledge. Connecting with God, responding to love with love is at the root of really genuine moral and spiritual change. And even more troublesome is this: it is probably consistent with a biblical world-view to conclude that reason itself is corrupted. We need God to be wise. And if we really believe this, our Christian educational theory will need to take it into account.

For a start, in RE, we need to create time to explore human nature from a Christian perspective. One of the ideas we've worked on for Christian ethics in Y7 involves Plato's classic tale, *The Ring of Gyges*. Gyges is a poor farmer who discovers, on a corpse, a ring of invisibility. Of course, he is quickly corrupted. He gets rich. He kills the king, marries the queen and lives nastily ever after. And this is Plato's challenge: human beings are good only because they cannot get away with being bad. If we could do evil with impunity, we would. So, the ring of invisibility becomes the motif of the term. From then on we are trying to find a Christian moral hero who could put on a ring of invisibility and do good anyway! So, for example, we have St Francis arguing with his materialistic dad and John Barnardo humanising the poor on the streets of 19th century London.

Connecting with God, responding to love with love, is at the root of really genuine moral and spiritual change

The theology of love is the key to understanding these famous Christian characters. Think back to Generation Y for a moment. According to the research, they knew about unconditional love within a family group. What we are presenting

to them are characters who are transformed by the love that is God, so that they can love the unlovable.

So, our distinctively Christian education contains an imperative to remind students to be virtuous ... but, to be consistent with our revelation, we need to demonstrate that extraordinary virtue requires a relationship with God. One of the most profound stories we use is that of Corrie Ten Boom who was sent to Ravensbruck concentration camp for hiding Jews. Famously, after the war, touring churches, preaching a message of forgiveness, she meets one of the SS guards from Ravensbruck.

Our distinctively Christian education contains an imperative to remind students to be virtuous

These are her own words:

'He came up to me as the church was emptying, beaming and bowing. "How grateful I am for your message, Fraulein." He said. "To think that, as you say, He has washed my sins away!" His hand was thrust out to shake mine. And I, who had preached so often to the people of Bloemendaal the need to forgive, kept my hand at my side. Even as the angry vengeful thoughts boiled through me, I saw the sin of them. Lord Jesus, I prayed, forgive me and help me to forgive him. I tried to smile, I struggled to raise my hand. I could not. I felt nothing, not the slightest spark of warmth or charity. And so again I breathed a silent prayer. Jesus, I prayed, I cannot forgive him. Give me Your forgiveness. As I took his hand the most incredible thing happened. From my shoulder, along my arm and through my hand a current seemed to pass from me to him, while into my heart sprang a love for this stranger that almost overwhelmed me. And so I discovered that it is not on our forgiveness any more than on our goodness that the world's healing hinges, but on His. When He tells us to love our enemies, He gives, along with the command, the love itself.'

The hope of Christian teachers: metanoia

So, when all's told, there will be an inevitable tension between the limited purposes of education – to illuminate understanding and promote free personal development – and the ultimate purpose of the Christian message: to illuminate God to human beings who, in fact, need God in order to experience genuine freedom.

In this final section I want to suggest that even these two purposes can be reconciled. First, the rules of our world-view education are clear. Because we are exploring beliefs, not absolutes,

there cannot be coercion of any kind. There must be a critical distance allowing students to freely consider the claims being made. Our theology of love begins with this same concern for freedom.

Secondly, however, what is presented to students is a claim to truth, unverifiable in this world, but a claim to truth. As a part of the educational exercise, they are invited to see the world as a Christian sees it. I guess, the better the lessons the clearer that view will be! So, our distinctively Christian, distinctively loving education contains a hope that transcends mere education. A hope I would describe as the possibility that students will see differently after these lessons.

Metanoia is a lovely theological word, usually translated 'repentance'. More literally, it means 'a change of mind' associated with the process of conversion. Theologians point out that *metanoia* is only partly a negative dwelling on past sins. The other side to the concept is a very positive realisation of God's grace and love that suddenly, personally makes sense. And so this is the ultimate hope within our distinctively Christian education, that in providing a chance to see differently we present students with the resources – if they so choose – for a 'change of mind', *metanoia*. Thus, the education we provide can become a part of a spiritual process in individuals which God alone perceives.

