

Autumn 2018

CLIS

Christians in
Library and
Information
Services



CHRISTIAN LIBRARIAN

CONTENTS INCLUDE

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EVENTS AT A GLANCE

●VISIT TO THE KILNS, FORMER HOME OF C. S. LEWIS AND HOLY TRINITY CHURCH, HEADINGTON, OXFORD. Saturday 20 October 2018. Details: pp. 9 – 10.

●CLIS ANNUAL CONFERENCE: SATURDAY 6 APRIL 2019: Blue Boar House, Oxford, with speakers Manoj Raithatha, Instant Apostle, and Dr. Nigel Crook, Oxford Brookes University. Details: p. 11.

●CLIS ANNUAL PUBLIC LECTURE: SATURDAY 19 OCTOBER 2019: Manvers Street Baptist Church, Bath, with guest speaker Bob Hartman. Details: p. 12.

PLEASE PRAY FOR

●Forthcoming CLIS activities including our visit to The Kilns and Holy Trinity Church, Headington.

●Christians involved in politics, whether as members of mainstream parties or the Christian People's Alliance.

●CARE and others working towards an ethical approach to the development of artificial intelligence and robotics.

●The work of the Evangelical Alliance, and its past and present staff, the Ship of Fools web site, Christian Heritage London, the Christian Resources Exhibition, and the Premier Radio Digital Conference.

● The work of the Universities' and Colleges' Christian Fellowship and especially for the current library and archives project.

●This year's Libraries Week planned by CILIP for October 2018.

●The work of the Arts Centre Group and its forthcoming Jack Clemo poetry awards event



FOUNDED IN 1976 AS THE LIBRARIANS' CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP

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

CHRISTIAN LIBRARIAN: NEWSLETTER AND JOURNAL OF CHRISTIANS IN LIBRARY AND INFORMATION SERVICES (ISSN 0309-4170) No. 80, Autumn 2018.

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Printing: Concisely Supplies 4 Business, Chelmsford, Essex. CLIS Logo Design: Megan Andersen.

Views expressed in this journal are those of the contributors and not necessarily those of CLIS as a whole.

CLIS minimum subscription for 2018: £30.00 Reduced rate for student, retired and unemployed members/subscribers: £20.00.

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THE FIRST WORD

RICHARD WALLER stresses the importance of preservation and suggests that our present generation may be in danger of cutting itself off from the past

GUARD THE DEPOSIT!



Seventeen hundred years ago this year a frightful row broke out in the churches of Alexandria when a clever, articulate and charismatic presbyter '*discovered*' that we Christians had been wrong for three hundred years and started preaching that Jesus was not and could not be God. A divine figure we were commanded to worship, certainly, but definitely not the one true God. This went down very badly and the Nicene Creed is the legacy of this troubled period that lasted for seventy-seven years.

I have been reading the literature from the time as part of my research for a planned lecture next year. These days you can get them all easily as e-Books and don't have to clutter up yards (or should that be metres?) of shelves with the collected works of Athanasius of Alexandria, Basil of Caesarea, Gregory of Nyssa, Gregory of Cappadocia and the many other writers whose works have survived the ensuing centuries, protected by generations of monastic and church librarians.

They are well worth reading. At least one of them, Athanasius' ***On the Incarnation of the Word*** (probably written around 318 – 320 A.D. and certainly before 325 A.D.) is still the definitive book on why we believe that Jesus is God the Son and not just Son of God. If you want to read it, get the edition with the preface by C. S. Lewis, also worth getting on its own account.

These books survived because someone cared about them and thought them important. They are. Records of the past can save us a lot of problems today and in the future. As librarians we have a part to play in this. Libraries are not bookshops that lend stuff out instead of selling them! They are also depositories that preserve the past for the benefit of the future. Having sung the praises of e-Books as space savers at the start, the emergence of the web is downgrading the felt need for preservation. Will the same sort of records be available from our time in another seventeen hundred years, if the Lord tarries?

Am I alone in thinking that, despite the current big interest in preservation of every kind, a large chunk of our society is in danger of being cut off from its past? I was doing the children's talk at the morning service last Sunday, using as a visual aid a chunk of WW2 shrapnel that had fallen through my grandfather's roof in London during an air raid. Unfortunately none of the children (basically top juniors) had heard of WW2, not covered at school as there were too many wars on the news all the time...

