

Notices + a VIP in FACT

I will cease to work for FACT at the end of August. The Trustees will complete all that needs to be done to close the charity as soon as is reasonably possible. We intend to close the bank a/c swiftly, as we don't want to continue to receive your financial support and not be able to use it for what you intended. Of course the best way to prevent that is for you to **cancel any Standing Order or Direct Debit** you may have set up from your bank. I would encourage you to do that immediately if you haven't already undertaken that action.

Before I leave I will reduce our website to one page with a simple announcement that FACT has closed. In due course the website will be taken down.

The email addresses for FACT will not be monitored after the end of August. If you are a church that still has not paid for the services you have received please immediately rectify that issue.

The Trustees will continue to meet as necessary to ensure the closure of the charity is completed.



There is someone who has been very important to FACT and its ministry whom I haven't mentioned as yet. As FACT was finding its feet in its early days it coincided with the retirement of Kay as a Headteacher and she offered to help with a little

administration. Now that would have been a waste of her vast knowledge and talents, not to mention her passion for children and their faith development. So quickly she found herself (with gentle encouragement from me) offering 2 days a week helping to write and organise RE Days. There were many other things she did alongside that and together we wrote Holiday Bible club material that was published in 2004. **'Grand Prix Winners'** was one of the first Holiday club materials to have video elements to support each daily session that went beyond the conventional telling of the Bible story. It birthed a new puppet character called Jan Carlo Fizzy-Cola. His catch phrase was, 'Excussi, I have the windy pops!' and then he would belch!

Final thoughts



I have fond memories of spending a day in a recording studio filming all of JC's chats. They later added the backdrop of Bands Hatch!

There are too many individuals that I could mention and thank but you all did what you did not for human accolades but because of your sense of calling by God. However, I am eternally grateful.

I found this very early picture of Dustbin Dan and me. Judging by the quality, I think it must have been taken on Kodak Instamatic 126! I know that there are literally tens of thousands of people whose school days were influenced by this character, for better or worse!



**So, my final words to you all are
Adiós, Adieu and Goodbye.**



**Faith Awareness
in Children Trust**

Simon Shutt Director of Children's Ministry

FACT, Ashford Baptist Church, Church Road, Ashford, TW15 2TT

Mob 07733360009

office@thefact.co.uk

www.thefact.co.uk

Goodbye, what a strange word!

I recently stumbled across the origins of the word Goodbye. It is a contraction of the simple expression, 'God be with you'. As far back as the 16th Century the full expression was regularly used but gradually it changed to what we now know and hear today.

It was a very simple benediction offered from one person to another as they parted company. In its original form it would have been spoken with sincerity. The user would want the person leaving to 'Go with God' and for them to know that God was with them. It's not just in English that these contractions of words occur. The Spanish goodbye is Adiós which started out as 'A Dios vais' meaning 'you go to God'. The French goodbye is Adieu which translates as 'to God'. For centuries people have acknowledged that God was a part of everything they did. He wasn't just for Sundays or panic prayers in a crisis but in everyday moments. There was a recognition that God was needed and welcome in all that life brought, both good and bad.

Today even the usage of the word goodbye is dying out. We use numerous other final shortened farewells, both spoken and written. If we can't quite decide which one to type Copilot is there to fill that in for us!

This is the final newsletter from me before I retire at the end of August. Shortly after I leave, the charity will be closed down. This newsletter is an opportunity to briefly look back, not to wallow in so called past glories, but to highlight that God has been with us throughout the last 30 years of the ministry carried out under the umbrella of FACT.

So read on and smile at all that God has been doing in the lives of children, households and churches.

As a supporter receiving this newsletter I hope you will see yourself in all that has gone on. Perhaps you have taken an interest, but at a distance or perhaps you have financially supported the work either regularly or on ad hoc basis. Perhaps you have quietly and without anyone knowing, prayed through the diary in each newsletter. Perhaps you attended prayer events at the FACT office or one of our open days. Perhaps you have taken an active role as a volunteer in the office or with our 'Time to Wonder' project. Perhaps you have been one of the 20 trustees that balanced good governance with Godly ambition. Not an easy thing to do sometimes!



Perhaps you have first hand experience of the ministry through schools, pre-school settings, parenting courses, church services or specific, targeted training sessions over the last three decades. Regardless of how great or small your involvement, know you have played your part on the journey.

So read on and smile as your memories are jolted and whisper a prayer of thanks to God as you do.