To return to our earlier categories, we offer Generation Y the resources to move from the merely 'formational' happy midi-narrative of everyday meaning to a transformational spirituality with the potential to change themselves and their circumstances. And at the centre of this will be the God of love. It is this God of love who our distinctively Christian education bears witness to. In RE we must demonstrate what this love means – unnatural, dynamic, transforming. Students will be given their own space to respond, critically or otherwise, to the stories we tell. But the story needs telling. The grand meta-narrative of love needs telling. As Christians, we understand something of this strange, unnatural love, and that makes us just as much a classroom resource as a Guido Rocha or a Corrie Ten Boom, as we declare our own experience of the God of love.

■ Tim Pearson

Thus the education we provide can become a part of a spiritual process in individuals which God alone perceives

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What is TISCA?

The educational scene in the UK is varied and complex. There are schools of all shapes and sizes, catering for the needs of a huge diversity of children. Around 7% of these schools are independent, that is to say they receive no funding from Government, central or local. If you visit almost any UK school, whether maintained or independent, you will find Christians working there. These Christians all need — and most of them want — fellowship with those of like mind.

In 1988, a group of Christian Headteachers in independent schools started to meet informally in London every other term. Their main purpose in getting together was to share news of their schools and to pray for each other. In addition to the Headteachers, others joined the group, among them Robin Vickers, who was Bursar of Wadhurst College, a Christian school in Kent, which closed about that time. When the group felt the need for a slightly more formal structure, Robin was appointed the first Treasurer, and the name Wadhurst Fellowship was adopted.

By 1994, more and more were coming along to the London meetings, many of them personally invited by Christopher Bacon, Headmaster of Dean Close School. In that year, an invitation was extended to Michael Coates to write a report on the situation of Christians working in independent schools. Michael had at that time recently retired after a career which had included teaching at Rugby, being Headmaster of Monkton Combe Junior School, and serving as the General Secretary of IAPS, the organisation which links the Heads of preparatory schools in this country and overseas. Michael's report ran to 80 pages. It recommended the establishment of a nationwide organisation with a Board of Trustees and a General Secretary. This organisation was established as a charity in 1995 with the name of TISCA – The Independent Schools Christian Alliance. Its first General Secretary was Ken Barnes, previously Head of Eversfield School in Solihull.

From the start, membership of TISCA was open to all those connected with independent schools – heads, teachers, chaplains, bursars, governors, parents and others who were interested in the cause of Christian education in the independent sector. From the start, some of the aims of TISCA were as follows:

- **To encourage and arrange regional meetings** for fellowship and for the exchange of ideas. These meetings are normally held in the evening on a school day, starting at around 6pm, with supper together following a talk, discussion and prayer.
- **To hold plenary sessions.** In recent years, the practice has been to arrange a meeting in London in the first part of June, to which members will be able to come from many parts of the country. One of the best of the early meetings was one addressed by Mark Greene and the late Lord Dearing. Speakers at recent meetings have included Lord Adonis, Baroness Cox, Jonathan Aitken, Prof. John Lennox, Fiona Castle, Bishop Pete Broadbent and Prof. John Wyatt. There have also been residential conferences for Headteachers and Chaplains. The next Chaplains' Conference is scheduled to be held at Glenfall House, Cheltenham, 4–6 October 2010.



- **To produce a regular bulletin.** This is published three times a year with the title *TISCA News and Views* or *TNV*. Issue No 51 of *TNV* is due for publication and mailing out to some 620 members in May 2010. Each issue includes edited versions of talks which have provoked particular interest at recent TISCA meetings. There are also book reviews, news items and articles of topical relevance, as well as a regular feature entitled *Slow Food* which consists of studies on particular books of the Bible intended to help busy teachers in their personal Bible reading. A list of prayer topics for schools is also compiled each term and sent out in hard copy or via email to all those requesting it.