To be cut off from our past is to court serious impoverishment. Whether it's not covering WW2 at school, only singing modern hymns at church (although the opposite problem, that I have encountered, is almost worse!) or whatever it is that we don't do or know about, we risk losing for all time something very precious that can sometimes never be regained.

It is one of the several reasons I have been so delighted that CLIS has helped the *Universities' and Colleges' Christian Fellowship* get its hundred years of archival material into some sort of order during the last twelve months so that they can research what has happened in earlier days. While we were there earlier this year the *Oxford University Staff Worker* (the modern incarnation of what many of us older folk will remember as Travelling Secretaries) found that the publicity OICCU (*Oxford Inter-College Christian Union*) has developed recently is almost exactly the same as that used by their predecessors in the late 1930s! And there were things they could learn from that!

We ourselves need to be on guard against cutting ourselves off from our past or a future generation will be forced to re-invent the wheel, since the wheel got lost and knowledge of how to make one vanished with it. This is a principle of wide applicability, in church, society and our family and personal lives. As Christian librarians we can also take an active role in doing something towards this. In our own Christian lives we need to remember the history of the Church and seek to learn from it lessons for today. Twenty-first century problems rarely have seventeenth century solutions (a particular difficulty with Puritan enthusiasts in my own group of churches!), but there is much of value in former times.

It was not for nothing that Paul told Timothy '*Guard the good deposit that was entrusted to you — guard it with the help of the Holy Spirit who lives in us.*' (2 Timothy 1:14 NIV)

Richard M. Waller, BD, was elected as the President of *Christians in Library and Information Services* at the annual general meeting on Saturday 14 April 2018. Until his retirement he worked for the public library service in the *Metropolitan Borough of Wigan*.

THE SECOND WORD

ROBERT FOSTER suggests that a talk on the Spanish Civil War from school days raises questions about Christian engagement in a neutral environment which are still relevant today

STIMULATING SUBJECTS AND EYE-CATCHING TITLES



At the CLIS conference this year, one of the talks included the subject of engaging with our colleagues. I was reminded of a time when, as a sixth former, I attended one particular school historical society meeting. A member of my peer group had given a talk about the Spanish Civil War. It was brilliant and captivating, with a compelling narrative. I was almost open-mouthed at the end, partly because it was that good, and partly out of amazement because I had gone along with others mainly to give some support to the speaker and he clearly didn't need any; but I was also shocked – or shamed – as in a few days I was due to speak at a Christian Union meeting which was similarly open to anyone.

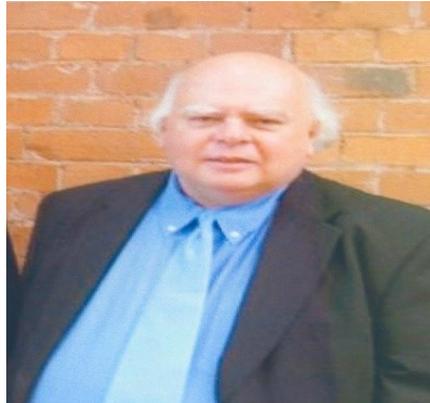
My material was essentially a Bible study, which I just didn't think would pass muster with my peers, either for content or presentation. I wasn't at all sure I wanted them to be there. In the event, my fellow history students didn't appear. But I wondered, then, how do you put a Christian viewpoint effectively in a neutral environment, along with clubs and other '*special interest*' groups?

This all happened long ago, but after our conference it seems that some of the struggles I was facing then are still pertinent now. At a previous place of work, I put a copy of ***Christian Librarian*** in the staff room on a table where copies of other magazines and newspapers were left. It wasn't long before someone said that if we were going to have a Christian magazine in the room we should have literature from other religions represented. This despite the fact that the same building housed one of the largest religious studies collections anywhere in London. A few days later the copy of ***Christian Librarian*** was nowhere to be seen. Of course, it could be that someone took it home with them. One can also too easily assume that the loud voice speaks for everyone else – it's not always the case. And sometimes God speaks to people when we least expect it.

