



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

Robert's contact details

E: robert@roberthall.co.uk

T: 0845 3702212 M: 07890 118993



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

Clive's contact details

E: c.ireson@btinternet.com

M: 07772 436532