- **To tackle specific subjects of Christian concern** within the independent sector, in collaboration with the independent school associations and other Christian educational organisations. Some of the issues addressed recently have included the GTC draft Code of Conduct for Teachers and the Charity

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Commission's guidelines on Public Benefit. Information is conveyed to members via the TISCA website www.tisca.info or by direct letters or emails.

From the start, TISCA has had close links with ACT. Both my predecessors, Michael Hepworth and Mark Greenstock, have been ACT Trustees, and I am currently Vice Chairman of ACT. TISCA is a member of the Evangelical Alliance, and works closely with a number of other like-minded organisations, including the Stapleford Centre and Scripture Union. TISCA also seeks to support Christian teachers working overseas. We publicise on our website staff vacancies in a number of international schools, including Hebron School in India and St Andrew's Turi in Kenya.

TISCA has tried to adhere to the principles which prompted its establishment fifteen years ago. We are anxious to remain true to our evangelical Christian heritage, to provide information and encouragement to Christians working in schools, and to co-operate with other organisations which share our aims. If you would like to know more about TISCA, please go to our website or contact the TISCA office.

■ Hugh Bradby, TISCA General Secretary and Vice Chairman of ACT.

We are anxious to remain true to our evangelical Christian heritage

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Charles Martin: a personal appreciation



Charles passed away early on Sunday morning, 22 October 2009, at the age of 86, after some two years of illness. A man of deep Christian commitment, 'His accomplishments were many and his capacity for work was phenomenal' says Richard Wilkins, long-time General Secretary of the Association of Christian Teachers, of which Charles was a founder member in 1970 and Chairman from 1980–1988.

I first met Charles through our shared involvement in the work of the Inter Schools Christian Fellowship (ISCF), Scripture Union's outreach to the maintained secondary schools. He and his wife Eleanor were key members of the team which led New Year Conferences for sixth form Christian Union leaders in the late 1960s and early 1970s.

As a teacher, and later as the Principal of Bilborough Sixth Form College in Nottingham, Charles thought through the implications of his Christian faith for education at a deep level. Intelligence, energy, vision and enthusiasm characterised his approach to education, as to his whole life. He edited and wrote a series of sixth form general studies textbooks almost as a sideline. On his way to preach at a church in Stapleford, he noted a former Methodist Chapel up for sale, and saw its possibilities as a base for weekend courses for teachers wanting to explore their work in Christian terms. Without much support

Intelligence, energy, vision and enthusiasm characterised his approach to education

from the Christian world he brought this vision to life, committing both cash and hard physical labour with perseverance to the project which became Stapleford House, the Association of Christian Teachers' residential centre, and subsequently metamorphosed, with Charles' continuing understanding and support, into the Stapleford Education Centre, which has developed an international reputation as a Christian 'think tank' and resource developer.

Charles was an encourager. His trademark encouraging comment, delivered somehow from the corner of his mouth with all the warmth of his personality behind it, could lift the mood of almost any gathering. I have a vivid memory of him, too, as a formidable debater, speaking powerfully against HJ Blackham, the then leader of the British Humanist Association, in a meeting at Ilford in the early 1970s.

Charles' Christian roots were in the Christian Brethren, but his sympathies were broad, and he was a valued speaker and preacher across a wide range of evangelical churches. In retirement he and Eleanor were much involved in bringing new life to the Methodist Church which they joined in Burniston.

Charles and Eleanor lived a simple life-style. Growing affluence they saw, above all, as offering the scope for increased giving to the many Christian causes they supported. They rejoiced in the love and fellowship of their family.

The last note we received from Charles expressed his gratitude for all God's provision for his needs, quoting from Psalm 23. 'Surely goodness and mercy will follow me all the days of my life and I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever.'

With many others I am grateful for knowing him in this life. In John Bunyan's phrase, he was indeed 'Mr Valiant for Truth'.