One last thought: a CU guest speaker, David Jackman, gave me a piece of advice which was, in effect, if you want people to come along you must have stimulating subjects and eye-catching titles. We've certainly had both in CLIS, but if you have any suggestions we will be pleased to have them too.

Robert Foster, BA, DipIM, MCLIP, is Chair of *Christians in Library and Information Services* and works as an Assistant Librarian at the *Royal College of Music*.

CLIS NEWSLETTER



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VISIT TO THE KILNS

We have not arranged an annual lecture for autumn 2018 but we have arranged visits to places of interest to librarians during September and October.

Our autumn programme began with a visit to the *Bible Society Library*, a unique collection of Bibles from many countries and cultures now housed at the *University of Cambridge Library*. This took place on Wednesday 12 September 2018: watch out for a full report in our next issue.

For our second visit we are arranging a return visit to *The Kilns*, the former home of C. S. Lewis in Headington, Oxford, which will take place on **Saturday 20 October 2018**.

The visit to *The Kilns* will begin at 2.00.p.m. and will be followed at 4.30.p.m. by a visit to *Holy Trinity Church*, Headington, where Lewis and his brother Warren are buried and where there is a commemorative window based on ***The Chronicles of Narnia***. Places on these visits may have to be limited, so if you would like to take part please let me know as soon as possible. The cost for the visit to *The Kilns* will be £12.50 per head with a reduced rate of £10.00 for student and retired visitors. Please make payments payable to *Christians in Library and Information Services*.

LIBRARIES WEEK

This annual campaign, sponsored by **CILIP**, the *Library and Information Association*, during the second week of October, is intended to highlight the range of things that users can do in their libraries and is not restricted to public libraries. Libraries of all kinds, in schools, workplaces and universities, can also get involved.

This year, with a focus on *Wellbeing*, libraries across the country will showcase how they bring communities together, combat loneliness, provide a space for reading and creativity and support people with their mental health.

CLIS members may wish to use *Libraries Week* as an opportunity to promote libraries within their local churches. You might like to consider the following possible ideas:

Write a short article on libraries for your church newsletter, perhaps mentioning the *Speaking Volumes* library scheme or encouraging members of your congregation to use their public libraries as a source of Christian books.

Write or lead a prayer of thanksgiving for books and libraries during one of your Sunday services.

Highlight specialist religious libraries such as the *Evangelical Library* or *Dr. Williams's Library*.

Start a church library or promote an existing church collection.

Libraries Week takes place from **8 - 13 October 2018** and you can find more information and register your support for the event at www.librariesweek.org.uk Please let me know how *you* have supported *Libraries Week* in your library or church and we will include a report in a future issue of ***Christian Librarian***.

OXFORD WORKING PARTY

There is still work to be done on the **Universities' and Colleges' Christian Fellowship** book library in their Oxford premises and there are provisional plans for a further working party later in the year or possibly early in 2019. If this goes ahead, volunteers will be required and we will be especially grateful for assistance from members who have some experience in on-line cataloguing. Travel expenses, meals and accommodation would be provided by UCCF. If you are interested, or would like to be kept informed of developments, please contact Richard Waller, telephone 01942 205843, or e-mail randnwaller@blueyonder.co.uk

EVENTS FOR 2019

- Next year's Conference is to be held on **Saturday 6 April 2019** at **UCCF, Blue Boar House, 5 Blue Boar Street, Oxford, OX1 4EE**. Although we have held several annual lectures in Oxford, this will be the first time that we have taken the conference to the city of dreaming spires, and we are hoping for a good attendance.

Our first speaker for the day will be **Manoj Raithatha** who runs the publishing company *Instant Apostle* and will be speaking on Christian publishing for the twenty-first century. Our afternoon speaker will be Dr. **Nigel Crook**, Head of the Department of Computing and Communication Technologies at *Oxford Brookes University*, who will speak on artificial intelligence and robotics and their implications for Christians and for the wider society. This should be an enjoyable conference with contrasting speakers and topics. Please book the date now and watch this space for further details as they become available.