**A newsletter to keep supporters informed, inspired & involved.
Issue number 178 August 2026**

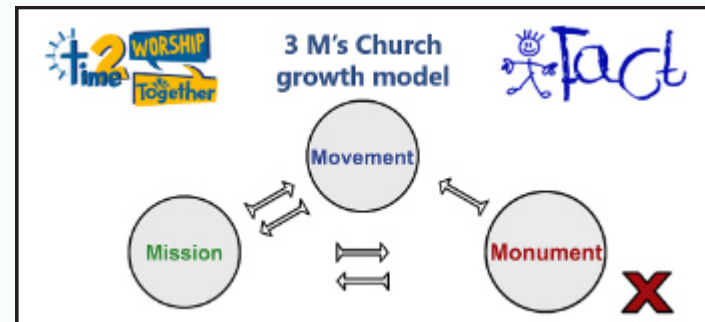
FACT enabling children and households to reflect on the Christian Gospel

Registered Charity Number 1055843

I.W. Training

The final training session for the three churches I have been working with for approximately two years took place on a Saturday morning at the end of June. There was time for them to exchange contact details to support each other as they move forward with I.W. in the coming months and hopefully years. I hear they have created a closed Facebook group so they can swap ideas. Who knew that churches could collaborate? Wonders will never cease!

One of the elements we unpacked in the training was a simple church growth model which we used to consider where they thought their church sat at this time.



There are three stages of church growth. This model can be used for a single church or denominations. All churches start as a movement, a small group of Christians who want to gather to worship, be disciples and engage in mission. These movements can be quick to react to changes and needs. They have little or any structures and there is often fast growth. However as time passes these movements find they need structures to allow for further growth and more efficient use of time and resources. We see this in the early church when Stephen and the deacons are set aside to look after the poor and the money to allow the Apostles to get on with the preaching and proclamation of the gospel. This is called the **Mission Station** phase. It's where structures and processes are put in place and often buildings are rented or bought to be used. In the perfect church (I know that doesn't exist!) the **Movement** is supported by the **Mission** and when in balance, growth and health in a church occur. However the reality is that for whatever reason the **Movement** wanes or is overtaken by the **Mission**. It takes prominence and eventually the **Movement** dies. This is when the church moves to the third stage, it becomes a **Monument**.

The **Monument** is a shell of a **Mission** with no **Movement** and eventually no congregation. At this point there are three possible outcomes.

1. A new **Movement** starts up, rekindles the **Mission** to act as intended and balance is once again achieved.
2. A new **Movement** starts up but leaves the **Monument** to start the cycle all over again.
3. The **Monument** is cared for as a memory of what was once a living community or it becomes a ruin or it is sold off and repurposed.

Intergenerational Worship is a missional tool that seeks to allow people to experience church in ways that are relevant to the way people live and learn today. It's not aimed at a specific group or type of people. It's core values are about creating opportunities for people to encounter God in multiple ways and learning styles.

Recent research is showing that a common complaint about churches from people attending for the first time is that they are not authentic. What they say and present somehow doesn't hold true when tested by people who try to join their ranks. This is indeed a sad statement and obviously not true of all churches but the fact there are some is worrying enough.

I concluded my training session where I had started with each church over two years ago. At my first meeting with each church leadership I challenged them not to be idiots! The simplest definition of an idiot is someone who does the same thing over and over again but expects to get different results. If what they were doing as churches wasn't bringing the results they had hoped for or desired then they needed to change. Carrying on with the same old same old wasn't going to solve their problems or challenges.

Some that attended the training saw Intergenerational Worship as a helpful tool to rebalance the **Movement** and the **Mission** in their church.

Ministry in Pictures



Ministry in Pictures



Passing on resources

The earth is the Lord's and all that is in it, the world, and those who live in it.
So says the writer of Psalm 24.
For Christians there is a simple, but often forgotten principle that we own nothing. It all belongs to God.

'But who am I, and what is my people, that we should be able to make this freewill-offering? For all things come from you, and of your own have we given you. Chronicles 29:14

So with that in mind it was an easy thing to off-load as many of the resources I have created over the decades for others to use. The big books and props I have used with toddler groups have found a new home with a church group. All the Intergenerational Worship service outlines, talks, song videos and activities have been catalogued and deposited onto USB memory sticks. These have been given to churches that I have been working with in recent years and that are intending to continue with I.W.

I have also placed all the artwork and layouts for the Time to Share at Home materials onto the USB sticks so that if any of these churches want to produce boxes for their church households they will be able to. Some of these churches have suggested they might use the materials with their children and youth groups. Great but why not use it with your home groups / small groups. I think you would be amazed at the conversations that would take place and the deep learning and wondering that would happen.

As I write I'm busy clearing the FACT office ready to hand the room back to Ashford Baptist Church. They have been extremely generous towards FACT from it's beginnings and again in recent years by providing an excellent working space. I was delighted to be able to offer some of our office furniture that they can make use of. Our old faithful printer has been snapped up by St Peter's in Staines and I hope it will be an asset to them.

To be frank, all the puppets have seen better days and have a lot of mileage on them! So, like me they have come to the end of their working lives and they will gently disappear from public life.

Supporters memories

We are very sorry to hear that FACT will be closing in August. I just wanted to express how much the ministry has meant to our family and how grateful we are for everything you have done.

When my girls were younger, they especially loved the workshops — particularly Charlie the puppet — and they still speak about those moments with real fondness. I have seen so many children learn, grow, and experience God's love in a way that was engaging and deeply meaningful.