■ George Oliver



Stapleford House, the former National Centre for ACT training courses.

Not what I expected

The mammogram or breast x-ray was routine. I went because I knew I should. I had not experienced any lumps or pain. There was caution in the radiographer's voice. I was called back for a biopsy and later learned I had three cancerous spots in the right breast. I didn't cry then and I haven't cried since. That was 18 months ago and I've recently chosen to have breast reconstruction. Next year there will be the third and final operation for reduction of the non-cancerous breast.



Why haven't I cried? What good would it have done? Sainly passive submission to sickness as God's will is not my style. Neither do I want to waste time on 'Why me?' My College Principal said she appreciated my desire to be discreet. 'Oh no,' I replied, 'quite the opposite.' My way of coping was to tell the world: my Access students, my church friends, even my hairdresser. I faced cancer as a fact of life, as a fact in my life. I became fascinated by the euphemisms people used to avoid saying

breast cancer – they referred to my 'operation' and my 'recovery' trying hard not to have to say either 'breast' or 'cancer' and especially not the two words together!

Recovery

Several factors helped my recovery. I didn't need radio or chemo-therapy. I didn't lose strength in my arm. I'm fortunate to have good support from family and friends and had fifty visitors in a week while in hospital in April 2008. This was encouraging but not restful! After the recent reconstruction operation I asked people to text, which many did, rather than visit, and I thank God for the mobile phone. Several friends with breast cancer had been through most of the procedures just ahead of me and I could share with them. After both operations my sister and other friends have come to stay to try and prevent me from doing too much too soon.

I went back to teach four weeks after the first operation. 'Too soon!' cried some but I knew I had missed the satisfaction of teaching. My mental need for my students and colleagues was greater than my physical need for recuperation. Both consultant and GP have given me the responsibility for saying when I should go back to work, which is scary. Fortunately my College and Head of Programme are sympathetic and allow me a reduced timetable at first. Living alone accentuates the need for the structure of work. When you're used to being busy and needed as a teacher, it's a

I asked people to text, which many did, rather than visit, and I thank God for the mobile phone



My mental need for my students and colleagues was greater than my physical need for recuperation

challenge to rest without getting bored and isolated. You need to plan people into your day and take yourself out regularly. You need to decide if you're going to travel in between hospital appointments and where to and when.

Three operations and weeks off work were certainly not what I expected in March 2008. Reflecting on why I could accept the loss of a breast without great emotional trauma, I conclude that my security and self-worth have never resided in being physically attractive. They lie in my intellect, personality and Christian identity. I am 'accepted in Christ' Romans 15:7. I have thought a lot about self-acceptance in relation to being single. Breast cancer seemed minor in comparison to living alone and 'complete'. I didn't feel less of a woman because of the mastectomy – breast removal – and I was happy to try using a prosthesis, that is a false breast. However, the weight of this silicone pudding weighing two pounds, stuck in a special pocket sewn into my bra, proved too

I have learned to be thankful; the cancer was treated in time and I suffered very little pain, only discomfort and inconvenience

heavy, which is why I went for reconstruction on the NHS. It will be good to be roughly equal after the reduction next year, instead of 36C on the right and 42F on the left! However, I care about comfort and convenience far more than cosmetic attractiveness.

So what have I learned?

Possibly to be content whatever state I am in, Philippians 4:11, doing or not doing, teaching or 'being'. I'm not indispensable as a lecturer. I have value whether or not I am working. This is a good lesson for the challenge of retirement. I'm even more aware of the need for a sense of humour, and I value good conversation as a gift to be enjoyed to the full. I have learned to be thankful; the cancer was treated in time and I suffered very little pain, only discomfort and inconvenience. I have been able to fill the unsought free time with the useful sorting out of decades of paper, plus reading and writing articles, like this one! It was not what I expected but "The Lord gave and the Lord has taken away. May the Lord's name be praised" Job 1:21. 'See to it that no-one misses the grace of God and that no bitter root grows up to cause trouble'. Hebrews 12:15.

