

Summer 2013

CHRISTIAN LIBRARIAN



The Journal of the
Librarians' Christian Fellowship

CONTENTS INCLUDE

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- *FROM L.C.F. TO C.L.I.S.*
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- *THE THIRTY EIGHT VILLAGES*
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EVENTS AT A GLANCE

●19-22 SEPTEMBER 2013: C.S. LEWIS JUBILEE FESTIVAL

Holy Trinity Church, Headington, Oxford. Details: p. 15

●SATURDAY 19 OCTOBER 2013: LCF VISIT TO EXHIBITION "FROM THE MIDDLE AGES TO MIDDLE EARTH".

Bodleian Library, Oxford, from 10.30.a.m. Details pp. 12, 15.

●SATURDAY 19 OCTOBER 2013: LCF ANNUAL PUBLIC LECTURE

New Road Baptist Church, Bonn Square, Oxford. Speaker: Rev. Dr. **Michael Ward** on *Imagination, Reason, Will: A Perspective on the Legacy of C.S. Lewis*. Details: p 12.

●SATURDAY 5 APRIL 2014: LCF ANNUAL CONFERENCE

Chancellor's Room, Hughes Parry Hall, 19-26 Cartwright Gardens, London, WC1, from 10.30.a.m. Speakers include Dr. **Neil Hudson**, *London Institute for Contemporary Christianity*. Details: p. 12.

PRAYER NOTES FOR SUMMER 2013

PLEASE PRAY FOR

●LCF's Executive Committee as it prepares for the launch of *Christians in Library and Information Services*.

●The work of our professional association, CILIP, as it prepares its own re-branding exercise.

●LCF's forthcoming activities including the October 2013 annual lecture and the April 2014 annual conference.

●Various activities planned to mark the fiftieth anniversary of the death of **C.S. Lewis**.

●Christian children's writers including our own member the Rev. **John Waddington-Feather**.

●The work of the *Christian Book Promotion Trust* and its *Speaking Volumes* library scheme .

●The role of libraries in spreading the gospel in South Sudan and in Cambodia.

●The work of the *Torch Trust*.

● Library and information staff in an era of reductions in spending, cut-backs, privatisation, re-organisations, redundancies and other challenges.



LIBRARIANS' CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP

CHRISTIANS IN LIBRARY, INFORMATION AND ARCHIVE WORK

*An organisation 'in liaison' with the Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals.
Affiliated to: Christian Research Association; Christians at Work; Evangelical Alliance; Transform Work
UK; Universities' & Colleges' Christian Fellowship.
Web Site: www.librarianscf.org.uk*

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THE FIRST WORD

LCF's recent Annual General Meeting approved a forthcoming change of name to *Christians in Library and Information Services*. MARGARET KEELING stresses the importance of change as well as the dangers of seeking after the latest novelty

THE ATTRACTION OF THE NEW

Do we find ourselves drawn to the many demands on our attention to try something new? Gizmos and gadgets, apps and experiences, food and clothes, the list is endless. Many of us, sometimes described as 'early adopters', find ourselves attracted magpie-like by the glitter and temptation to try the next big thing.

Yet here we are – *Christians in Library and Information Services*. Moving on with a new name, looking for a new logo, and for fresh ways to fulfil our calling as 'light and salt' in our professional world, and supporting Christians in their changing professional roles. But in our case, we have thought long and hard over these changes, and have moved forward in response to the one who is 'making all things new' (Rev.21 v 5)

Interestingly April's *CILIP Update* led with 'The next leap forward' as CILIP too set out its intention to make big changes, in recognition of the need for a new direction, a new vision and mission. This started back in 2010, when members were asked for their views about the future of their professional organisation. It seems to me that a number of key concepts emerge as the drivers of these changes, which we too share.

The article sets out the need for 'creating community' in the professional

world, for encouraging recognition and value of our professional skills. It highlights the importance of '*re branding*', of a recognisable and clear identity which all can sign up to, and which epitomises the '*brand values*' which convey our '*personality*'.

This drive for a fresh direction resonates with us too. What is our '*community*' as CLIS? One of our greatest needs and greatest support as Christians is in communities – church, home groups, social groups, workplace. Communities are places where we can be supported, challenged and encouraged and in our turn, be part of God at work. How then do we engage with our communities, personal, professional, virtual and face to face? As many ways as possible! As an organisation we ignore social media at our peril, but what about the everyday face to face relationships that our isolating society desperately needs?

What is our '*brand*'? Is it clear, and does it express our personality as Christ's followers in our professional area? What is our story to the Christian world? The recent AGM and Conference gave the opportunity to chat about the many stories we have as members: of where we've come from, and what we have experienced of God's direction, of service to individuals and organisations.

To move on to a different story, Jesus described the silliness of putting new wine in old skins, or new strong patches on old cloth. His kingdom values call for new garments, new bottles. As we seek to move forward into shaping the next phase in our organisation we need wisdom in rediscovering our own new story of kingdom values, old yet totally relevant for today.

D. Margaret Keeling, BA, MA, MCLIP, PhD, was first elected as President of the *Librarians' Christian Fellowship* at the Annual General Meeting on Saturday 2 April 2011. She worked until her retirement as Head of Services for Libraries, Culture and Adult Community Learning for *Essex County Council*.

THE SECOND WORD

LOUISE MANNERS finds amazement and delight during a recent visit to the historic churches of Italy

ITALIAN INTERLUDE



The service on the Sunday after Ascension in *St. John the Baptist* Church in Ravenna, Italy, presented many surprises. The bulk of the sermon consisted of question and answer sessions with the two youngest children in the church, the two boy servers. The expression on the face of the elder of the two boys was of delight at being in the limelight. In the church was a magnificent crib showing normal life going on in the busy Italian countryside in addition to the baby Jesus, Joseph and Mary, the shepherds and the three kings. There was even the Italian equivalent of a Punch and Judy show! Under the baroque church of *Saint Eufemia* I was amazed by the House of the Stone Carpets where fairly recently excavated fifth to sixth century Byzantine palace mosaics in wonderful condition are on display. I found the mosaics of the *Basilica of Saint'Apollinare* in Classe to be very beautiful and the more to be valued in that the basilica was almost destroyed during the Second World War. I was delighted that to this day Ravenna continues to be a major producer of mosaics and in its educational institutions a future generation of mosaic artists is learning the practice.

Louise Manners, *DipLib, MA, MCLIP*, works as a Subject Librarian at the *Ealing, Hammersmith and West London College* and serves as Chair of the *Librarians' Christian Fellowship*.

NEWS

LIBRARIANS' CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP NEWSLETTER



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ANNUAL PUBLIC LECTURE

- 2013 marks the fiftieth anniversary of the death of writer and scholar **C.S. Lewis** and we will be celebrating Lewis' contribution in our annual public lecture. This is to be held on **Saturday 19 October 2013** in the **New Road Baptist Church, Bonn Square, Oxford**, from 2.30.p.m. Dr. **Michael Ward**, Senior Research Fellow at Blackfriars Hall, *University of Oxford* and author of *Planet Narnia*, will be our guest speaker. Michael's talk will be entitled *Imagination, Reason, Will: A Perspective on the Legacy of C.S. Lewis*. The speaker will try to form an overview of Lewis's legacy, fo-

cussing not on particular works but on his general approach to the life of the mind and the life of faith. Though he sometimes called himself a "*rationalist*", Lewis also said that the "*imaginative*" side of him was older and more continuously operative than the rational side. The lecture will demonstrate how he brought these two sides of himself together and how he related them to his Christian faith.

- For those who can get to Oxford in time we hope to arrange a morning visit to the *Bodleian Library's* current exhibition *Magical Books: From the Middle Ages to Middle Earth* (for more information please see *Lewis Anniversary* below), probably from about 10.30.a.m. This will be followed by lunch in a local restaurant. There is *no need* to book for the afternoon lecture but if you would like to join us for the Library visit and/or lunch please let me know.

ANNUAL CONFERENCE

Next year's **Annual Conference** will be held on **Saturday 5 April 2014** in the **Chancellor's Room, Hughes Parry Hall, 19-26 Cartwright Gardens, London, WC1** from 10.30.a.m. and our speakers will include Dr. **Neil Hudson**, Director of the *Imagine* project at the *London Institute for Contemporary Christianity*. Please book the date now and plan to attend.

NATIONAL LIBRARIES DAY

This year's **National Libraries Day** was held on **Saturday 9 February 2013** and provided a useful opportunity for highlighting the contribution of libraries of all kinds to our national life.

As LCF's contribution to NLD we circulated a press release to a number of Christian weekly newspapers and radio programmes urging support for libraries from members of the Christian community.

As a result of this initiative, the Rev. Tony Miles mentioned LCF and NLD on his "*Saturday Quiet Time*" programme on *Premier Christian Radio* on 9 February 2013.

LCF's Vice President, Richard Waller, recorded a one minute forty-five second promotional item on libraries which went out on *Flame Christian Radio*, a local station serving the Wirral, on 9 February. As a follow-up Richard spoke about libraries on Flame's "*Chat Room*" programme on Monday 18 March 2013.

LCF's President, Margaret Keeling, included an item on NLD, and a prayer for libraries, in the morning service at *Woodbridge Baptist Church* on Sunday 10 February 2013. On the same date my own church, *Barking Baptist*, included a short article on NLD in its weekly newsletter.

