

## Volunteers

In this newsletter, I've mentioned 3 volunteers who have been key in the creation and assembly of the Time to Share at Home boxes, but FACT has always been dependent on the support and skills of volunteers. We have a dedicated group who support the Time to Wonder project, all the Trustees are volunteers, our day to day financial handling is dealt with by a volunteer and there are others who give of their time and expertise on an ad hoc basis. There is always room for more to become part of the FACT family of volunteers.

Have you thought about getting involved?

There's no time like the present to give me a ring and have a chat to become one of the unsung heroes of FACT.

## Chapter

It was good to have been invited to attend, and share briefly with, the local Anglican Chapter of ministers about Time to Share at Home. This has led to further 'one to one' meetings to demonstrate how it works and I hope that this will lead to more being used in churches locally.

If you would like to hear and see for yourself then get in touch to arrange a demonstration at your convenience.

## Trustees Meeting

The Trustees meet each quarter to discuss and review the work and ministry of FACT. They are the governing body for the charity. They met at the end of January and scrutinised the work that was being done with policies, DBS checks, and the financial updates. They also celebrated the new website and heard a report on the ongoing work and ministry. Without this dedicated group of people, FACT couldn't legally exist. There are currently 4 trustees. At this meeting, a visitor joined them to observe and hopefully will be coming onboard as a Trustees soon. The Trustees are seeking someone to hold the position of Treasurer. This is not an arduous role as all the day to day work is done by a volunteer. You would need to be able to understand a simple spreadsheet with an ability to offer a faith perspective. If this interests you then do get in touch. You would be a very welcome addition to the team.

## Nativity appearance



I never have been a shrinking violet! So, when asked to part take in my church's outdoor Nativity, held at Shepperton Studios on the Saturday before Christmas I couldn't say no.

It was so well organised and thought through that my role was easy to do. As it was a tableau set to music, all I had to do was walk on, sit on a throne and look menacing. Some disingenuous people might say that wasn't acting, just me being me. However, I milked it for all it was worth.

Apart from the fun and enjoyment, the facts are that over 420 people stood and watched the Christmas story unfold with the inclusion of live animals - sheep and a donkey. The climax of the Nativity was a simple scene around the manger in a stable with the cast shouting, 'Glory to God'. A simple statement expressing the arrival of God incarnate. I do hope they can get a camel next year, then I could be a Wiseman riding in from the east!

*Simon*

## Time to Wonder



We are continuing to offer Time to Wonder to schools and I am currently trying to firm up some interest with a couple of local schools. The dates that are currently available are on our website. It's first come first served, so don't wait and miss out.



Faith Awareness  
in Children Trust

FACT, Peterhouse, St Peter's Close  
Staines, Middlesex TW18 2ED



01784-457601

office@thefact.co.uk



www.facebook.com/

FACT.FaithAwarenessinChildrenTrust



www.thefact.co.uk

Our lives begin to end the  
day we become silent about  
things that matter.

*Martin Luther King, Jr.*

It seems to me that life is often full of people who want to tell me what I should think. From what I should think politically to what I should be buying in the supermarket to cook for my tea. This is more than simple advertising and making me aware of choices, it's about convincing me that they have the answers to whatever my question might be. In all of this, the challenge to sift what is important from what is unimportant can be difficult to discern due to the overwhelming onslaught of information and the growing decibels that attempt to drown out anyone else who might wish to speak.

In my ministry I often find myself wondering when to speak and when to stay silent. I recognise that for me, fear can be a driving force that causes silence, and ignorance or arrogance can be a driving force that causes words to pour forth.

Martin Luther King Junior's quote above is a helpful reminder that it takes courage to speak out on things that really matter and are important. Fear of being ignored, misunderstood, forgotten or drowned out by others can cause silence. While overconfidence, ignorance of the needs of the listener and misplaced zeal can mean that words simply ebb away or bounce off their intended recipient.

During a recent prayer time at the office, I found myself musing on the story of Esther and how 'Uncle Mordecai' challenged her to use her position in the King's Court to speak up for the Jews.

*"If you keep quiet at a time like this, deliverance and relief for the Jews will arise from some other place, but you and your relatives will die. Who knows if perhaps you were made queen for just such a time as this?"* Esther 4:14.

It's one of the classic verses that people present, latching onto the final phrase, 'for such a time as this'. However, I was initially struck by the first part about not keeping silent when there are things for good that need to be shared and spoken.

There are echoes of Esther's situation in the challenge to Timothy in Paul's second letter to him. 'Fan into flame the spiritual gifts' and 'don't have a spirit of fear and timidity'.