■ Jackie Gooding

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HELPING TEACHERS AND SCHOOLS CHOOSE THE RIGHT PATH

‘Faith’ schools seem to be a hot topic at the moment; everyone seems to have an opinion about their value to our communities, and their effect on communities. However, long before the issue became quite so topical, four Christian men and women from Surrey had already come to a conclusion.

Their conclusion was, quite simply, that Christian schools have a vital role to play in our communities. At a time when Christian values are under pressure and when ‘religion’ is so often seen as divisive, they provide a unique opportunity to assert confidently the value of the Christian ethos, and to prove its efficacy by nurturing communities characterised by grace.

But, there is a problem. Schools struggle to fill teaching posts – especially heads and senior positions. Christian schools seem to struggle more than others to find the right people. Although there are plenty of advertising opportunities for schools, there is no coordination, no way for the majority of schools to access the majority of candidates, and vice versa, no support and little professional recruitment culture, either within schools or within the available advertising resources.

Of these four men and women, all felt the effect of this problem personally – three are parents with children in Christian schools. The fourth is a teacher in a Christian school. One is also a

governor. Between them, they realised they had over seventy-five years experience in professional recruitment, human resources management and teaching. And so a new company was born – Emmaus Recruitment.

Emmaus is a recruitment company, available to any school, but bold in asserting its belief in the value of Christian schools. Emmaus will assist a school in selecting its staff in a manner usually more familiar to firms of accountants, bankers and lawyers, but at a fraction of the usual cost. It provides a service which begins with basic advertising via TES, its own website and its newsletter which goes into about 2,500 schools monthly – soon to increase to nationwide. For a one-off payment, presently less than a typical TES advertisement, the school

Emmaus will assist a school in selecting its staff in a manner usually more familiar to firms of accountants, bankers and lawyers, but at a fraction of the usual cost

obtains this service, gets its own permanent microsite built on the main Emmaus website, and gets its advert promoted until the position is filled – no repeat advertising costs. But beyond this basic service, Emmaus has the ability to handle a school’s entire recruitment needs, should the volume of vacancies warrant outsourcing, and even to provide a bespoke search and selection service for senior or challenging positions. With its deep understanding of the education system, Emmaus aims to build relationships with schools, not just service a ‘job board’, to get to know a school, not just its media schedule and to manage much more than just a transaction. Launched with the support of Bishop Nick Bains of Croydon and Bishop Kieran Conry of Arundel and Brighton (see box for their comments).

■ Jan Burbridge, Public Relations Manager, Emmaus Recruitment

‘Increasingly, the only contact a person may have with explicit gospel values and the person of Christ is within a church school. Through their expertise, professionalism and faith, Emmaus can help us attract the teaching talent our church schools will always need.’

The Rt Revd Kieran Conry, Roman Catholic Bishop of Arundel and Brighton.

‘Emmaus brings a level of professionalism, seen in other industry sectors, to church schools’ recruitment, setting head teachers and governors free to concentrate on the running of their schools.’

The Rt Revd Nick Bains, Anglican Bishop of Croydon.

ACT local groups and contacts

ACT is building a vibrant national network of local contacts and local groups which serve, inspire and equip Christians working in schools and colleges in England. In order to expand this ministry, ACT works in partnership with local churches and Christian organisations, encouraging and facilitating grassroots support for Christians working in education. Our goal is to provide every Christian educator in every county in the country with at least one local contact and one local group.

ACT Local Contacts are ACT members who are willing to be contacted by Christians working in education who live and/or work in their locality. They listen, give advice and pray.

ACT Local Groups are led by ACT Event Organisers who are willing to organise local meetings and events for Christians working in education who live and/or work in their locality.

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Getting your ACT together

All kinds of membership news

Grief that finds no vent in tears makes other organs weep.

Dr Henry Maudsley, British psychiatrist

GTCE Code of Conduct

Principle 8 of the Code for registered teachers: Demonstrate honesty and integrity and uphold public trust and confidence in the teaching profession.