- Back in May this year a number of members and friends of CLIS took part in a walking tour of historic London led on our behalf by **Ben Virgo** of *Christian Heritage London*. (See report elsewhere in this issue). As this was much appreciated by those who took part we have invited Ben to lead another tour for us on **Wednesday afternoon 15 May 2019**. This time we will be looking at items of Christian interest in the *British Museum*. More details will appear in later issues.

- Our annual public lecture will return on **Saturday afternoon 19 October 2019** when we will be returning to the **Manvers Street Baptist Church** in Bath and our speaker will be the well known children's writer and master storyteller **Bob Hartman**.

TOLKIEN EXHIBITION

Admirers of **J. R. R. Tolkien**, and his epic fantasy novels ***The Hobbit*** and ***The Lord of the Rings***, will be interested in the current exhibition ***Tolkien: Maker of Middle-Earth*** which is being held at the Bodleian Libraries' *Weston Library* in Oxford until 28 October 2018. The 'once-in-a-generation' exhibition explores Tolkien's 'amazing legacy' as an artist, poet, linguist and author and also takes in his academic career and personal life. Visitors can view an array of draft manuscripts, illustrations and maps drawn for his publications, plus early abstract paintings, stories written for his children, objects that once belonged to Tolkien, fan mail, and private letters.

The exhibition is open Mondays to Saturdays 10 – 5 and Sundays 11- 5 and admission is free but ticketed. A limited number of tickets will be available on the door but visitors are advised to book in advance either via the web site <https://tolkien.bodleian.ox.ac.uk> or by 'phoning 01865 278112.

Tolkien is well known as a best-selling author in his own right but also as a member of the *Inklings*, the informal group of Christian writers that included C. S. Lewis and Charles Williams among others. We are not arranging an 'official' CLIS visit to the Tolkien exhibition but some of our members may wish to make their own way there. Members who plan to take part in our visit to *The Kilns* on 20 October might wish to arrange their own morning visit to the *Weston Library* if they can get to Oxford in time.

PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL NEWS

- The present writer contributed five 'bitesize' book reviews to the July/August 2018 issue of *idea*, the magazine of the *Evangelical Alliance*. The books covered were: ***Hear My Heart*** (Billy Graham), ***God is Stranger*** (Krish Kandiah), ***Interrupting Silence*** (Walter Bruggeman), ***What We Talk***

About When We Talk About Faith (Peter Stanford) and ***Strands of Destiny*** (Peter Horrobin).

- Congratulations to our member **Sarah Etheridge**, and her husband, who are celebrating the birth of their son **Rupert James Etheridge** on 15 June 2018. Sarah serves on the CLIS executive committee as our Recruitment Secretary and works on the staff of the *Lambeth Palace Library* in London.

- Our past speaker **Stewart Henderson** is the author of ***A Poet's Notebook ... with new poems, obviously*** (Lion, £8.99, ISBN 978-0745980324) which combines twenty-one new poems with accounts of the writing of the poems and reflections on P .G. Wodehouse, C. S. Lewis, Madeleine L'Engle and Malcolm Muggeridge among others.

CLIS readers will especially appreciate the chapter *Somewhere in the Library* which includes a poem in praise of children's literature and children's librarians. Well known as a broadcaster and performance poet, Stewart Henderson gave our annual public lecture in Oxford in October 2006.

- **Ben Virgo** is responsible for a regular podcast which features discussions on leading Christian historical figures with current church leaders. Leaders taking part in the series so far have included Terry Virgo, Glen Scrivener and Rico Tice. You can find the podcasts on the web site <https://itunes.apple.com/gb/podcast/christian-heritage-london-podcast/id1340413852/?mt=2>

Ben recently led a walking tour of Christian London for CLIS members on behalf of *Christian Heritage London* and this is reported elsewhere in this issue.

HISTORICAL IMAGINATION

I have always been a little dubious about the phrase '*Christian fiction*' (or '*Christian music*' or '*Christian drama*' or '*Christian anything*') but I have always taken an interest in fiction written by Christians and fiction dealing with Christian themes.

