

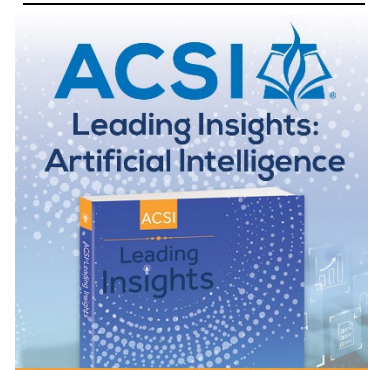


An International Member Connection, December 2024

Fellow International Educator,

I was recently reading the Christmas story in Luke, chapter two, and this time, it hit me how the first ones to hear the news of Jesus's birth and the Messiah announcement were a group of unknown, likely uneducated, non-status shepherds! We don't know their names, only their late-night occupation. Those were the ones who were chosen to go and see the baby in a manger.

Most of the 170 international Christian schools we serve describe themselves with some version of "College Prep", and that's good. Yet some in your student body will not choose the college route. Some will be craftsmen, builders, plumbers, inventors, and maybe animal caregivers (shepherds). It amazes me that God decided to announce his son's coming not to the college graduates, the influencers, the wealthy, or the ministerial class but to a group that worked in quiet places to no fanfare, no acclaim, and no vast retirement plans. Something different and new was coming. I urge you to keep your eyes open for the up-and-coming "shepherds" in your classroom, soccer team, or dorm. God may give them a profound new message that their college-bound classmates might not hear. To the shepherds, "You guys are great."



"Today, in the town of David, a Savior has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord" (Luke 2:11).

Blessings to you wherever you are in the world. Have a restful Christmas break.

Tim for the [international school team](#)

[Tim Shuman, Senior Director, International Division](#)

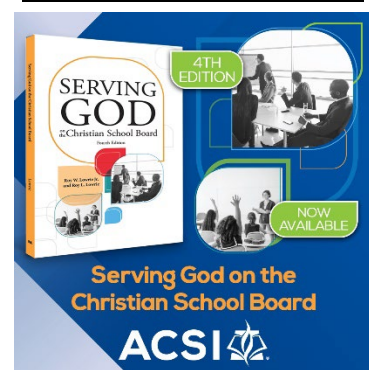
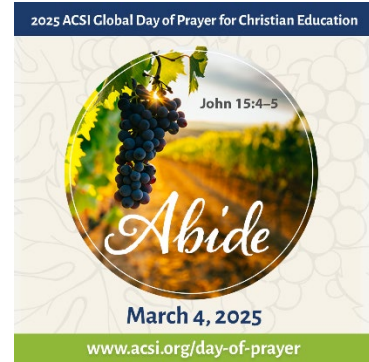
[Chealsea Allen, International Schools Activity & Events Coordinator](#)

[Michael McNabb, Director of Accreditation, International Division](#)

[Kimberly Park, Accreditation Specialist, International Division](#)

[Caitlin Taylor, Administrative Assistant, International Division](#)

ACSI Christmas Card



Today is [Giving Tuesday](#)! Join us in advancing Christian education globally. Support the ACSI Global Impact Fund to strengthen Christian schools, equip educators, and impact students for

Christ worldwide. [Give today!](#)

Merry Christmas!



Merry Christmas from ACSI! Watch the video above for a special Christmas message from ACSI President & CEO, Dr. Larry Taylor.

Upcoming International Events

- Are you bringing on staff for the second semester? [PFO2Go](#), our online course, can help prepare them to transition to your country and ministry. This [recent article](#) unpacks PFO2Go for you.
- **Calling International School Leaders to register for ISLC Europe in Mallorca, Spain. Join us from 27 to 30 April 2025.** [Check out our speaker lineup HERE.](#)
- **NEW DATES. Leaders in Latin America**, register now for the ABI Conference. We are calling international and national leaders from Accredited, Bilingual, and International schools in Latin America to come together on **30 March to 02 April 2025** in Santa Domingo, Dominican Republic. [LEARN MORE HERE.](#)
- **Mark your calendars for ICEC Asia 2025**, which will be held in Malaysia on the campus of Dalat International School from November 26 to 29, 2025. Details are forthcoming.