- Exercise their responsibilities in relation to the examination and assessment of achievement and attainment in a fair, transparent and honest way.
- Demonstrate honesty and integrity in management and administrative duties, including the use of school property and finance.
- Understand that their duty to safeguard children and young people comes first, but otherwise acknowledge the rights of children and young people, families and colleagues to confidentiality, in line with statutory requirements and school policies.
- Represent their professional status accurately and avoid taking advantage of their professional position.
- Maintain reasonable standards in their own behaviour that enable them to maintain an effective learning environment and also to uphold public trust and confidence in the profession.

More details at gtce.org.uk

Fifty-six per cent of children and young people went to church in 1904. Today, that figure has dropped to only four per cent. But ninety-nine per cent of children and young people are in school. Christian teachers, schools workers and volunteers are vitally and strategically placed to draw children and young people into relationship with God.

Scripture Union 2009 Annual report

Children from some of our poorest communities start school with such a huge weight of deprivation on their shoulders, it can be incredibly hard to counteract the effects.

Lesley Ward, ATL union president

National Family Week 2010

National Family Week 2010 is 31 May to 6 June. There will be thousands of opportunities to participate. The website invites families to run their own events. 'Whether it's a private affair with your family and friends or a public event to raise money for a charity, or just for fun – it's the perfect time to get the family together. You can register events in the Partner Zone which means your event will be publicised if you wish – plus you'll find helpful tips and tricks, tool-kits and event packs to help make the occasion a success!' nationalfamilyweek.co.uk

Ageing workforce

A report from the Institute for Employment Studies identifies skills' shortages, an early retirement culture and the prospect of a pensions crisis, as prolonging the labour market participation of older workers. Work-life balance policies and flexible employment can provide the means of prolonging labour market engagement. Changes in retirement behaviour will therefore originate primarily from the demand side – ie employers' policies. Schools are advised to review their policy on this matter.

I know the power of faith-based institutions to get stuff done.

Barack Obama, Saddleback Civil Forum, August 2008

£23,000 debt

... is what the average student beginning a degree today could expect to graduate with, rising to over £30,000 for some London students. The Bible views debt as undesirable – Jesus, for example, frequently uses it as an image for sin in the parables. Debt was considered a last resort, rather than a way of extending our income, as it can easily be viewed in our age of still relatively easy credit. But Old Testament law also placed strict limits on lenders. Loans were to be forgiven every seven years: Deuteronomy 15:1-11, meaning that no-one was kept in long-term debt. Combined with the biblical prohibition on charging interest, Leviticus 25:35-37 – perhaps the most radical financial law in the Old Testament – this command ensured that 'there should be no poor among you', Deuteronomy 15:4. Today, in contrast, debt can all too easily be a way for companies to make money by keeping others in poverty. The greater the loan, the higher and longer-term the repayments.

Source: The Jubilee Centre

Safeguarding: what you must disclose



Teacher trainees

Teaching is exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974, so trainees must disclose details of convictions or cautions in connection with an application for training, no matter how irrelevant or how long ago it took place. The training provider will decide whether the trainee will be accepted, suspended, excluded or allowed to continue. The provider may decide to terminate training if information is withheld.

NQTs or teachers moving jobs

Information about convictions or cautions must be disclosed with any application. The head will decide whether to appoint.

Qualified teachers

All convictions and cautions will be passed on to the GTC. Inform your head as soon as possible, ideally with a union representative or colleague present. If the GTC believes the offence is relevant to a teacher's registration, disciplinary procedures will be put in place. If the GTC finds a teacher guilty of unacceptable professional conduct, incompetence or a relevant criminal offence, it may issue a reprimand, conditional registration order, suspension order or prohibition order. As part of the hearing, the media may pick up on the case.

With all this going for us, my dear, dear friends, stand your ground. And don't hold back. Throw yourselves into the work of the Master, confident that nothing you do for him is a waste of time or effort.