LCF and NLD received coverage in the ***Church of England Newspaper*** and the ***English Churchman*** and there may have

been other mentions that we have not seen.

Did other members get involved in NLD? Or does anyone have ideas for ways in which we might get involved in **National Libraries Day** in the future? Comments please.

GET READY FOR C.L..I.S.

As reported elsewhere in this issue, our recent Annual General Meeting adopted a new simplified Constitution for the Fellowship and also approved a forthcoming change of name to *Christians in Library and Information Services* (CLIS).

We hope to implement this name change in the near future but in the meantime have to attend to such matters as a new logo and letterhead, a revised publicity leaflet and, if possible, a launch event for the 'new' association which will attract the interest of the library and Christian press and media.

The executive committee will be grateful for your prayers as we prepare to introduce CLIS to the library profession and Christian community.

MEMBERSHIP DIRECTORY

As in 2011 and 2012 we have produced this year's *Membership Directory* as an e-mail attachment which was sent out recently to

members and subscribers on our **E-Newsletter** mailing list.

If you have not received the *Directory*, or had any difficulty with the attachment, please contact our Web Site Manager Mary Wood at mary@the-woods.org.uk

If you would like to receive a printed copy of the list, please contact our Membership Secretary Janice Paine, 22 Queensgate Gardens, 396 Upper Richmond Road, Putney, London, SW15 6JN. Tel. 020 8785 2174.

If your details do not appear in the *Directory* it is probable that we have not received your subscription for 2013. On the other hand it is always possible that we have made a mistake. Either way, Janice would be pleased to hear from you as soon as possible.

The subscription rates for 2013 is £26.00 with a reduced rate of £16.00 for retired, student and unemployed members and subscribers. Please make cheques payable to Librarians' Christian Fellowship.

APPEAL FROM SOUTH SUDAN

We have recently received an appeal for assistance from *Chaima Christian Institute Maridi*, where they teach Theology, Discipleship and also Vocational Training Skills at a tertiary level. Based on their Strategic Plan for 2013 – 2017, the newly appointed principal, Rev.

Canon Patricia Wicks, is seeking funding in order to upgrade the institute and make it self-sustaining.

Their plans for developing the library are as follows:

1. Buy new books for the library generally;
2. Increase number of chairs and tables, and buy a computer for the Librarian;
3. Build a new library as the present one is small and we want to expand the library;
4. Give training to the Librarian.

The Principal asks: "*Please join hands with us so that through the work of the Institute we can increasingly offer skills and knowledge for sustainable and equitable social economic transformation of the lives of South Sudanese for useful service to God and for the development of South Sudan.*" She is a British Mission Partner with CMS (*Church Mission Society*) and has been working in South Sudan for the past fifteen years.

More background information can be found online at <http://www.cms-uk.org> in an article on urgent prayer needs in South Sudan <http://www.cms-uk.org/Pray/PrayerSpace/TabId/150/ArtMID/3737/ArticleID/600/Urgent-prayer-needs-in-South-Sudan.aspx> or contact our Overseas Secretary at LCFoverseas@etelligence.info

The LCF Committee will also consider what contribution we can make as an organisation.

LINDISFARNE GOSPELS

The **Lindisfarne Gospels** is a beautifully illustrated manuscript produced in memory of St. Cuthbert at the monastery on the island of Lindisfarne around 700 A.D. Over a thousand years later this magnificent example of medieval craftsmanship is returning to the North-East of England to form the centrepiece of an exhibition on Durham's UNESCO World Heritage Site.

This runs from **1 July – 30 September 2013**. Various organisations in the region will be working in partnership to celebrate the Gospels' return with a calendar of events taking place while the Gospels are being displayed in Durham.

You can find more information about the **Lindisfarne Gospels** exhibition, and sign up for an e-mail newsletter which will provide information about the availability of tickets, on the web site www.lindisfarnegospels.com

LEWIS ANNIVERSARY

- Our own Fellowship is not alone in organising events that mark the fiftieth anniversary of the death of **C.S. Lewis**.

The *Bodleian Library*, Oxford, is mounting a summer exhibition *Magical Books: From the Middle Ages to Middle Earth* highlighting the work of leading writers of fantasy for children: C.S. Lewis, J.R.R. Tolkien, Susan Cooper, Alan

Garner and Philip Pullman. The exhibition will display a selection of Tolkien's original artwork, C.S. Lewis's original map of Narnia, and manuscripts of novels and poems from all of the writers in the collection.

Also featured in the exhibition will be a selection of books and manuscripts which contain the original myths and legends on which these Oxford-educated writers freely drew for inspiration.

Admission is free and the exhibition runs until **Sunday 27 October 2013**. Details from communications@bodleian.ox.ac.uk

- A festival celebrating the life of C.S. Lewis is being planned by *Holy Trinity Church*, Headington, Oxford, the church where Lewis worshipped for more than thirty years.

The *C.S. Lewis Jubilee Festival* runs from **19 – 22 September 2013** and will include a talk by Lewis biographer Professor Alister McGrath, guided walks around Headington where Lewis lived for more than forty years, and the premiere of a new play based on the life of Lewis.

Both services on Sunday 22 September will have a Lewis theme with the Bishop of Oxford, the Rt. Rev. John Pritchard, preaching at the evening service.

More information is available from www.cslewisjubileefestival.org

- Peter Berry continues with his *Inklings* walking tour of Oxford each Wednesday during the summer months following in the footsteps of

C.S. Lewis, J.R.R. Tolkien, Charles Williams and their friends.

Peter, who has led several walking tours for members of LCF, also leads a general literary walking tour of Oxford each Tuesday and Thursday visiting sites associated with Graham Greene, T.S. Eliot and Dorothy L. Sayers.

An innovation this year is a *Music Tour* on Fridays exploring Oxford links with Handel, Haydn and Beecham among others.

For details contact the *Blackwell Bookshop*, 48-51 Broad Street, Oxford, OX1 3BQ. Tel. 01865 792792.

RELUCTANT CONVERT

Nearly fifty years after his death, **C.S. Lewis** remains a popular author and richly deserves his reputation as one of the twentieth century's most influential Christian writers. There have been a number of good biographies of Lewis but those requiring an introduction to his life and works will benefit from reading Alister McGrath's ***C.S. Lewis: a Life: Eccentric Genius, Reluctant Prophet*** (Hodder and Stoughton, £20, ISBN 978-1444745528).

Speaking about his book at the *London Institute for Contemporary Christianity* on Monday 22 April 2013, Professor McGrath explained that he wrote his book for readers of the ***Chronicles of Narnia*** series who want to know more about the author. It is now more than twenty

years since A.N. Wilson wrote his major biography of Lewis, and new evidence and new interpretations have become available since that time.

Professor McGrath said that new evidence suggests that the date when Lewis became a "*reluctant convert*" to theism was 1930 and not 1929 as claimed in earlier biographies and in Lewis's own autobiography. There is also new evidence that Lewis encountered hostility from the scientific establishment at Oxford because of his strong opposition to vivisection.

Professor McGrath believes that there is more to Lewis than meets the eye. Lewis was not a saint but a flawed human being and he has tried to provide an honest portrait of his life in the biography.

The speaker suggested that much of Lewis's current support comes from Roman Catholics and evangelical Protestants in the United States. The latter is surprising as Lewis's theology attracted criticism from evangelicals during his lifetime and immediately afterwards.

For contemporary readers Lewis occupies a middle ground between modernity and post-modernity. For some readers he provides a rational and convincing argument for the Christian faith, while others are drawn to his use of stories and images to commend the faith.

A lively question time after the talk covered such topics as Lewis's

political views, J.R.R. Tolkien's response to Lewis's works, and whether or not Lewis would have approved of the film versions of his works.

Alister McGrath covers other aspects of Lewis's work in his collection of essays ***The Intellectual World of C.S. Lewis*** (Wiley-Blackwell, £19.99, ISBN 978-0470672292)

It is interesting to speculate how Lewis might have answered recent attacks on the Christian faith from such writers as Richard Dawkins and Christopher Hitchens. Peter S. Williams's ***C.S. Lewis and the New Atheists*** (Paternoster, £9.99, ISBN 978-1842277706) suggests that Lewis's writings anticipate many of the arguments of these recent opponents of the faith and help to answer them.

GROUPS THAT WORK

The *London Institute for Contemporary Christianity* also hosted an afternoon consultation on Wednesday 24 April 2013 for representatives of Christian professional and workplace groups and other organisations involved in workplace ministry.

Those attending the event included four past LCF speakers: Brian Allenby, Michael Coveney, Ros Turner and Paul Valler.

The objectives of the afternoon were to learn what is happening through Christian workplace groups and in the area of "*whole life discipleship*", to consider

what existing practices and new ideas might have wider application, to identify what actions and next steps might be taken individually and collectively, and to assess commitment to working together beyond an initial consultation.

It was suggested that a Christian disciple should recognise work as a context for mission and Christian maturing. Working Christians should expect to be envisioned, equipped and supported for work in their church communities.

A disciple making church should affirm work as a place where God can be glorified and his mission to reconcile all things to himself can be carried out.