News, Articles, & Other Ideas

- ACSI's most recent posts and resources:
 - [The Tie That Binds: Relationships in Christian Schools](#) with Matthew H. Lee.
 - [The Heart of Christian Education: What Do We Really Value? Evidence from Christian Schools in Indonesia](#) with Rian R. Djita, Ph.D.
 - [Restoring the Faith Practice of Hospitality: A Courageously Good Gift](#) with Elisa Carlson
 - Dr. Larry Taylor interviews the Pollards, who work at [Mercy Ships Academy](#), an ACSI-accredited school on board Mercy Ships, a floating hospital. Enjoy a [School on Water](#).
 - Have you ever wished you could ask another international Christian school a question on a pressing topic in your school? Now you can. With your ACSI login, you can join the International School group at [ACSI Community](#) and hear from one another on various topics. The only missing piece...is YOU. Join us today.
- [International Schools Research](#) recently posted the white paper, [How do International Schools Prepare Students for Higher Education?](#) And then there is this related article from ICEF Monitor, [Foreign Student enrollment in the United States reached an all-time high in 2024](#)
- This should interest us in international education, [The World's Largest Unconnected Populations](#).
- [Michael and Kim Essenburg](#) care for international Christian schools and love to share flourishing tips and ideas with you.
 - [International Christian school leaders, how clear are you on what you value and what you don't value?](#)
 - [What are 7 experiments you could do to further experience resilient well-being?](#)
 - [Model a flourishing reading life.](#)
 - [How can you make even more effective, efficient decisions?](#)
- A thought-provoking article to share with someone in your community: [The Joy of Missing Out: Lessons from a Church-Wide Digital Detox](#). Do you think it's possible to do this?
- Having lived in Europe for a few decades, this data did not surprise me. [The World's Top 20 Tallest Countries](#).

- I love this international teacher’s work as an instrument repairer at school: [A Personal Musical Journey](#). I also learned the word peripatetic, which is very relevant to international work. It means “traveling from place to place, in particular working or based in various places for relatively short periods.”
- As we approach a well-deserved Christmas break, this liturgy may be just what we need: [A Liturgy for Rest](#).

Headship Openings Only

- Christian Academy of Guatemala. [Learn more here](#).
- Doulos Discovery School, Dominican Republic. [Learn more here](#).
- Faith International Academy, Philippines. [Learn more here](#).
- Hillcrest International School, Indonesia. [Learn more here](#).
- International Academy of St. Petersburg, Russia. [Learn more here](#).
- International Christian School – Uijeongbu, Korea. [Learn more here](#).
- Mountainview Christian School, Indonesia. [Learn more here](#).
- Tien Shan International School, Kazakhstan. [Learn more here](#).

If you have a head of school opening, please let me know. Check our [member school vacancy page](#) and the [ACSI Career Center](#). If you are interested in a position at an international school, check out the latest non-USA opportunities [here](#). Check out the latest ACSI [Job Flash](#) that goes out to thousands. Learn how you can get your needs included in the Job Flash [here](#); scroll down for Job Flash.

Introducing Purposeful Design’s New 3rd Edition Science, Grade 5 Textbook Grounded in Biblical Worldview

ACSI’s publishing division, Purposeful Design Publications, is thrilled to announce the release of

Take Time to Focus

By Carol Aversa, Director of Accreditation, Northeast

This time of year, it is so very busy, yet exciting, as we prepare to celebrate the Savior’s birth. There are school programs, church activities, gifts to buy, meals

Thank You for Your Service!

We have several employees retiring in December 2024. We are so grateful for their servant hearts and service in Christian education over the years!

Science, Grade 5. This 3rd edition textbook is crafted to spark curiosity and promote a deeper understanding of the natural world while emphasizing a robust biblical worldview.

In the current educational environment, it is crucial to provide students with not only scientific knowledge but also a framework that encourages them to see the world through a lens of wonder and appreciation for God's creation. Purposeful Design Publications accomplishes this by seamlessly integrating scientific principles with biblical truths, allowing students to recognize God's handiwork everywhere around them and critically assess secular assumptions.

Science, Grade 5 is written by experienced educators and subject-matter experts. It emphasizes active learning methodologies rooted in biblical principles. Students won't just read about scientific concepts—they will actively engage in evidence-based instruction, hands-on scientific inquiries, and stimulating engineering-design activities.