I have recently reviewed **Phoebe** (Hodder and Stoughton, £14.99, ISBN 978-1473669727) by Paula Gooder, the first venture into fiction by a noted New Testament scholar. Surprisingly, Paula says that her book is not a novel but an exercise in '*historical imagination*'. It tells the story of Phoebe, briefly mentioned in St. Paul's Letter to the Romans as a deacon of the church in Cenchreae. The book recreates what it must have been like to be a member of the early church in Rome and includes a number of well known figures including St. Peter.

The story raises interesting questions about the role of women in the early churches with Phoebe described as a deacon and Junia (almost certainly a woman's name) '*prominent among the apostles*', according to Romans. You can read my review of **Phoebe** on the *Evangelical Alliance* web site at www.eauk.org

JACK CLEMO COMPETITION

As mentioned in our previous issue, the *Arts Centre Group* have organised their 2018 *Jack Clemo Poetry Competition* in honour of the celebrated Christian poet **Jack Clemo**, whose centenary was celebrated in 2016. Poets and would be poets were invited to submit a poem on the theme '*Those Moments We Always Come Back To*' with a prize of £100 on offer for the winning entry.

The competition has now closed but those who entered, and others with an interest in poetry, can look forward to a coming awards event to be held at the **Westminster Central Hall, Storey's Gate, London, SW1H 9NH** on **Saturday 17 November 2018** from 12.00 to 5.00. p.m. Our past speaker, and long time *Arts Centre Group* member, **Tony Jasper** is the organiser of the competition and awards ceremony and you can obtain more information from the *Arts Centre Group*, *c/o Paintings in Hospitals*, First Floor, 51 Southwark Street, London, SE1 1RU. E mail info@artscentregroup.org.uk

DIGITAL SPEAKERS

Premier Christian Radio have recently announced the speakers and subjects for the 2018 **Premier Digital Conference** to be held later this year.

Keynote speakers include Rachel Jordan Wolf, Mission and Evangelism Adviser to the *Church of England* on sharing the gospel on-line and Nigel Cameron, author of ***The Robots are Coming***, on artificial intelligence and robotics.

There is a choice of seminars during the day and speakers include Kevin Bennett, *Premier's* Chief Operating Officer, on using e-mail to engage, San Hailes, Editor of ***Premier Christianity***, on writing for the web and Amaris Cole, Digital Communications and Content Manager at the *Church of England*, on amplifying your church's message on-line. Other topics during the day include understanding the digital world, best practice for church web sites, what young people are doing on-line, and increasing reach on *Facebook*.

Although planned for a Christian audience the Conference should also have a lot to offer librarians keen to acquire a better understanding of the digital communications revolution.

The Conference is to be held on **Saturday 3 November 2018**, from 10.00. a.m. at **The Brewery, Chiswell Street, London, EC1V 4SD** and you can find more information (including costs) on the web site <https://www.premierdigital.info/conference>

THE MAGAZINE OF CHRISTIAN UNREST

As a long standing visitor to ***Ship of Fools*** I am pleased to welcome the recent re-launch and revised design of the web site. Despite its changed appearance, SOF continues in its traditional role as the self-styled '*magazine of Christian unrest*' combining satire on the failings and foibles of the Christian community with serious discussion of current theological issues.

At the time of writing the site includes an extract from Rebecca Stott's book ***In the Days of Rain*** (Fourth Estate, £9.99, ISBN 978-00082009193), recalling a crisis in the *Exclusive Brethren* movement back in the 1960s. Simon Parke reflects on the changing face of the Great British Funeral.

In the long tradition of SOF's *Gadgets for God* feature the site introduces us to the Punching Nun glove puppet and the Last Supper musical pillow. There is a creed for smartphone users and a profile of SOF's patron saint, St, Simeon, the Holy Fool.

The *Mystery Worshipper* feature, arguably the most popular section, brings us the latest reports from unsuspecting churches whose sermons, worship and after-church coffee have been assessed by SOF supporters visiting incognito.

Ship of Fools was launched as a printed magazine in 1977 by Simon Jenkins and Steve Goddard and ran for several issues before re-emerging as a web magazine in 1998. You can find the current web site at www.shipoffools.com

SETTING GOD'S PEOPLE FREE

Setting God's People Free is a programme of change initiated by the *Church of England* to enable the whole people of God to live out the Good News of Jesus confidently in all of life, Mondays to Saturdays as well as Sundays.

