

**ACT NOW is the magazine of the Association of Christian Teachers, having grown over thirty years.**

**Long standing ACT member Arthur Rowe comments on the Spring / Summer 2010 edition.**

For more than a generation ACT NOW has been a remarkable resource for Christian teachers and all those interested in thinking about education. Its wide ranging agenda has something for Primary and Secondary school teachers, those who work in Local Authority or Independent Schools, student teachers to Heads, in this country and abroad, so it helps readers see their particular contexts in a much broader picture than many papers they read. I have received ACT NOW for most of the years of its publication but I rashly want to say that this Spring / Summer issue is the best I have ever seen. Jan in the ACT office asked me if I could say why.

There are the usual features of excellent, colourful presentation, a few but informative advertisements and an introduction to ACTuality, an email bulletin issued every week in term time which I have already discovered is an excellent way of being aware of what is going on. In this particular issue there is a farewell to Carol Horne who for decades has been the voice of ACT on the telephone, and a powerful testimony from one teacher about how she coped with cancer.

But the really striking and significant articles for me are: ACT's response to the Consultation on the General Teaching Council's Code of Conduct, an introduction to the Scottish Curriculum for Excellence, and the crowning glory, a lecture by Tim Pearson on a distinctively Christian education for today. These articles would have gladdened the heart and mind of the late Charles Martin who receives an appropriate appreciation from George Oliver.

The response to the Code of Conduct was written on behalf of ACT by ACT's Company Secretary and Trustee, Colin Broomfield, a former Headteacher. An impressive feature of piece is the even-handed way he affirms the good points in the Code and cautions where problems may arise. He welcomes the Code and points out that many of the 8 principles are derived from Christian values. But he reports that members of ACT have reservations about the way one of the principles may be interpreted. There have been a number of recent examples of Christians in different professions being prosecuted for refusing to comply with requirements thought to arise from equality and diversity legislation.

In reality these are cases of conflicting human rights and the rights of Christians to work according to their faith have been overridden. ACT is right to raise this issue which will have to be addressed in the not too distant future.

The redesign of the curriculum for Scottish schools identifies the capacities, experiences, outcomes and values of a Curriculum for Excellence and the writer of this article delights to point out how close these are to a Christian worldview. He sums up his experience of implementing some of the stages in his school by saying, 'Curriculum for Excellence is about two things: Doing School Together and Making Sense of Learning'. In practice this means giving pupils responsibilities and working in partnership with the local community on the one hand, and restructuring the curriculum around interdisciplinary projects on the other. This quite short article raises a number of thought-provoking issues.

But it is the lengthy, but very readable, lecture of Tim Pearson on a distinctively Christian education for today which gets this issue its 5-star rating. Throughout my teaching career of more than 50 years I have been looking for a comprehensive Christian conception of education and there were always loopholes or inadequacies in the philosophies offered – until now! In a very satisfying account Pearson recognises the importance of world views, sketches the character of Generation Y as the young people of today are called, and explains how he seeks to shock them out of blind acceptance of secular materialism. He distinguishes what is socially formative, but reduces people's capacity to think for themselves, from what is transformative and liberates them for authentic life choices. He takes into account the dark side of freedom and the inherent corruption of human nature but has strategies to expose these to his students. He recognises the tension between the aims of education and the ultimate purpose of the Christian message but shows that they can be reconciled.

The points raised in these three articles are so important that I am distributing copies to the Chair of Governors of a number of secondary and primary schools in Braintree and District. I hope they will encourage their staff to become members of ACT to benefit from the thinking and sharing of ideas which has always been the hall-mark of the Association.

Arthur Rowe May 2010

**Copies of ACT Now are available from the ACT office 01727 840298 or [jan@christians-in-education.org.uk](mailto:jan@christians-in-education.org.uk)**