Corinthians 15:58 *The Message*

Understanding tax

Tax Matters is the title of HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) new, free online resource for teachers. Designed for years seven to thirteen in PSHE, Business Studies and Citizenship, the **Tax Matters** resource contains three new teaching modules: Income Tax, National Insurance and Tax and Society, to help pupils gain an understanding of how tax is raised, what the main taxes are and for what they ultimately pay. There are also ready-made lesson plans for each module available online, for both Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4 pupils – with ideas for using **Tax Matters** with students. All of the materials are available free by visiting taxmatters.hmrc.gov.uk

Teacher refuseniks

About 255,000 people who have passed through the training process have chosen not to work in the classroom. Of these, 88,600 never even entered the profession, according to DCSF statistics. This means that there is one qualified, but non-working, teacher for every two who currently do the job in England, 61% of whom were trained to work in the secondary sector. More than 130,000 teachers in the fifty to retirement age bracket are not teaching, while about 11,900 people who qualified before the age of twenty-nine have never worked as teachers.

Your child, your schools, our future: building a 21st century school system

... is an aspirational DCSF publication. The chapter titles are:

- 1 Our ambition for every child: an education that prepares them for the challenges of the 21st century.
- 2 In every school: excellent teaching and the extra help each child needs.
- 3 Every school working in partnership: because no school can do it alone.
- 4 Every school improving: strong accountability and rapid intervention when it is needed.
- 5 Every school and school leader supported: the right roles for local and central government.
- 6 In every school: a well-led and highly skilled workforce.

Tick box mentality

In an interview with the TES, Gillian Low, President of the Girls' Schools Association, warns that the tidal wave of regulation which is engulfing education does nothing to create good schools, and stops staff in the private and state sectors from thinking out of the box. 'Regulation isn't a means to school improvement. We have to be accountable; some laws are important, especially regarding safeguarding, for example, but I question whether the level of regulation is necessary or conducive to running good schools.'

For about one per cent of children, conventional attainment targets are simply unachievable – and therefore, no indicator of life chances.

Chris Goodey, Centre for Studies on Inclusive Education, Bristol

One to One Tuition Programme

This programme helps children gain understanding in English and maths. Designed for key stages two, three and four pupils who would benefit the most, it complements classroom teaching by addressing barriers to learning that are personal and particular to each child. Newly qualified, current, former and retired teachers can become tutors, who decide how many pupils to tutor, and when and where to give tuition, which can take place at the child's school or in a town centre location such as a library. Tutors on the programme get paid a typical rate of £25 per hour for twelve hours per pupil.

Don't ask yourself what the world needs. Ask yourself what makes you come alive and then go and do that. Because what the world needs is people who have come alive.

Howard Thurman 1899-1981, Baptist Minister

Who goes where?

Usual Sunday attendance in Anglican churches is 868,000, with 869,000 in Catholic churches. Each Anglican gives, on average, £8.62 weekly, while each Catholic contributes £2.50 weekly.

The average SATS test score for a school is more a reflection of local affluence, or the lack of it, than the ability of the teachers.

Rod Liddle in *The Spectator*

Graduates

I read recently that 100,000 graduates are out of work. It prompted me to pray for them, that they would not start their working life feeling like failures. I prayed for them and for this network that we would know that we are loved and valuable outside anything we ever do to earn a wage. It is a simple truth that we think we know, but it bears repeating again and again, for those who are out of work and those who are glittering 'successes' – we have a sure status, an unshakeable identity because of the cross.

Elizabeth Hunter themedianet.org

Written by and for Christians in education

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The earth is the Lord's, and everything in it

David Stroud leads ChristChurch, London, and the Newfrontiers UK Team. He is launching a new conference to equip people to transform culture. For more information visit www.everythingconference.org

I recently spoke to an actor who, in a moment of candid honesty, admitted, 'I have never felt at home in a church before, because people have never understood my job.'

How many of us feel our careers are devalued or misunderstood? How many see our jobs as secondary to mission and struggle to have a vision for how Jesus can use us in our sphere of influence?