The intention is to facilitate a change in culture which will seek to implement proposals from the ***Setting God's People Free*** report presented to the General Synod in 2017. These proposals seek effective ways to build up the whole people of God with a confident faith and vision for the Kingdom of God which is lived out in homes, schools, communities and places of work.

You can find a summary of the report, along with a new booklet ***Setting God's People Free for Monday to Saturday*** at <https://www.churchofengland.org/SGPF>

Could these ideas be relevant to your church and could you bring this initiative to the attention of your church leaders?

LITERARY CENTENARIES

2018 marks the centenary of two significant writers of Christian interest. whose writings may be familiar to members and friends of CLIS.

Madeleine L'Engle (29 November 1918 – 6 September 2007) was a writer of novels for children and adults as well as works of non-fiction. Her works reflect her Christian faith as well as a strong interest in science. She

is probably best known for her science fiction/fantasy novel ***A Wrinkle in Time*** which inspired a *Disney* film released earlier this year and now available on DVD and Blu-Ray. This book won a major book award in the United States and was followed by several sequels telling stories of space and time travel.

In addition to writing fantasy stories for children and young adults in the tradition of George MacDonald and C. S. Lewis Madeleine L'Engle also wrote more down to earth adventure stories for younger readers.

Wheaton College, Illinois, in the United States, has maintained a collection of papers and other materials relating to Madeleine L'Engle since 1976 and her biography has recently been written and published by members of her family.

Roger Lancelyn Green (2 November 1918 – 8 October 1987) was an Oxford academic, a friend and former student of C. S. Lewis, and a member of the *Inklings* group of Christian writers to which Lewis and others belonged.

Green is probably best known for his children's books re-telling stories from Greek, Egyptian and Norse mythology. He also retold the legends of King Arthur and Robin Hood. He co-wrote an early biography of C. S. Lewis with Lewis' one time secretary, Walter Hooper. He wrote some works of original fiction and is said to have suggested the title ***The Chronicles of Narnia*** to Lewis. He lived in Cheshire at *Poulton Hall*, a manor house that his family had owned for more than nine hundred years.

POET AND VISIONARY

Several hundred people assembled in the *Bunhill Fields* cemetery in London on Sunday 12 August 2018 to witness the unveiling of a new gravestone for the poet and painter **William Blake** (1757 - 1827). Speakers taking part in the ceremony included the clergyman and poet, Malcolm Guite, and the heavy metal rock star, Bruce Dickinson.

The *Bunhill Fields* burial ground is the final resting place of many non-conformist heroes of the past including John Bunyan and Isaac Watts. William Blake was buried in a common grave when he died in 1827 and the exact site of his burial remained unknown for many years until research by two admirers

located it in 2006. The *Blake Society* raised the money to commemorate Blake and the unveiling of the gravestone took place on the one hundred and ninety-first anniversary of his death.

I have always thought of William Blake as a rather unorthodox religious figure whose beliefs had something in common with those of the Gnostics of early Christian history. However, Mark Vernon, writing for the ***Christian Today*** web site at <https://www.christiantoday.com> had no hesitation in naming him as a '*Christian visionary*' who '*conversed with angels, saw saints, experienced ecstasy and understood that he had a vocation blessed by Christ ... to open the Eternal Worlds, to open the immortal Eyes of Men*'.

FAITH AT THE CENTRE OF POLITICS

Our recent Conference speaker, **Malcolm Martin**, is the Deputy Leader of the *Christian People's Alliance*, a political party based on the principles of Christian Democracy.

According to the movement's web site the *Christian People's Alliance* draws members from all backgrounds and church traditions. The party actively promotes Christian social teaching and draws its principles from the Bible and especially the life and teachings of Jesus Christ. Rooted in the traditional Christian faith, CPA seeks through practical service to demonstrate God's love in the political arena based on principles drawn from the Bible and from Christian political insights through the centuries.