One of the most interesting parts of the afternoon was a discussion on the implications of the "*Fresh Expressions of Church*" movement for workplace ministry. Traditionally a distinction has been drawn between a workplace group or professional association and a church. Is this distinction justified or should we see such groups as legitimate expressions of the Church? Does a church have to be a "*local*" church and is there any reason why people cannot be members of more than one church at the same time?

The afternoon provided an opportunity for a useful exchange of ideas and my hope is that it will lead to a more regular inter-change between professional groups. It was interesting to learn that the LICC are making plans for a *Workplace Sunday* initiative to be

announced in the future. Watch this space for more information.

TOGETHER AT SWANWICK

The present writer was privileged to attend the *Christian Resources Together* conference held at the *Hayes Conference Centre*, in Swanwick, Derbyshire from 29 – 30 April 2013. This brought together several hundred Christian booksellers, book publishers, and suppliers of Christian resources.

One of the highlights of the conference was the opening address by Professor **Tom Wright**, former Bishop of Durham but now returned to academic life at the *University of St. Andrew's*.

Dr. Wright was introduced as the world's best-selling British Christian writer. He is a prolific author and his fifty-five or so books have included both popular level titles for the lay person and more heavyweight works for a scholarly readership. At the moment he is putting the finishing touches to a major academic work on St. Paul, to be published in the autumn.

Dr. Wright's theme was *Empowered to Serve* and illustrated the way in which, from the creation stories of Genesis onward, the human vocation has been to bear the image of God and reflect God's glory into the world.

The Conference included sessions on both practical and spiritual topics. The former included seminars on e-books and sales development while the latter

included LCF member **Eddie Olliffe** on *Helping Others By First Helping Yourself* and author **Tony Horsfall** on *Soul Care for Busy People*.

Speaking Volumes, the Christian Book Promotion Trust's scheme in which churches are encouraged to donate Christian books to public, school and other libraries, was one of the major sponsors of the conference and had a stand in the conference exhibition. The scheme attracted considerable interest from booksellers, and a seminar by **Paula Renouf**, director of the scheme, was well attended.

The conference included an awards ceremony to honour the achievements of writers, booksellers and publishers. *Lion Hudson* did very well, taking away the prestigious publisher of the year award for the fourth year running. The company also won the Biography of the Year award for David McCasland's ***Eric Liddell: Pure Gold*** (Lion Hudson, £9.99, ISBN 978-745955711) and the Fiction Book of the Year award for Fay Sampson's ***The Hunted Hare*** (Monarch, £8.99, ISBN 978-0857212047).

There was a posthumous award for the late John Paculabo, one time member of the folk group *Parchment* and later Chief Executive of *Kingsway Publications*.

The awards were preceded by an entertaining and thought-provoking talk by church leader **Jeff Lucas**, who paid tribute to four of his favourite Christian books.

Like libraries, the Christian book trade has gone through a

difficult time in recent years. We should support the work of writers, booksellers and publishers by buying, borrowing and reading Christian books and praying for those involved in this important area of Christian service.

SUMMER READING CHALLENGE

A Christian librarian from South Wales is interested to know the response of other Christians in libraries to the theme of this year's *Summer Reading Challenge* sponsored by the *Reading Agency*. The theme is to be the "Creepy House" ("are the UK's children brave enough to explore *The Awful Upstairs*, *The Gruesome Ground Floor*, and *the Spine-Tingling Cellar?*") and you can find more information on the *Reading Agency* web site at <http://readingagency.org.uk>

Is the emphasis on haunted houses etc. just a bit of harmless fun, designed to get children reading, or should we be concerned that the theme will encourage children to take an unhealthy interest in the occult? In order to find out the views of Christian librarians working with children I circulated this question to a number of LCF members.

Both of the replies received to date show a positive response to *the Summer Reading Challenge*.

Stella Thebridge, Senior Librarian, Children, Young People and Families for Warwickshire

writes: "We occasionally get similar queries if the theme of Halloween is chosen as a children's activity and steer clear of that title.

As you may know participants in the *Summer Reading Challenge* receive incentives through the challenge linked to the theme, but they do not have to read books specifically on it. They can choose any six books – the main purpose is doing the reading and enjoying it.

I don't have a problem with the ghost story as a genre for adults or children or the kinds of books that are on the recommended reads

I don't believe we encourage interest in the occult, none of the books should do this. Witches and wizards are just folklore in my view and in terms of fiction are just another part of the fantasy world of so many works of fiction."

Marie Shipley, Children's and Young People's Co-ordinator for Coventry writes: "We have discussed the issue of the theme "Creepy House" locally and we have taken the view that we want to avoid overtly publicising the supernatural. In fact, the *Reading Agency* are supportive of this and have given some brief guidance.

For our activity sessions throughout the summer we want to include all families and they have the choice of whether to take part or not. We have compiled some templates of activities that libraries can use over the summer and adapt as necessary. If staff are not comfortable with the theme in delivering the sessions themselves, they do not have to take it further

than we have suggested.

Perhaps the theme this year will encourage parents/carers to have some interesting conversations with their children and I also think it may appeal to a wider audience who will not typically be library users”.

What do others think? Send me your comments and we will continue the discussion in later issues of **Christian Librarian** or the **E-Newsletter**.

FROM THE SECRETARY'S MAILBAG

Are Christians being persecuted in the contemporary workplace? Past discussions on this topic in **Christian Librarian** have attracted the following response from our Ruislip member Jean Woods:

“I think Christians get far too worked up these days about ‘persecution’. I would never say that being unpopular, teased or ridiculed means persecution. When I was a young Christian I think it was accepted that you might well be unpopular etc. as a Christian. And we forget how persecuting the Church can be when it is in any position of power, as history often shows”.

What do others think? Let me have your views which will be included in a later issue of **Christian Librarian** or the **E-Newsletter**.

FICTION ROUND UP

Our new Seven Deadly Sins, according to a current novel, might be Hedonism, Entitlement, Celebrity-and-Brand Worship, Conspicuous Consumption, Ego-centrism, Shallowness and Short-Termism.

Wendy Perriam’s **An Enormous Yes** (Robert Hale, 30 June 2013, £19.99, ISBN 978-0709093855) tells the story of Maria Brown, torn between her devout Catholic upbringing and a possible new life of artistic and sexual fulfilment. The author sets out to examine what constitutes the good life. Is it a matter of “*must-haves*” and “*me-time*” or should it be based on the religious ideals of altruism and self-sacrifice? When it comes to the crunch Maria must make a choice between a new lifestyle and commitment to her family.

“*Christian fiction*” has always been a popular genre in the United States but has enjoyed less success in our own country. I am pleased to see that a number of Christian writers and publishers have shown a renewed interest in fiction during recent months.

As noted in an earlier issue, *Lion Hudson* have recently launched a new fiction imprint. The *Lion Fiction* list includes the first three titles from a new science fiction series by Stephen Lawhead plus re-issues of his earlier Arthurian and Celtic fantasy novels.

The heritage of Celtic Christianity provides the backdrop to

Fay Sampson's crime novel ***Death on Lindisfarne*** (Lion Fiction, £7.99, ISBN 978-1782640257). American author Donna Fletcher Crow explores similar territory in the third novel in her "Monastery Murders" series ***An Unholy Communion*** (Lion Fiction, £7.99, ISBN 978-1782640042).

Other titles of interest include Derek Wilson's ***Magnificent Malevolence*** (Lion Fiction, £7.99, ISBN 1782640183), a volume of "devilish memoirs" in the tradition of C.S. Lewis's ***Screwtape Letters***.

Not all of the titles are explicitly 'religious' and Martin Allison's ***The Reichenbach Problem*** (Lion Fiction, £7.99, ISBN 978-1782640155) is a mystery novel featuring Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, creator of Sherlock Holmes.

Meanwhile, from another publisher, comes ***Adrian Plass and the Church Weekend*** (Hodder and Stoughton, £14.99, ISBN 978-1444745442), the latest episode in the long running "Sacred Diary" series by Adrian Plass.

A Story of God And All of Us by Roma Downey and Mark Burnett (Hodder and Stoughton, £16.99, ISBN 978-1444749793) is a novel based on a forthcoming television dramatisation of the Bible which is to be broadcast by Channel Five later in the year.

CURRENT AWARENESS

- Mark Woods explores how Christians can find support at work

in his article *Walking the Walk*.

Most Christians spend the majority of their waking hours in places other than their local churches. For many people it is the workplace that is their primary mission field and where they are most likely to spend time with people who do not share their faith.

It is important to be authentically Christian at work and to address ethical concerns that arise in particular working environments. Many Christians find support through membership of a Christian professional association.

One such group is *Christians in Science*, an international network of those concerned with the relationship between science and Christian faith.

Another group is the *Librarians' Christian Fellowship*, first founded in the 1970s.

This is an uncertain time for staff in libraries due to library closures, redundancies, reductions in opening hours and the privatisation of public services. No less than two hundred local libraries are said to have closed in 2012 and some campaigners fear another three hundred could be lost in 2013.

LCF tries to support its members in these difficult times and its recent annual conference tackled the issues of redundancy, unemployment and retirement.

The article appears in the ***Methodist Recorder*** for 10 May 2013, p. 19.

- The ***Church Times*** celebrated its one hundred and fiftieth

anniversary with a special commemorative supplement in its issue dated 8 February 2013.

Peter Street's *150 Years Ago Today* (pp. 1-3) sketches the social and religious background to 1853 when the newspaper emerged as a mouthpiece for the rising "Tractarian" (High Church) movement in the *Church of England*.