Many of us work in the secular world and it is tempting to see a divide between church and our work. But I am increasingly convinced that we need to be people who shape culture, and if this is to happen, we dare not devalue our careers! We need to see our workplaces as mission fields and ask the question, 'What does Jesus want to do in my workplace?'

A businessman, soon after coming to faith, told me he was dissatisfied with the recruitment industry in which he worked. He was put off by the cut-throat attitude that cared more about profits than the welfare of their clients. In January he established his own recruitment agency, with the vision of seeing the whole industry changed, based on the principles of fairness, honesty and customer care. Within eight months its reputation had spread and he had relocated from his mother's kitchen to an office in a prime location.

I am thrilled by examples like this: men and women who have a vision for their career and see it as a key part of the Church's mission. Shaping culture is not just about planting churches and leading individuals to Christ, as vital as that is. It's about promoting the common good: benefitting everybody by creating better environments in which to live and work.

There is great potential for effecting change through positive influence. If we promote beauty, truth and goodness, everyone benefits. Christians are too often known for campaigning against the negative aspects of secular culture. I'm for creating rather than complaining. We need to seek opportunities to promote positive culture: helping Christian artists to exhibit their work and businessmen to operate ethically. What's more, if Christians are seen to be having a positive effect, we will gain credibility and a platform to speak on many issues.

Josiah Wedgwood is a prime example. In 1787, this well-known and influential businessman created a range of hat-pins and brooches for fashionable women. They bore an emblem of an African slave in chains and the provocative slogan 'Am I not a man and a brother?' Within three years, thousands had been distributed. Wedgwood's contribution to the world of fashion became a significant factor in raising public awareness for the Society for the Abolition of Slavery.

I am passionate about equipping Christians to make a difference in whatever area they find themselves. Psalm 24:1 tells us that 'The earth is the Lord's, and everything in it.' Everything. Not just the so called 'sacred' elements of culture, but our work, study and leisure as well. Everything belongs to God, and, as His people, we are called to get involved and, have a positive influence on society. As we commit ourselves to impacting culture by being faithful in whatever area God has placed us, I am excited about the many possibilities that will emerge.

■ David Stroud



Six reasons why ACT membership matters

ACT ONE is each autumn when ACT members meet together on ACT Day for spiritual fellowship and dialogue.

ACT TWO is connections with the media, communicating the Christian perspective on education and related issues.

ACT THREE is a listening organisation, and members are welcome to contact us 0845 370 2212.

ACT FOUR is our members' magazine, *ACT Now*, with in-depth articles and news for the thinking Christian.

ACT FIVE is the *ACT Prayer Diary*, stimulating your prayers for education and the world beyond.

ACT SIX is our regular email update service, ACTuality, delivered free most weekends during term time.

Make sure you are connected

ACT is a membership organisation which includes headteachers and principals, teachers, teaching assistants, support staff and governors, lecturers, advisors, consultants and peripatetic staff.

Low annual membership rates:

- ▶ **£0 free** – students in PGCE, BA and BEd education courses.
- ▶ **£20 reduced** – retired teachers, NQTs, school governors, those on low incomes, less than £15k.
- ▶ **£40 full** – those on more than £15k.
- ▶ **£80 associate body** – local area groups which work in schools.
- ▶ **£800 life** – paid in 4 x £200 annual instalments.

Ring **Stephanie 01604 632046**
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or: join online at
www.christians-in-education.org.uk

or: for further information email
join@actupdate.org.uk

ACT Day 2010

...is being held within Liverpool's Anglican Cathedral on Saturday 9 October, and the speaker will be Right Reverend James Jones, Bishop of Liverpool.

Put this in your diary now, and why not make a weekend of it? Liverpool is a great place with an interesting history, a Tate gallery and a UNESCO-listed waterfront.

ACT Day is from 10.30am to 4.30 pm and will also include worship, prayer, a workshop and the AGM.

To register your interest, please either: ring Jan 01727 840298 – message service
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