CPA was founded in 2000 by members of the non-party *Movement for Christian Democracy* founded by a cross-party group of Christian Members of Parliament. The CPA has adopted the same principles and social vision summarised in the Six Principles of Christian Democracy: Active Compassion, Respect for Life, Social Justice, Wise Stewardship, Empowerment and Reconciliation. The party believes that the Christian faith gives a vision for the whole of politics through principles, policies, peacemaking, economic policy and ethics and aims to put faith at the centre of politics.

CLIS members are likely to have a variety of political viewpoints and, while some will welcome the existence of a Christian party, others will prefer to support one of the existing mainstream parties. Political choices, however,

need to be based on reliable information and you can find more information about the *Christian People's Alliance* on their web site at www.cpaparty.net

CURRENT AWARENESS

- Rowan Williams' essay *Master of His Universe* welcomes the *Bodleian Libraries'* current Tolkien exhibition. Williams defends Tolkien's works, which are sometimes dismissed as '*reactionary fanrtasy*', while acknowledging concerns about '*implied misogyny ... racial stereotyping, the romanticising of violence and the reduction of moral issues to cosmic battles between absolutes*'.

According to Rowan Williams, salvation is achieved for Middle Earth '*through the weaving together of a whole set of flawed agencies, mixed motives, compassion, prejudice, courage and craving*'. This models the way in which the Creator works '*not by intervening but by interweaving*'.

It is these themes that most clearly make ***Lord of the Rings*** a work of Christian fiction. The book is ultimately '*about how desire for power ... is a dream that can devour even the most decent*'. The article appears in the ***New Statesman*** for 10 – 16 August 2018, pp. 40 – 43.

- Madeleine Davies' article *I Commend to You Phoebe* is based on an interview with the New Testament scholar Paula Gooder who has recently written ***Phoebe*** (Hodder and Stoughton, £14.99, ISBN 978-1473669727), her first venture into fiction. ***Phoebe*** uses '*historical imagination*' to reconstruct the life of a female deacon and benefactor in the early church briefly mentioned by St. Paul in Romans 16.

Paula Gooder hopes that her book will open up the role of women in the early church and suggests that the stories of other early Christian women, such as Lydia, the dealer in purple cloth, are '*crying out*' to be told. She discusses the problems facing women in leadership positions in the contemporary church but notes a recent '*massive change in culture*' which has led many young women to follow her into biblical scholarship. The article appears in the ***Church Times*** for 25 May 2018, p. 21.

- Tim Wyatt's article *Dance as if no one's watching, tweet as if it will be brought up in court* looks at positive and negative aspects of social media as seen by leading figures within the Church of England.

The article notes recent concerns about social media including allegations of data misuse and interference in election campaigns. This contrasts with the early days when church leaders recognised the value of social media and bloggers like Church Mouse attracted thousands of followers. Numerous Facebook groups were created representing the views of different Christian traditions and interests. The use of social media has continued to grow but the misuse of social media is more widely recognised now than in earlier years. The article appears in the **Church Times** for 13 July 2018, pp. 17-18.

- Articles in the ***Bulletin of the Association of British Theological and Philosophical Libraries***, Volume 25, number 2, Summer 2018, include *Theological Collections at the University of Edinburgh* (Rachel Campion), *Forging Alliances for Effective Information Literacy* (Various writers), *Lessons from Seventeen Other Libraries: an exercise in professional development* (Keith Lang), and *Theology on the Web* (Rob Bradshaw).

ABTAPL's Autumn Meeting is to be held at *Lambeth Palace*, London, SE1 7JU, on Thursday afternoon 8 November 2018 with CILIP's Nick Poole as keynote speaker. Their Spring Conference is to be held from 4 -6 April 2019 at *Regents Theological College*, West Malvern, Worcestershire. Details from rachel.campion@lkh.co.uk

EBSCO PUBLISHING

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ANNABEL HAYCRAFT joins other CLIS members and follows in the footsteps of George Whitefield, John Wesley, John Milton, and Charles Spurgeon (not forgetting Dick Whittington and his Cat!)