The same author's *Keeping it in the Family* (p. 4) profiles members of the Palmer family who owned and sometimes edited the paper for four generations.

Bernard Palmer's *When We Gave a Piece of our Mind* (pp. 5-7) recalls some past controversies on which the newspaper expressed its strong opinions. These included the disestablishment of the *Church in Wales*, Bishop John Robinson's controversial best-seller *Honest to God* in 1963 and the arguments over the unsigned preface to *Crockford's* in 1987.

Margaret Duggan's *50 Years Before the Masthead* (pp. 10-11) remembers changes that have taken place during her fifty years as a contributor.

Cole Moreton's *The Lights Are Still On ...* (pp. 21, 24) finds there is still hope for the Anglican Church even in an age of division and uncertainty.

- The ***Church Times*** for 22 February 2013 included an extensive report of the second *Bloxham Festival of Faith and Literature* held at *Bloxham School*, Oxfordshire. This was held between

15-17 February 2013 and was organised in partnership with the ***Church Times*** and the *Greenbelt* festival.

The weekend began with an anniversary dinner for the ***Church Times*** and continued with memories of growing up in clerical households from novelist James Runcie, police officer Sarah Thornton and theologian Jane Williams.

James Runcie returned to take part in a panel discussion on crime fiction and the differences between crime fiction and 'real' police work. This session also included contributions from Lord Blair, former Commissioner of the *Metropolitan Police* and actress Jenny Spark, who appears in the ***Wallander*** television crime series.

Julia Golding, author of the ***Companions Quartet*** series, led a session on villains in children's literature.

The Festival strayed beyond the purely literary into the visual arts with Bishop Stephen Cottrell speaking about the artist Stanley Spencer and (past LCF speaker) Richard Harries and artist Roger Wagner speaking about artists' treatment of the image of Jesus in the modern era.

A session on the values of the City lamented the fragmentation of the financial sector and the difficulty of holding anyone to account. Another session exploring standards in public life took a sober look at the journalistic profession in the wake of the Leveson enquiry.

Professor Keith Ward took a look at the four gospels from the

perspective of a philosopher. He concluded that Jesus communicated the mercy, forgiveness and unlimited love of God and mediated God in human form.

Freelance writer Francis Spufford took a determinedly emotional approach to faith in a session based on his book ***Unapologetic*** (Faber, £8.99, ISBN 978-0571225224).

Theologian Paula Gooder led a session on Heaven and Hell in the Bible.

Hanging on Every Word by Malcolm Doney, Meryl Doney, Jo Duckles, Paul Handley and Sarah Meyrick, appears in the ***Church Times*** for 22 February 2013, pp. 19-22.

- ***Christianity*** magazine devoted most of its March 2013 issue to the theme of “*Work*” and was guest edited by Mark Greene, Executive Director of the *London Institute for Contemporary Christianity*.

Mark Greene's own *Just a Way to Make a Living?* (pp. 16-19) argues that Christians have the potential to change the nation through their workplaces. Many churches, however, have neglected working life as an opportunity for Christian ministry.

In *Just Another Manic Monday* (pp. 23-25) six Christians – ranging from a HR Director to a pizza delivery man – explain how God has been able to use them in their respective jobs.

Lucinda Borkett-Jones' *How Can We Connect Church and our*

Working Life? (pp. 33, 37) offers ten practical suggestions for integrating faith and work.

In *Help! My Boss is Driving Me Crazy* (pp. 38-43) a panel of Christians (including past LCF speakers Richard Higginson and Paul Valler) respond to questions from readers under such headings as *What Job Should I Do?*, *I'm Trapped in my Job* and *I Don't Like the Office Banter*.

In *Worship in the Key of G* (pp. 26, 27, 29) Graham Kendrick discusses some of the strengths and weaknesses of the current worship scene and considers reasons why the songs sung on Sundays often have little relevance to what worshippers are doing for the rest of the week.

Ruth Garner's *Christianity Ltd* suggests some of the highs and lows of working for a Christian organisation.

EBSCO PUBLISHING

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ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING



Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of the Librarians' Christian Fellowship held on Saturday 20 April 2013 in the Eadon Hall, Methodist Central Hall, Warwick Lane, Coventry.

The Meeting was chaired by Margaret Keeling, President of the *Librarians' Christian Fellowship*.

Apologies for Absence were received from: Derek Fawcett, Janet Danels, Gordon Harris, Rachel Johnson, Kirsty Robinson, Elizabeth Pool, Kirsty Robinson, Sue Rugg and Jean Woods.

Minutes of the last Annual General Meeting (28 April 2012)

These had been published in the *Christian Librarian* of Winter 2012, so were taken as read. Richard Waller proposed and Robert Foster seconded that they be accepted as

correct. There were no Matters Arising.

Annual Report for 2012-2013

This had been circulated in advance so was taken as read.

Louise Manners (Chair of the Executive Committee) added the membership statistics for the end of 2012:

167 members, including two new and two rejoined members.

Fourteen subscribers (seven personal and seven institutional).

(In addition, thirty-six free copies of *Christian Librarian* were sent out).

Mary Wood proposed and Christine Gagan seconded that the Annual Report be adopted.

Treasurer's Report for 2012 (given by Nick Horley)

Subscriptions and publications balanced themselves out fairly evenly in 2012, but the Annual Conference had made a loss of about £200. However a substantial donation had resulted in a surplus for the year, and the LCF has a healthy reserve in the Nationwide.

Robert Foster proposed and Janice Paine seconded that the Report be adopted.

Election of Officers

No ballot needed to be held, as all

the candidates were unopposed. The President read out the names of the elected post-holders.

President: Candidate: **Margaret Keeling**

Proposed by: Executive Committee

Life Vice President: Candidate: **Philip Hayworth**

Proposed by: Executive Committee

Secretary: Candidate: **Graham Hedges**

Proposed by: Janet Danels and Kim Walker

Overseas Secretary: Candidate: **Eleanor Neil**

Proposed by: Vernon Burgess and Graham Hedges

Web Site/E-Newsletter Manager:

Candidate: **Mary Wood**

Proposed by: Stuart Glover and Robert Foster

Library Assistance Manager:

Candidate: **Mary Barker**

Proposed by Shirley Shire and Gillian White

Member Without Portfolio: Candidate: **Diana Guthrie**

Proposed by: Kirsty Robinson and Mary Barker

Motion on the Constitution

(proposed by the Executive Committee):

That the Christians in Library and Information Services Draft Constitution, as circulated to members of the Fellowship, should be adopted as our Constitution in place of the present Constitution of

the Librarians' Christian Fellowship.

Mary Wood presented the Draft Constitution. This is based on the Charity Commission's 'small charities' constitution, which allows the composition of the Committee to be more flexible than our current one, so that for instance the current Secretary's portfolio of responsibilities could be split up and re-assigned. All the major changes had already been voted on by postal ballot. Mary warned that having a new constitution won't in itself make us grow; we still need commitment from every member.

In reply to questions, it was stated that somebody who had transferred from being a subscriber to being a full member would be able to vote on the Draft Constitution at this meeting.

The LCF Constitution has always allowed for the President to be someone from the book world, not just from librarianship, and this was to be carried over to the new Constitution.

Two Amendments had been proposed in advance by Janet Danels and were now discussed:

That the words 'to provide a forum for discussion of professional issues within a context of Christian belief' be added to Section 2: the Purposes of the Association.

Proposed by Heather Lewis and seconded by Richard Waller. This Amendment was carried, with one abstention.

That, in Section 5: Executive Committee, the section beginning ‘Any member may stand for election to the Executive Committee ...’ be replaced by: ‘Any member may stand for election to the Executive Committee if they sign a written agreement to the Association’s Statement of Faith’.

Stuart Glover proposed and Philip Hayworth seconded the adoption of this Amendment, but it was not carried (four in favour, fifteen against, one abstention).

Diana Guthrie proposed and Richard Waller seconded the adoption of the amended Constitution, and this was carried unanimously.

Any Other Business

Stuart Glover informed us that *Voices for the Library* has a Twitter account; he would be the following week’s tweeter and hoped this would produce some modest publicity for the LCF.

Philip Hayworth asked about the role of regional representatives in the new organisation. Wales and Scotland have active representatives and it was hoped they would continue in an informal way, perhaps being recognised with distinctive titles.

There was no further business and the meeting was declared closed by the President.

DIANA GUTHRIE enjoys “the very best sort of Annual Conference” held in Coventry’s Methodist Central Hall on Saturday 20 April 2013

BEYOND LIBRARIANSHIP

Coventry’s central location in England drew LCF members from many parts of the country, and there was an encouraging buzz of conversation in the Methodist Central Hall as people got together over coffee and biscuits.

The official part of the Conference began as usual with a short time of worship, led by Stuart Glover and Richard Waller.

The Annual General Meeting followed on immediately, the most interesting part of which was of course the proposed re-birth of the Fellowship with a new name and updated constitution. The change of name had already been agreed by postal ballot, and after some discussion about the wording of two sentences, the amended constitution was agreed, leaving the Fellowship looking forward to a reinvigorated future.

The overriding theme of the Annual Conference was changing professional direction, whether that

means moving into a different area of librarianship and information services, or leaving the discipline altogether to pursue something different.