I also want to thank you personally for the way you have led the Intergenerational Worship. My husband, who is a non-believer, attends once a month, and this has meant a great deal to me. The way you present the message makes him feel welcome, comfortable, able to listen and be part of the community. I am sincerely grateful for that.

Thank you Simon, the ministry has been a memorable part of our lives, and we truly appreciate everything you have poured into it.



A church wrote.
We want to express our deep gratitude for the many years of faithful ministry that FACT has invested in this community. The impact of your work over more than three decades is significant, and we know that countless children, adults, and churches have been blessed through your commitment to advancing Christian education and discipleship.
As you approach your retirement on 31st August, please be assured of our prayers and our heartfelt appreciation. Your leadership, dedication, and faithfulness have been a blessing to many, and we trust that God will continue to guide and encourage you in the next season.

Avril - one of our full-time schools workers shares her memories



I worked for FACT for many years. Although I had studied at Cliff College to do this kind of work, I had no actual experience on the ground. FACT gave me that opportunity and allowed me to flourish. Simon taught me how to use puppets, how to operate technology, how to confidently present to large groups of children and adults, how to multi task and stay calm. His mantra was 'Know something deeply, in order to explain it simply.' Whether for RE Days, Assemblies, Time To Wonder or speaking at conferences and workshops, we carried this mantra. Preparation was key, FACT's whole approach was always professional, thorough, inclusive and relevant. It was about giving young people space to explore faith, to encounter God in an open and inclusive way.



I have many happy memories of our office in Egham, where the team would plan, create and prepare ready for delivery. I was learning in a 'live' environment but Simon and the team supported me every step of the way. By the time we moved offices to Staines, I was much more experienced but FACT never rested on its laurels. Simon ensured it was always cutting edge, moving forward at pace and so it was, at this stage, we created 'A Time To Wonder'.

Little did we know the impact this project would have.

As with most things at FACT, the timing was key. In the busyness of school life, children and teachers alike were eager to grab this space to express themselves; their hopes, their worries; to dream of their potential, to know they were special in God's eyes.

Since leaving FACT I have really enjoyed Simon visiting our toddler group at Staines Methodist. Indeed, Simon helped to set up both our Messy Church and Toddler and Carer group, both of which are flourishing.

FACT maybe closing but its legacy lives on in so many deep and varied ways.

So thank you Simon, thank you FACT for everything.

Supporters memories

I just wanted to say a big 'well done' to you for your faithful and prayerful work for children through FACT. I remember your very early days of setting up this ministry- boldly stepping out and harder still, keeping going as the 'constant'.

There have been many changes, I know, within the team and in how we communicate with children. It's great to recognise that some of the old ways with your puppets are timeless and always enjoyed.

Our girls came to many of your events and my 6 years or so as a trustee helped me to appreciate all of the prayer and effort that went into every season. My particular highlight was always the Time to Wonder that you brought to the schools.

I've been involved in a couple of similar events run by a school connected to our new church. On my first volunteering session, I walked in and was greeted with a slightly panicked organiser saying that someone couldn't be there and could I take their place? Unlike your preparation evenings, there had been no opportunity to even know what the theme was, but thanks to what I had experienced through Time to Wonder, I was able to run with leading a group.

Anyway, Simon I just wanted to say 'Well done, good and faithful servant'.

I know that local schools and churches will miss your physical presence but they will have an abundance of resources and expertise from what you have introduced to them.



Many thanks for keeping me updated on FACT through the Newsletter over these many years. I think that you and the Trustees have made a good, but also brave, decision to end FACT at a point where it is still a lively enterprise. Much good work has been achieved over the years, but everything has its season. All that you have done in God's name will always be remembered, and now it's time to relax a little....

As requested in your penultimate Newsletter, here are some memories from your time at Oakfield First School, Windsor:

'Simon's FACT assemblies were a real highlight every half term at Oakfield First School. The children loved his puppets, and the message from the morning's assembly would always be discussed afterwards with real understanding, even among the youngest children. But the thing which was most valued by children and teachers alike were the wonderful RE days in which a topic would be explored in great depth using different 'ways in' with a whole Key Stage across an entire day. So often the adults found themselves amazed at the level of thought which the children displayed, and the teachers all agreed that they personally learned more about Christianity during those days than they ever had done at school!

When Simon decided to hand over some of his schools, Oakfield included, to Avril, initially there was real disappointment because we knew that we would all miss him. But true to form, he had chosen a worthy successor, and briefed her very well. Everyone loved Avril just as much as they had loved Simon, and FACT continued to be a regular and highly valued part of Oakfield life – one which both the children, now young adults, and the teachers and Teaching Assistants still recall with real affection.

Thank you for all of it, Simon, and may God's blessings go with you in this next stage of life.'

From Roz and the Oakfield team

I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, and I have remained faithful.
2 Tim 4:7