At the start of 2019 I'm pushing on with all that I'm convinced God has led me to. Time to Share at Home, Time for Toddlers and Time to Wonder. There are other projects waiting in the background that will also come into their own at the right time.

I am intentionally going to be vocal about them with every opportunity that comes my way and not hold back with false modesty or false humility.

We have a generation under the age of 40 who know nothing or very little of the wonders of God. My calling is to find ways to allow them to discover and reflect on the reality of God, so that they too might choose for themselves what they will do about that engagement.

*Simon*

A newsletter to keep supporters informed, inspired & involved.  
Issue number 133 February 2019

FACT enabling children and households reflect on the Christian Gospel

## Brand new website

It seemed like a good idea at the time! Sat in the dying moments of the Trustees meeting in October, as AOB points were allowed, I threw away a simple comment about how we should consider how we might add a PayPal function to our website. I didn't anticipate the enthusiastic response of 2 trustees. As they say, the rest is just history.

Following a review and the realisation we needed to rebuild our website on a new platform, work began with the aid of a professional website designer. Their costs were covered by a specific gift from a supporter (Thank you so much!) We now have a fantastic looking, mobile friendly, fresh, bright, dynamic and interactive site - with multiple methods by which people can make payments!

It went live on Monday 21<sup>st</sup> January and we are hopeful it will prove to be a useful tool in our communication today. Take a look and a browse. Enjoy the photos and testimonials, buy a Time to Share at Home box, leave a donation, share it amongst your friends on social media and all from the comfort and immediacy of your mobile phone! We've created new logos for the 3 main areas of ministry, brand new photos, contact forms, easy payment processes and testimonials from people who have been involved with what FACT offers.

## Toddlers at Christmas



In December I was able to visit some of the toddler groups I work with. Not all wanted a visit this half term as some wished to do their own telling of the Christmas story. Once again I looked for fresh ways to tell the account of how God came and dwelt amongst us as one of us. I employed a set of finger puppets to tell of the Angels messages to Mary, Joseph, and the Shepherds. Ending up with Mary holding the baby Jesus (Velcroed to her hands!) During my time I included a gentle song with actions and finally my puppet, 'Baby', who brought his own particular twist to things. It is a beautiful thing to see children and adults alike engrossed in the story, the song, and the puppet. Phones being put down, children being still and eyes and ears open. Not simply because it's fun and sometimes amusing but because they want to engage with the deeper spiritual truths that are being accessibly offered.



## Time to Share at Home

Perhaps the most vexed question in relation to this new project has been what do we call it? We thought about using the word family in the title but today the word 'family' has lost any substantive meaning. It has widened its inclusion of so many different types of family units that when anyone mentions family they then have to explain what they mean by that word! We thought about using the word 'household' but this hardly a snappy, everyday word and sounded a bit technical and cold.



We have returned to the word 'home' as this invokes images of a place where we live with others. Who those 'others' are isn't important to how the material in the boxes is used. Age, race, creed, nationality or faith do not disqualify anyone from taking part. They may be blood relations, or people related in a legal way, or simply people who are attached to you as friends, carers or even lodgers. The important thing is that collectively you share the same space together. It is in this 'safe' space that we hope people will take a tiny piece of time together to talk, listen, wonder, engage, and hopefully, discover something of God in those moments.

I continue to meet with interested parties to demonstrate how it works. Without fail, people are excited by what they see and hear and want to try it for themselves. The next stage will be for these people to move beyond the 'taste and see' to 'buy and use'. With the launch of our new website, it has never been easier to purchase boxes. You may prefer to get in touch and drop by to collect them yourself rather than receive them through the post. (Remember the kettle's always on!)

I just want to take this opportunity to say, I am extremely grateful to the dedicated team of 3 volunteers who laminate, trim, cut, stick, assemble and pack these boxes. Mike, Dave, and Georgina you are stars!



The reality of life today is that unless we are intentional about doing what we really think is important to us, then we get sucked into so many things that are other people's priorities. The feedback from those who have done sessions from Time to Share at Home are that they love them and gain so much from them, but to actually make time to get together is incredibly difficult. It takes time to create good habits but well worth the small amount of effort that is needed.



## Prayer

Tuesday morning prayer at the office at 8.15am is still happening each week. It's a good habit that is now established. It's natural and beneficial. If you can, and want to join me please do. We are done by 9.00am so just turn up and start your day being with God - listening, being, asking and thanking. (Sometimes traffic causes a slight delay for me but I will be there)

*Simon*

**If you keep quiet at a time like this, deliverance and relief will arise from some other place**

Esther 4:14