Heather Lewis, the morning speaker, is Librarian of The Mount Prison in Bovington, Hertfordshire, and her talk was entitled '*Am I just a librarian? preparing to make a change in career path*'. Although librarians often find themselves the butt of caricature and tend to underestimate their professional status, her answer to her question was an emphatic 'No!'. But we do need to ask ourselves constantly whether we are still in the place where God wants us to be; it is so easy to take the line of least resistance and carry on doing the same thing.

Heather herself has more than once found herself having to re-assess her professional position, because a job has changed dramatically or just disappeared. It's difficult to be objective when the rug is being pulled from under your feet, so it's a good idea to give some theoretical thought well in advance about possible change and to begin to articulate your own strengths. And it's very good to have somebody to pray with, ideally from outside the work situation.

Redundancy can be a real confidence-shaker, but it's important to remember that it's the post that's been made redundant, not the person in it. If you have to leave a job, redundancy has the advantage of being public knowledge, with associated rights and support,

whereas *choosing* to leave a job may need a lot of discretion and the lack of colleagues' support.

Heather then asked and answered several questions:

How well do you know yourself?

When Heather was made redundant by Hertfordshire County she took the opportunity of a psychometric assessment, which gave her food for thought and some surprises. CILIP now has a '*Professional Knowledge and Skills Base*' on its web-site, which can be used as a self-assessment tool by CILIP members to help them think through their professional and personal development, but there are numerous other psychometric tools - her own church undertook an '*Understanding Your Team*' test to discover its needs and strengths. One thing to remember is that results can change over time, even on a purely personal level.

What motivates you?

Do you need deadlines? Do you love teamwork? Is project work what gets you fired up?

What are the essential and desirable elements of your day-to-day life (including employment)? What are the limits beyond which you're not prepared to go?

You may have constraints of family or location. Or maybe you can only work certain hours. Are you

prepared for a job to take up most of your waking life? You may have to set yourself a minimum rate of pay to aim for. If made redundant, it's very easy to grasp at the first job that's offered, so plenty of thought and prayer needs to go into any decision.

What's important to you about having a job?

It may provide a vital structure to your week. It's good to feel your skills are valued in some area of your life. And the money is very useful!

Is paid work something you intend to do full-time until you retire?

This question is becoming more and more common nowadays. Losing your job may mean having to take on part-time work, and you may not have much control over this decision.

Where are you in the overall pattern of your career?

Heather wouldn't have chosen prison librarianship at the start of her working life, especially as it's a cul-de-sac in terms of a career development, but she's got lots of professional experience behind her, and she loves the work. She's part of a job-share arrangement and is very grateful for part-time hours.

Advice to those contemplating a change of direction:

Look beyond the job title; organisations often don't fully understand what librarians do and may couch their advertisements in very general terms. Define your skills in non-library terms, eg. 'customer service' or 'prioritising'.

If you are out-of-work, it's vital to find a structure to your daily life. Try looking at job-seeking as a job in itself, with a set amount of time each day or week spent actively on it.

Maintain self-esteem and a positive outlook by learning new skills and doing voluntary work.

Be prepared to compromise.

But - most important of all - is finding God's purpose for your life right now.

During the lunch-break, delegates had the opportunity to look round Coventry's Central Library, newly re-opened after refurbishment.

Our afternoon speaker was Donald G. Davis, Jr., Emeritus Professor of Library History at the *University of Texas at Austin*, and his talk was entitled '*Retirement: what good is it?*'.

He believes that the working world can be divided into those looking forward to retirement and those who aren't. Until fairly recently, people worked until they could no longer do so; retirement is a fairly new option for most people in the West. Some believe that it deliberately moves people out of the work force to make room for younger workers, and in most

Western democracies employees have little say in the matter.

But retirement is not a Biblical concept, except for the Levites (Numbers 8: 25). There is a contrast between the world's view of retirement and the faithful Christian's. We are bombarded by offers of comfortable retirement – insurance, security, holidays, the suggestion that *'we've earned it'*. Should it be a time of leisure and pleasure, or a greater opportunity to use the benefits of more time for God's service? It can be a very worthwhile time of life, but in the end it comes down to Godly contentment – being aware of living your life in a way that's pleasing to God.

If most of your life has been moulded by work, then retirement might not greatly appeal: it will require altering the routines of a lifetime; some people can't bear the idea of leaving behind the trappings of work; others may not have much else in their lives. So in these cases it may appear easier to keep on working. But it's never too early to discover activities that can be developed in the greater leisure of retirement, when you have more freedom to do what you're meant to do. Talents that formerly went into work can now be used in God's ministry, and there's more time to nurture other gifts, and to receive blessings too. New and creative ministries await.

In the workplace Donald had always made clear where he stood as a Christian. He would invite his students to his home, so that they

could experience something of the way that a Christian family lives. He now has renewed joy in serving God, and his experience has developed into a more deliberate witness to God. Even in retirement he feels he still has a ministry to Faculty members at the *University of Texas*; he persuaded Christian colleagues to contribute to a book of essays on how they saw themselves as Christians, and is still part of a group that witnesses in the different campuses of the University, helping to set up Christian networks and writing Bible studies. We are called to be salt and light (even *'hot sauce'!*) to the community where God has placed us.

Outside the *University of Texas* he's a lay pastor in the Presbyterian Church, which involves preaching in churches without a pastor. And he feels called to care for those in special need, not only by doing weekly visits to hospitals and hospices, but by standing alongside those who are alone or bereaved. He seldom finds life dull!

Summing up, he feels that retirement should be prayerful and productive. The life of faith doesn't end till the journey is over.

All in all it was a very stimulating day, with two excellent speakers and a lot to think about - the very best sort of Annual Conference.

Diana Guthrie, MA, serves on the executive committee of the *Librarians' Christian Fellowship* as Minutes Secretary/Member Without Portfolio.

ANNUAL REPORT

LOUISE MANNERS recalls the work of the *Librarians' Christian Fellowship* during the past year and looks forward to the coming of *Christians in Library and Information Services*

FROM L.C.F TO C.L.I.S.

The Annual Report of the Librarians' Christian Fellowship for 2012 - 2013 originally presented to the Annual General Meeting held on Saturday 20 April 2013 in the Eadon Hall, Methodist Central Hall, Warwick Lane, Coventry

Major Events

LCF held its annual conference on 28 April 2012 in London on the theme, "*Librarians and Disciples in a Time of Trouble*". The morning speaker was Michael Coveney of *Transform Work UK*, talking about "*Flourishing in the Workplace*". Delegates found his enthusiasm to be infectious. The afternoon session featured three LCF members, Gordon Harris, John Wickenden and Sara Batts, giving short and informative presentations on Discipleship and Ambition.

The Annual Public Lecture took place in Bristol on Saturday 6 October 2012 with Robert Hicks, of *Creative Publishing* speaking on, "*Lost Christian Letters of the First Century*".

Visits

On Thursday 17 May 2012 LCF visited the ***Church Times*** in its new offices in Golden Lane, London, EC1.

On Saturday 16th June 2012 a party from LCF attended the *threesixty Theatre*'s spectacular production of ***The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*** by C.S. Lewis in a big top tent in Regent's Park in London. On Thursday 6 September 2012 there was a visit to *Hodder Faith*, part of the publisher *Hodder and Stoughton*, in offices in the Euston Road, London.

Publications and outside Publicity

Four issues of *Christian Librarian* were published during the year. The issues included reports of LCF activities and talks from meetings along with subjects as diverse as Internet bookselling, finding work in spite of the Work Programme, the libraries of *Regent's Park College*, Oxford, the three hundred and fiftieth anniversary of the 1662 edition of the ***Book of Common Prayer***, self-service borrowing in libraries, the challenges of e-books, and the information needs of Namibian pastors. In addition a follow up article by Graham Hedges, "*Breaking the Deafening Silence*" to the earlier, "*Contending for the faith or spoiling for a fight?*" on the role of Christian professional groups and alleged "*persecution*" of Christians in the workplace was published. Both articles also appeared on the web sites of *Christians at Work* and *Transform Work UK*.

Four issues of the ***E-Newsletter*** have been published in 2012 and, to date, one in 2013. They included articles on new technology, the launch of ***Together*** magazine for the Christian book trade, faith and literature, religious fiction and the ***Clearing the Ground*** report produced by *Christians in Parliament* on alleged '*persecution*'. They also publicised events such as firstly the *Bloxham Festival of Faith and Literature*, and secondly the *Lambeth Palace Library* exhibition on "*Royal Devotion*" inspired by the ***Book of Common Prayer*** anniversary.

With regard to outside publicity LCF has been mentioned on various web sites and in Christian and library periodicals, for example the *CILIP in London* Calendar, ***The Good Bookstall***, *Premier Christian Radio* "Billboard", ***CILIP Update***, ***Methodist Recorder***, ***Christian Marketplace*** and the ***Bulletin of ABTAPL***.

Officers of the Fellowship

There have not been many changes on the executive committee this year but Philip Hayworth was nominated as Life Vice President in recognition of his twenty plus years' service as northern rep. Four meetings of the executive committee were held during the year. The administration of the LCF website is being changed and a PayPal account has been set up.