Continue reading [here](#).

to prepare, and special celebrations to plan. Such fun, yet sometimes stressful!

Just recently, I felt the angst of all that needed to be done and purposefully took myself out of the busyness to consider one aspect of the Christmas story: the perspective of a new mother looking down at her savior.

Luke Chapter 1, verses 26-38 tells us of Gabriel's visit to Mary, proclaiming her virgin conception of the Son of the Most High. We read where Mary questions, "How could this be?" And can you only imagine her confusion, her panic, the reeling thoughts going through her mind? I imagine it being too much to even process! Yet we see Mary's obedience in verse 38 as she responds, "I am the Lord's servant. May your word to me be fulfilled." (NIV)

I'm certain that Mary did not have all the answers to her questions as she carried this child. Scripture does not share much of her story for the next nine months. Yet, we celebrate His birth, and the details shared in Scripture of His birth are the fulfillment of prophecy regarding the Savior. So, let us consider the moments after Mary held her newborn baby.

Continue reading [here](#).

Celebrating Jan Snyder's 30 Years of Service at ACSI

Jan Snyder started her journey with ACSI on November 9, 1994, just two months after the organization moved its headquarters to Colorado Springs from Whittier, California. At the time, ACSI was led by founder Dr. Paul Kienel, and his wife, Annie Kienel, who hired Jan to work part-time in the mailroom. Annie, a servant leader, was gracious and flexible, allowing Jan to work during the hours that her three young children were at school.

In her early days at ACSI, Jan worked with a total of 20 employees at the organization's new Colorado Springs office. She quickly embraced the organization's mission and, by 1996, transitioned into the Order Department after being invited by her supervisor, Fran Burdick. Jan began working full time, answering phones and processing book orders on DOS-based computers. The textbooks offered by ACSI at the time were mainly Bible and spelling. Jan was soon promoted to supervisor, a role she held for 18 years with the support of her manager, David Smitherman.

Continue reading [here](#).



[ACSI | Association of Christian Schools International](#)

Post Office Box 62249, Colorado Springs, CO 80962

Connect with us on social media and fellow Christian educators through the [ACSI Community!](#)

We respect your privacy. We do not sell, rent, or abuse our customer email list.

We strive to send valuable, timely emails to our members and friends.

[MANAGE SUBSCRIPTION PREFERENCES](#)

Introducing Purposeful Design's New 3rd Edition Science, Grade 5 Textbook Grounded in Biblical Worldview Continued

This research-based, three-dimensional approach not only enhances comprehension but also develops future-ready skills like critical thinking, problem-solving, and creativity, all while reinforcing the connection between science and faith.

Educators will value the smooth incorporation of NSES and NGSS standards into each lesson, ensuring comprehensive coverage and alignment with educational objectives. The inclusion of differentiated instruction ideas, cross-curricular activities, and performance-based assessments further supports educators in addressing diverse learning needs and tracking student progress effectively.

With engaging unit videos, colorful learning materials for digital display or printing, and a wealth of resources, our Science, Grade 5 promises to be an invaluable tool for educators and an inspiring journey of discovery for students. Prepare to unlock the wonders of science through the lens of faith and witness God's handiwork in every lesson!

Take Time to Focus Continued

Many of you may already be familiar with the song, “Mary, Did You Know?” In that song, Mary is asked about whether she knew of the miracles that her baby would one day perform, whether she knew that the baby she was holding is the great I Am. As a mother myself, I try to imagine what transpired in her heart during those first few moments, hours, days... being able to be face to face with one’s own Savior. Throughout the book of Luke, aside from Gabriel’s proclamation, Mary is made keenly aware of her son’s identity from Elizabeth to the shepherds, to Simeon; from before His birth, to shortly after His birth, as she held her newborn baby, she knew her Savior was in her arms. Even as she held Him, she was being held by her Heavenly Father.

Which brings me back to my perspective regarding preparing for Christmas; considering that a baby, fully God and fully man, in His new life/birth, provides for new life and rebirth for us. The fragility of a human infant, yet Holy (and wholly!) powerful, could provide salvation to even ME!