Library Assistance

It has not been a very active year for Christian library projects but appeals for help from a Christian university in Cambodia, and from a Manchester church leader seeking help with the cataloguing of a private library were publicised. Earlier LCF involvement in the cataloguing of the "*Epworth Archive*" at *Westminster Central Hall* was mentioned in the Central Hall centenary booklet and Graham Hedges continues to be occasionally involved with this project.

Review Group/Postal Ballot of Members

The Executive Committee has been working through the recommendations of LCF's review group and these recommendations were discussed at length at the 2012 AGM/Conference. A postal ballot of the membership carried out in the summer of 2012 approved changes to the existing regulations concerning the assent of individual members to the Fellowship's statement of faith. The Fellowship, as a whole, however, remains committed to its traditional statement of faith. Other changes agreed in the ballot, include a name change to *Christians in Library and Information Services* and a new, simplified constitution.

Louise Manners, *DipLib, MA, MCLIP*, works as a Subject Librarian at the *Ealing, Hammersmith and West London College* and serves as Chair of the *Librarians' Christian Fellowship*.

REVIEW

FROM THE BOOKWORM'S SHELVES

ILLUSION: A NOVEL

Frank Peretti

Monarch; 2012; £9.99, Pbk., 572p., ISBN 978-0857213266

Frank Peretti is perhaps best known for his controversial books, ***This Present Darkness*** and ***Piercing the Darkness*** published in the early nineties. Whatever your view of their theological soundness, the books with their fast-paced and gripping narratives and their glimpses into the spiritual forces at work behind the façade of daily life put out a strong message on the power of prayer and gave Christians a forceful incentive to pray.

Peretti, as Karen Kingsbury has said in the ***New York Times***, is a master story teller and his latest book, ***Illusion***, shows that he has not lost his touch in this respect. The central characters, Dane and Mandy Collins are planning their retirement after a successful career in the magic business but tragedy strikes when Mandy is killed in a car accident. Devastated. Dane retreats to his ranch in Idaho, but soon becomes involved in mentoring a young woman with a striking resemblance to his wife and a remarkable talent for magical illusions.

But as the plot progresses, the mystery deepens, and the reader becomes aware of increasingly disturbing undercurrents. Just who is this young woman? Where has she materialised from? How can she perform the apparently effortless illusions with which she soon starts to make a name for herself? And who are the mysterious figures pursuing her? As the answers start to be revealed, we are taken further into the world of the imagination and

indeed to the fringes of science fiction.

The multi-layered narrative tells the story of Dane and Mandy's marriage and of Dane's attempts to come to terms with his loss. The author weaves a dazzling and evocative picture of his characters and the events which overtake them. It is a pleasant change to read a novel where the spiritual world is real and where faith forms an integral part of the characters' lives. They talk to God and pray in a simple and unforced manner. Although they can't understand what is happening to them, they trust that somehow God will work things out. Some Christians may have reservations about the setting in the world of magic, but this is essential to the plot and the nature of the issues raised by it. However, in my view, the characters are somewhat one-dimensional and Dane and Mandy's marriage seems perhaps too perfect to be real.

The story provides opportunities to explore spiritual issues relating to death and life, self and identity, and reality and illusion. Questions about the moral limits to scientific experimentation are also raised. But the treatment of these issues is somewhat superficial and I don't feel that any of them are addressed in any depth.

Illusion is an enjoyable read with a spiritual dimension. It is a heart warming tribute to the indomitable human spirit and the force of true love. Personally, however, I would have appreciated a more thoughtful approach to the moral and spiritual issues raised.

Mary E. Wood, BA, MScInfStud works as Information and Content Developer for the *Chartered Management Institute* and serves the *Librarians' Christian Fellowship* as Web Site and ***E-Newsletter*** Manager.

ARTICLES

ELEANOR NEIL finds a metaphor for the coming of the Kingdom of Heaven in the midst of the day to day frustrations of supervising a collection of library periodicals

SERIAL REFLECTIONS

Long, long ago, back in the days when I was still at library school, I vowed that I would never become a serials librarian. The ordered rows of uniform issues neatly filed in journal boxes could have been beguiling, but I was not fooled. Periodicals were tricky things in my opinion. Merely being a lender or a borrower was fine by me.

The Germans are often reminded by a stylised eye that *Gott sieht dich*; I should have remembered that He also hears our innermost thoughts and that His plans are often quite different from ours. And so all these years later here I am a solo librarian in a tertiary college confronted with my very own serials collection.

Fortunately it is a small collection, but I cannot help thinking that a year or two later and I might have been able to completely avoid this jumble of journal boxes. Replacing it with a virtual collection seems more desirable by far, but unlike our image of heaven I suspect that it will mean swapping their physical reality for another set of challenges.

In the meantime I discover that my learning curve is more like a series of treacherous hairpin bends which I navigate very slowly and carefully. The library management software package seems to be obtuse and unforgiving in the way it handles serials, but presumably this is largely because of my inexperience. My predecessors, who were not librarians, solved the challenge by treating every copy as an individual monograph. Rectifying this results in a shocking drop in the number of title holdings.

The challenge of predicting the pattern of issues when I generate a new subscription in the LMS requires careful planning and lots of prayer. There is no going back once I click on <create>.

If what appeals to humans about art is pattern with some variability (I read that in a journal article) does this mean that

periodicals seem like art to a real serials librarian? Do they delight in the variability? Not me. Volume numbering that does not roll over at the end of the calendar year catches me out. If a magazine has thirteen issues p.a. when will the bonus issue come out? I discover it will probably be one of the summer months (which one?) if published in America or Christmas if British. Our national Christian newspaper comes out fifty times a year; not at Christmas or Easter. The latter is a problem, because the publisher is vague as to whether it will be Holy Week or the one following: "*It depends on how much material we have*" he explains over the phone. Fair enough, but if I guess incorrectly, the entries for more than thirty issues will need to be manually corrected as each issue is received. I already knew that publishers sometimes get confused with numbering and skip or reuse one, but what I want is perfection.

The messy, humanness of producing serials becomes all too real when the eagerly awaited first copy of a title on digital lighting arrives. In it the editor announces that he has cancer and, although he does not say so, it is to be the final copy. I pray for him, and eventually the lone copy slumps to the bottom of its journal box. Unsurprisingly there is no response to the request for a refund. Should I change the cost of the single issue to the value of the subscription or not? Even if I do that will the budget be accurate?

I struggle with how the LMS handles the cost of subscriptions. When a subscription is paid I want it to come off the budget total, so I can see the reality of what has been spent. Instead the total amount is chopped up into appropriate chunks according to the number of issues, and when each copy is received that amount comes off my budget. The Accounts Department patiently demonstrate that they do something similar. It is correct but unsatisfying. Then one day it occurs to me that this is perhaps a metaphor for the '*now, but not yet*' of the Kingdom of Heaven. It does not change the problem, but I can be content with how the plan unfolds.

Eleanor Neil, *RLIANZA*, is the Overseas Secretary for LCF and lives in northern New Zealand, where she is the *Lifeway College* librarian based at the *David Yaxley Memorial Library* at their Snell's Beach campus.

JOHN WADDINGTON-FEATHER explains his reasons for embracing Kindle technology and recalls the early days of his career as a children's writer

E-READERS AND HEDGEHOGS

Embracing Kindle

My Kindle venture all began last June. I've been very ill over the past two years and been in and out of hospital for major operations as well as three nights a week on dialysis till midnight. I'm also approaching eighty so I said last June to my eldest daughter, Sarah, who's a doctor in practice and monitors me, that I was stopping self-publishing in paperback, as it was all getting too much for me. She suggested I keep on writing but put my work on Kindle and she'd place it on Kindle for me, being more computer literate than I.

Last June she placed four of my detective novels on Kindle and they sold twenty copies. We thought we were doing well, as they wouldn't have sold twenty copies in a month as paperbacks. In December they sold seven hundred and twenty copies. Since then sales have exploded as the Americans have taken the Rev. Detective Inspector Blake Hartley and his Muslim sergeant, Ibrahim Khan, to their hearts. At the time of writing they'd sold one thousand five hundred and thirty copies so far this month and there are still eleven more days to go in this month.

I'm having to revise most of my work as it's over thirty years since I wrote some of my fiction. Then I pass the revised versions to my sister-in-law, Diana, in Brussels and she edits my work (She was a translator for the E.U before she retired and is multi-lingual) Then she passes them over to Sarah, who puts them on Kindle.

Since last June several of my novels have had the maximum five-star reviews on the Internet and Amazon certainly gives them fine publicity – something I could never have afforded when publishing in paperback. Yet though I have one, I've never used a Kindle device. I'm too busy writing! And I now have five of my six mystery novels and two of my romantic historical novels on Kindle.

All my *Quill Hedgehog* books will be put on in due course and my plays; one of which, **Garlic Lane**, had its London premiere two years ago; though it was first produced at *Leeds Civic Theatre* in 1973 and elsewhere throughout the country since. It was staged here in north Shropshire by a local drama company only last December. I was hoping that my play, **Edward, the Uncrowned King** (about Edward VIII and the abdication crisis in 1937) would have been staged in New York this year, for an agent there who saw **Garlic Lane** in London was very taken by it. However, sadly the theatre was destroyed in Manhattan during the hurricane last year ‘

Children's Fiction

One aspect of my calling as a teacher and priest was ministering to young students who'd been casualties of divorce, which, alas, grew greatly in my time as a teacher from 1957 to 1995. It was my experience as their teacher that children came to terms better with the death of a parent than with a divorce. As teachers we see a different side to divorce from parents; for there are times when children confide family matters in their teachers which they keep from their parents.

And as a writer of children's fiction I've been a similar confidant. I realised this when I began writing my animal fantasies, the *Quill Hedgehog* novels, in the 1960s. These began life as bedtime stories for my three daughters when they were very young. At that time we lived in a small rural village near the moors above Bingley in Yorkshire called Eldwick. The village had clearly defined boundaries. By the time we left in 1969 it had merged with the city of Bradford, five or six miles away.

So the novels started as a protest against the rapid loss of farmland opposite our home, when all the wildlife disappeared overnight in a rash of housing, and the little country lane running by our house became an arterial road into Bradford with a variety of shops and offices along it. And as I wrote more of the *Quill Hedgehog* novels a fantasy world began to emerge – the Animalfolk world – which, in contrast to the Humanfolk world adjoining it over the border, is a world of peace, stability and neighbourliness. It was this world some of my young readers, who were suffering the trauma of parental divorce, identified with strongly. It provided a kind of healing, a buffer against the real world they had to live in.

It is a world whose characters are loveable, because in a neighbourly way they love each other and are always kind to one another. As I self-published more and more in the series under my imprint *Feather Books*, more and more children and some adults joined the *Quill Hedgehog Club*, which I launched to promote the novels. It was through editing the monthly journal that I first realised that the novels were providing a pastoral role for young readers under stress, as they wrote to me (*Quill Hedgehog*) pouring out their troubles and saying how they were enjoying the books; how much comfort they received from them.

What is true for my *Quill Hedgehog* tales is true, I believe, for other children's fantasy novels which have no sex or sadistic cruelty or gratuitous violence in them; novels by J.K. Rowling, C.S.Lewis, J.R.R. Tolkien and other classic children's fantasy authors. As fantasy writers, they provide an escape from stressful reality which is therapeutic. For those of us who write such novels it's a satisfying yet sobering thought, because it makes us wary of what we put into our work, and how we ourselves live under the spotlight of the young.

The Rev. **John Waddington-Feather**, BA, FRSA, is a writer, the proprietor of *Feather Books*, and a retired teacher, school librarian and prison chaplain.

PAULA RENOUF provides an update on the *Christian Book Promotion Trust* and its *Speaking Volumes* library scheme

A CHRISTIAN READ FOR EVERYONE

Have you ever perused the aisles of your local library and wished there was a credible selection of Christian books to choose from? Has your child proudly shown you their school library only for you to be dismayed that there are so few attractive Bible story books? Do you ever wish you could get a life changing Christian book into your local prison to give an inmate hope? Are there beautiful engaging Bible board books in your church's Toddler Group for the parents to share with their children? Do you serve community lunches at Church but wish you could lend a book to your visitors to kick start dialogue about the Christian faith?

Speaking Volumes is a scheme that aims to provide exactly these books. Their mission is to make it possible for anyone to read a Christian book – not just Christians!

Reading remains a vital instrument to understanding and it is guaranteed these days that you can find a Christian book on almost any subject you need help with. However, back in 1967, Cecil Jackson Cole, after the loss of his dearly loved wife Phyllis, sought in vain for a Christian response to bereavement.

Cecil had an all consuming vocation to relieve suffering in the world. At the time of Phyllis's death he had already driven the growth of the fledgling charity *Oxfam* in the 1940s and created further charitable trusts of his own including *Help the Aged* and *Action Aid* in the fifties. Not wishing others to suffer without the help of suitable literature he created the *Christian Book Promotion Trust*. Their first project was to fund publication of one of David Winter's early books *Hereafter*, unsurprisingly – a book on bereavement!

The Trust went on to introduce a scheme later called *Speaking Volumes* whereby churches can purchase recommended books for giving to libraries in their community. These can be any library that allows the borrowing of books by everyone, not just Christians. Typically books are given to public libraries, schools, play-groups, prisons and care homes. Books are selected by a panel of experts and the list of recommended books is published every two years. Both books and DVDs are purchasable in conjunction with your local Christian bookshop at a 50% discount – the other 50% is match funded by *Speaking Volumes*.

Cecil Jackson Cole was a dynamic philanthropist who ingeniously set up his trusts to be financially independent by giving them shares in commercial businesses that, equally, he had a hand in creating. Consequently *Speaking Volumes* can offer the books at half the usual retail price which makes the giving of books possible for even the smallest and poorest of churches.

To date *Speaking Volumes* has assisted in providing around 50,000 books to over four thousand libraries. People frequently ask if it's harder to give Christian books to libraries in the current anti-Christian climate but the reality is libraries often request more books. The real challenge is enthusing local churches. We forget that there are still people not brave enough to hunt the Vicar down to find answers they are longing for. It is often in the hushed anonymous corner of a library that God reveals his perfect love for them.

If your church wants to ensure there are quality Christian books available to people in need in your community then visit www.speakingvolumes.org.uk or call 07941 301481 for a catalogue.

Paula Renouf is the Director of the Christian Book Promotion Trust's *Speaking Volumes* library scheme and can be contacted via P.O. Box 1070, Cambridge, CB22 4WX.

SHIRLEY SINCLAIR shows how libraries can be used to bring the Gospel to Cambodia

THE THIRTY EIGHT VILLAGES

In 1998 Cambodia, formerly Kampuchea, emerged from around thirty years of civil war with a reasonably stable government at last, but with severe developmental needs and a decimated educational system. Adult literacy stood at about 65%, and the per capita GDP at US\$ 1,110.¹ Organisations such as SIPAR, and Room to Read² have been working to give basic training to librarians and restore a love of reading to a country where books were systematically burnt in their thousands. The adult literacy rate has risen to 77.6%³ and Cambodia has risen up the development scale to number 138, *'Medium Human Development'*⁴, but spiritually there is still much to be done. This is a brief snapshot of how the two aims of Gospel proclamation and educational development can be jointly achieved, how libraries can be a part of this, and an invitation to you to consider bringing your skills to Cambodia.

I worked for nine years as part of a Christian International NGO in Cambodia and was able to use my library training and experience in some different contexts. In the rainy season of 2010, I braved the red mud of a South Eastern rural province to have a look at the work being done by dedicated church planters, Wei Wei and Daniel, in utilising library books for the Gospel. When they arrived in 2008, they soon realised that the majority of the thirty eight villages in the district, with a population of over 42,000, were unreached by the Gospel. With much prayer, they visited two of the commune offices to see how they might offer to serve the communities and win their trust, and surprisingly they were invited to set up commune and school libraries. However, the conditions were clearly stated that no Christian material was to be included in any of the libraries.

As I travelled throughout the district with Wei Wei, hanging desperately onto the back of a motorbike over the bumpy dirt roads, I began to understand how she had taken this opportunity and how by God's grace it had become like gold. Visiting the simple wooden buildings that housed the libraries, she had come to know the personal lives and needs of officials, librarians and teachers. With a delicate touch, she delivered books, training, oversight and genu-

1 UNDP, Human Development Report, 1998

2 www.sipar.org and www.roomtoread.org

3 www.unesco.org

4 UNDP, Human Development Report, 2013

ine care. I saw sparsely furnished classrooms and struggling teacher-librarians, where she saw openings and needs that she could address. I saw burgeoning commune libraries, with growing book collections, where she saw people hungry for the Christian message and she had the patience to wait in hope. Our organisation was tasked with supplying the books and providing quality professional training to locally employed librarians who had never been to library school ... there is no library school in Cambodia.

Two years after the project began, Wei Wei and Daniel were informed by the two library directors on behalf of the commune councils that Christian books would now be welcome as long as the content was good. High quality, colourful Christian books for both children and adults, written in Khmer, are now shelved in commune and high school libraries! A story that I enjoyed greatly when I visited, was of the beautiful children's illustrated Bible that disappeared from one of the commune libraries. The conscientious Khmer librarian was so upset about its loss, when he had been so vigilant in keeping his loans book up to date. It eventually returned, minus its glossy hard cover, in a very tattered state! Praise God, it had been so popular that it had gone around most of the village before being surreptitiously returned. A more orderly method of getting the books to the villagers is by means of the mobile library. For this you need to imagine a metal box, shaped to fit on the back of a motorbike, and a very bumpy journey into the remotest wooded enclaves. Why not take a year or two out to come and experience this for yourself? Just let me know

Notes:

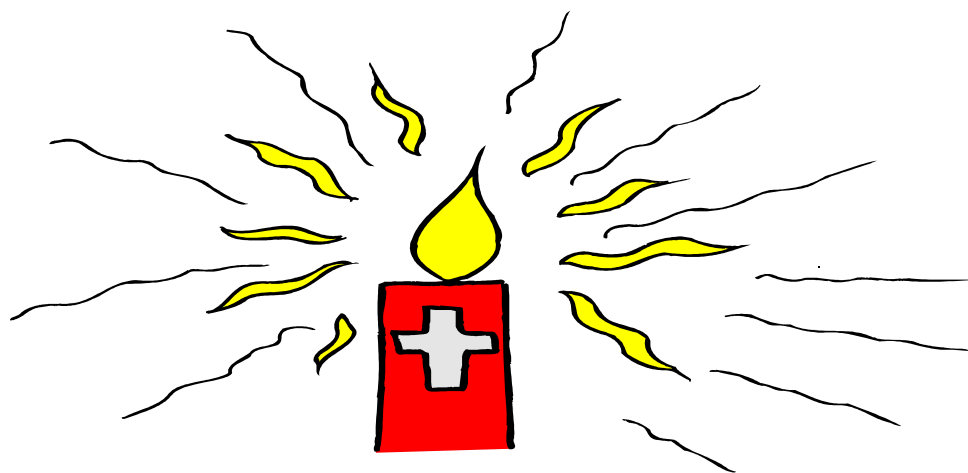
1. Anyone interested in making a financial donation to the project can contact me for further details of how to do this: shirleyincb@gmail.com
2. If you want to read more about my experiences as a librarian in Cambodia, see my article in the *International Library and Information Group's* newsletter, **Focus**, volume 41, number 3, 2010: *Unprofessional in Cambodia*.
3. Please do contact me if you think you might be able to offer your skills and time to libraries in Cambodia in the context of a Christian mission. NB. There is no salary offered.