As you prepare to celebrate this tremendous gift and eventual sacrifice, I challenge you to steal away to a quiet space. Consider the tremendous gift that Salvation is. Determine a particular piece of the Savior’s birth that speaks to your heart. And allow that to resonate in all your celebrations.

Merry Christmas!

Thank You For Your Service Continued

Jan’s role grew as ACSI expanded. The Order Department evolved into what became Customer Service and began supporting schools beyond just book orders. Jan’s team also took on standardized testing services, and they adapted to new technology, including the launch of the Purposeful Design webstore.

Around eight years ago, the Customer Service and Membership departments merged, forming what became known as Member Care, and then later, the Care Team. Through these changes, Jan was a steady force, helping her team through each transition while maintaining ACSI’s commitment to serving schools.

Before the COVID-19 pandemic, ACSI's headquarters was home to more than 90 employees, and some of Jan's fondest memories from the years in the office include weekly chapel services, daily devotions, and special events like Air Force fly-over picnics, fall chili cook-offs, and Christmas dinners. She also treasured the everyday moments spent in the lunchroom and around the coffee machine, where lasting friendships were made.

For Jan, her 30 years at ACSI have been more than just a career—they've been a calling. She looks back with gratitude at the many godly people she's worked with and the opportunity to serve both the Lord and the schools ACSI supports.



Erin Wilcox Retires After Distinguished Service at ACSI

After dedicating nearly a decade of service to ACSI, Erin Wilcox is embarking on a new chapter as she announces her retirement this December. Since joining the organization in June 2015, Wilcox has displayed a passion for Christian education, serving in the Accreditation Department and most recently as the Assistant Vice President of Digital Initiatives.

"I have loved working for an organization that has as its mission to inspire children to become devoted followers of Jesus Christ," she reflects. "Whether it was through the process of accreditation or working on digital resources, that mission has continued to inspire me."

Wilcox's journey with ACSI actually began more than two decades ago, when she served as a member of both the regional and national accreditation commissions. During this time, she witnessed significant transformations in the organization's approach to accreditation. "Over 20 years ago, many things were done very differently by region," she notes. "When [ACSI] moved to a more centralized model, and processes became more consistent, I think our products and services improved considerably."

Wilcox leaves behind a legacy of commitment to Christian education and organizational excellence. Her expertise and dedication helped shape the organization's current accreditation standards, which maintain high academic excellence while nurturing spiritual growth in students across the country.



Celebrating Bobbie Kelly's Retirement

After over two decades of dedicated service, Bobby Kelly, Director of Accreditation Central Division, is retiring from ACSI. Bobbie joined ACSI in July 2003, beginning her journey with Student Activities in the Ohio River Valley region. Over the years, she witnessed and contributed to many substantial changes, including the merging of the Ohio River Valley and Mid-American regions, eventually uniting with the South Central region to create the Central Division.

While at ACSI, Bobbie played a vital role in maintaining and enhancing educational benchmarks. Her involvement in the recent revision of ACSI's accreditation standards highlights her commitment to ensuring that schools maintain excellence. Her impact on ACSI's community and her contributions to accreditation will be remembered and valued for years to come.



Early Education Senior Coordinator Kim Brucker Announces Retirement

After dedicating more than three decades to early education, including 6½ years of service at ACSI, Kim Brucker has announced her retirement from her leadership role Senior Coordinator, Central Division.

During her tenure at ACSI, Brucker played a role in expanding early education support services. She helped develop new initiatives such as the Early Education Leader Connect and Leadership Networking Meetings.

One aspect of Brucker's work that she “loved” was “writing articles for the Early Education Newsletter.” These were produced in order to provide valuable guidance on integrating biblical truths into every aspect of kingdom education.

"It has been a privilege to serve Early Educators through encouragement, inspiration, and equipping them to serve God faithfully and obediently," Brucker reflected. "My favorite part of

serving early educators has been to pray with them and encourage them with a Gospel-centered vision."

While Brucker was at ACSI, the early education division experienced significant growth, expanding its professional development offerings to include both in-person and virtual events. These initiatives have strengthened support for member schools and their leaders.

Brucker remains passionate about Kingdom Education and is prayerfully awaiting God's direction for the next chapter of her life. "I will miss working alongside so many godly men and women as we have sharpened each other through our interactions," she shared.