Shirley Sinclair worked in Cambodia for some years as a missionary librarian with the *Overseas Missionary Fellowship*. She is currently studying for an MA in psychotherapy but retains a keen interest in libraries.

LIN BALL introduces the work of a leading Christian organisation which has been working with blind and partially sighted people for more than half a century

TORCH TRUST

VISION FOR PEOPLE WITH SIGHT LOSS



With one hundred people every day in the UK receiving a diagnosis of sight loss, there's never been a greater need for companionship and support on that journey into growing darkness.

Becoming blind isn't just about medical intervention, mobility aids or accessing benefits – although those are important, of course. It's about finding appropriate provision for new and changing needs; about being connected with others who will understand and care; it's about recognising that blind people, too, have spiritual needs.

Torch Trust is a Christian organisation which has been working with blind and partially sighted people for over fifty three years. It began with one concerned but fairly ordinary couple, Ron and Stella Heath, opening their Surrey home to young people who were blind, and trying to find creative solutions to the lack of Christian literature in braille, giant print and audio.

The beginnings of the Torch Library

When the Heaths realised how little Christian literature was available for the blind and partially sighted young people they were getting to know, it was natural to them to pray about it. They believed that in response God said to them, *'You give them something to eat'*.

Over fifty three years since those early foundations, Torch has evolved into an innovative charity with a team of professional staff and dedicated volunteers operating from a purpose-built office in Market Harborough, Leicestershire. Today the Torch Library consists of over three thousand five hundred Christian titles in braille, giant print and audio, and serves over twelve hundred borrowers.

Torch Trust's Publications Leader, LCF member Lydia Tebbutt, explains, *'Most people now come to us through age-related sight loss such as macular degeneration. Despite the difficulties, our borrowers often write, phone or e-mail to express their gratitude. The phrase we most commonly hear is, 'This book came at just the right time!'*

A virtual bookshelf

Lydia describes how the Torch Library works. *'At the time the borrower returns the book they have loaned, our system recognises that they are ready for their next title from their virtual bookshelf. A borrower can send in a list of book titles from the catalogue to create that bookshelf, but a lot of people just want the librarians to choose for them. They do this by talking to the borrower about what sort of books they like to read – whether it is a genre or an author or a topic.'*

'We cover a wide range of Christian subjects, from serious Bible study to devotional, from biography to fiction. In the study category, Tom Wright's 'For Everyone' series of commentaries is popular, as well as the series 'The Bible Speaks Today'. Other favourite authors include John Stott, J. I. Packer, Joni Eareckson-Tada, Stephen Cottrell, John Pritchard and Paula Gooder.'

'The Bible is, of course, our most popular book,' says Lydia. *'And many people borrow one book of the Bible at a time and just read straight through.'*

Next to the Bible, biographies are the most popular, followed by Christian fiction.'

'A common request is for more British Christian fiction. American publishers have a much larger market and therefore have more scope to produce this genre.'

Copyright issues

The ***Copyright (Visually Impaired Persons) Act 2002*** enables Torch to make accessible copies of print books distributed in the UK; and Torch holds a license issued by the *Copyright Licensing Agency*. Provision by publishers of electronic files – especially well-structured e-Pub files – makes the transcription process considerably quicker than scanning the print version.

Currently Torch is developing software that will enable the Library to respond to 'on demand' requests. This again entails the organisation working closely with publishers who are now producing e-pubs. In the near future Torch hopes to be able to offer the contents of Christian publishers catalogues, whereas in the past titles have been chosen by a committee.

Other transcriptions

A condition of the CLA Licence is that Torch does not produce an accessible version of a title which has already been transcribed or is commercially available in the preferred reading format of the blind or partially sighted reader. Along with other secular organisations such as *Calibre Audio Library* and the *Royal National Institute for Blind People*, Torch registers the titles transcribed into either braille, giant print or audio on a database known as 'Unity'. This ensures there is no duplication of accessible books.

'One of the reasons it's popular to borrow braille books is that they are so bulky to keep at home,' explains Lydia.

'A complete braille Bible, for example, takes up 1.5 metres of shelf space!'

Although most Christians who read braille do have their own Bible, they don't have space for a lot more books. Giant print too can require quite a lot of shelf space. So the Torch Library is literally a 'Godsend'!

However, Torch's most popular library is the audio library. Until recently the majority of Torch books were recorded on cassette tape. About nine years ago, Torch started producing DAISY (Digital Accessible Information System) CDs. These CDs look just like audio CDs but can only be played on DAISY CD players, which are particularly designed for people with sight loss. DAISY CDs also have a greater capacity. The whole Bible fits onto just four DAISY CDs. But the most important feature is that they are so navigable, enabling the reader to move easily between chapters and sections.

The drawback of this way of delivering audio is that the players can cost £240 - too expensive for many Torch borrowers. So for some time Torch has been looking for another solution to replace the obsolete cassette.

The Torch Memory Stick Library

Memory sticks - known by a variety of names, such as USB sticks, flash drives etc. - have been around for a few years now. However, it's only recently that players have been specifically developed to play audio contained on them. Memory stick players are small, lightweight and have high visibility controls. In fact, there are less buttons than on the old cassette players, so they are loved by people who are blind or partially sighted. And the sound quality is far better than on a cassette player. They cost around £24, making them a very attractive digital alternative. Another plus is that the same mp3 book files created for DAISY CDs can be used for books on memory sticks. So now Torch can offer Christian books on either DAISY CD or memory sticks, to suit the borrower.

Other resources from Torch

As well as offering a free postal lending library (free, that is, to people registerable as blind or partially sighted) Torch also produces a range of Christian resources which enables people to participate in their church life. These include home group studies such as the '*Lifebuilder*' or '*Cover to Cover*' series, and course materials such as '*Alpha*' or '*Christianity Explored*'. Torch believes every blind or partially sighted person should have the

opportunity to explore the Christian faith and grow as a Christian.

Carol, a long term Torch Library user, feels it's all about a level playing field. Though blind, she successfully leads a church home group using Torch material. *'If I have braille copies of the studies,'* says Carol, *'I am on a level with the other group leaders in my church – therefore, at no disadvantage. New group members soon adjust to my lack of sight, as I am comfortable with it myself.'*

Torch also produces giant print Bibles, audio Bibles and some hymn books to sell. And, to help people with sight loss have a fulfilled devotional life, a range of Bible reading notes are also available: CWR's ***Every Day With Jesus*** and SU's ***Daily Bread*** in audio; BRF's ***The Upper Room*** in giant print; SU's ***Daily Bread*** and BRF's ***New Daylight*** in braille. A further twelve hundred people subscribe to these daily Bible reading notes.

Social needs

Keenly aware of the social needs of blind and partially sighted people, Torch runs over one hundred Torch Fellowship Groups around the UK. The gatherings, usually monthly, focus on acceptance and friendship. Other kinds of social groupings for people with sight loss – including Torch Book Groups, have been successfully piloted and are now being developed.

Another key area of what Torch offers is their programme of specialist holidays for people with sight loss. Many of these are run from its own Holiday and Retreat Centre in Sussex, with a handful taking place in other parts of the UK and Europe. Often those who attend return year after year, finding the centre a *'home from home'* where their disability is no barrier to full acceptance and inclusion.

International reach

Torch Trust also has an international reach, with Torch magazines going out from the UK to 100 countries. But most notably Torch works from a literature

production centre in Malawi. Here the focus is again on providing accessible Christian literature in African languages and starting up fellowship groups. Contacts built up over many years also enable the distribution of targeted aid to blind people in Malawi and several adjoining impoverished countries – items such as white canes, braille machines and wheelchairs as well as basic medicines and foodstuffs.

Make contact!

What's available from Torch is for people of any faith or none. Torch is also committed to encouraging churches to be more inclusive of disabled people, and produces a range of resources to that end. Torch CEO Dr. Gordon Temple and the present writer have together produced a book called ***Enabling Church***, a resource to promote understanding of what the Bible says about disability and inclusion (published last year by SPCK).

Any librarian wanting to know more about what Torch offers blind and partially sighted readers can ask for a free librarian's pack. Email info@torchtrust.org or call 01858 438260.



Lin Ball is a member of the Media Team at *Torch Trust* and a former Chair of the *Association of Christian Writers*