EXPLORING LONDON



On a sunny day in late May, several CLIS members met Ben Virgo, tour guide of the *Christian Heritage London* series of guided walks, at *Byron's* restaurant near *St. Paul's Cathedral*. Following an enjoyable meal we joined a larger group of members on the steps of *St. Paul's* where our tour commenced. Designed by Sir Christopher Wren, the Cathedral is a stunning building, all the more impressive against the background of blue sky which we were fortunate enough to enjoy.

Around the corner we reached another beautiful Wren church, *St. Mary-le-Bow*, re-built after the Great Fire of 1666. According to tradition a true Cockney must be born within earshot of Bow Bells, referring to this church's bells. In the story of *Dick Whittington and his Cat*, the sound of the bells are credited with having persuaded Dick to turn back from Hampstead to live in the centre of London and eventually become Lord Mayor. At the same church, in the eighteenth century, George Whitefield preached his first public sermon. When churches stopped inviting him (due to jealousy and disagreements) he started to preach outdoors.

We walked up Wood Street, off Cheapside, which is mentioned by Wordsworth in his poem *The Reverie of Poor Susan*.

Later, we passed the church of *St, Giles, Cripplegate*, where John Milton is buried. Nearby is the Barbican and Aldersgate, where John Wesley experienced his conversion in 1738. It is said that the later students of preacher Charles Spurgeon (in the nineteenth century) heard about the Aldersgate meetings and re-instated them. We also saw *St. Botolph's Church*, a fascinating example of Georgian architecture.

Having made a brief stop at the *Guildhall*, a Grade 1 listed building which dates back to the early fifteenth century, we walked towards Smithfield, where we stopped at Cloth Fair. In medieval times, merchants gathered to buy and sell material, at the Bartholomew Fair. A blue plaque marks the entrance to John Betjeman's home in Cloth Court. We saw the *Church of St. Bartholomew the Great*, the oldest church in London, dating back to 1123. French Huguenot refugees, escaping the massacre of 1572, settled in the area and are credited with having invented oxtail soup. Nearby is *St. Bart's Hospital*, which was originall[y] a priory for the poor.

Towards the end of our tour, we passed outside the church of *St. Sepulchre-without-Newgate*, which is on Holborn Viaduct, near the *Old Bailey*. We thanked our guide, Ben, who had given a very informative and entertaining tour.

Annabel Haycraft, BA (Hons), DASP, MA, is the Librarian of *Spurgeon's College* and serves on the executive committee of *Christians in Library and Information Services*. Information about *Christian Heritage London* can be found at www.christianheritagelondon.org

ANNE MACRITCHIE enjoys a tour of the Kelvingrove Museum and Art Gallery in Glasgow

ART AND ARCHITECTURE IN GLASGOW

Two events have taken place recently involving Scottish members of CLIS. Three of us met for lunch on 16 July and on 4 August 2018 two of us went to see the *Charles Rennie Mackintosh* exhibition at the *Kelvingrove Museum and Art Gallery* in Glasgow.

We discovered there was a guided tour of the Museum at 11.00 so joined that and had an excellent guide and gained a good overview of the treasures of the museum and art gallery and learnt something of its history. One highlight was seeing the painting *Christ of St. John of the Cross* by Salvador Dali – a very thought provoking and evocative interpretation and not as surrealistic as many of Dali's works.

The Mackintosh exhibition was excellent and there was a wide selection of his work from furniture to architectural drawings and things that influenced him – including Japanese art. There were two short films of houses he designed inside and out and I couldn't help feeling that they wouldn't be out of place today in many ways "*trendy*" over one hundred years later!

It was altogether a very enjoyable and interesting visit. We were reminded of the tragic second fire at the *School of Art* as our bus had to make a detour. It was perhaps Mackintosh's most famous building – hopefully some of it can be salvaged.

Anne MacRitchie, BSC, is the Scottish Secretary for *Christians in Library and Information Services*.

MEMBERSHIP MATTERS

***News from the Membership Secretary:
Janice Paine, MCLIP, 22 Queensgate
Gardens, 396 Upper Richmond Road,
Putney, London, SW15 6JN.
Tel. 020 8785 2174***

A warm welcome to one new member. Also listed below are those who have renewed their membership since May 2018.

We would greatly appreciate it if payment could be sent before the end of April each year.

If you have changed address, job or e-mail, please let us know as soon as possible.

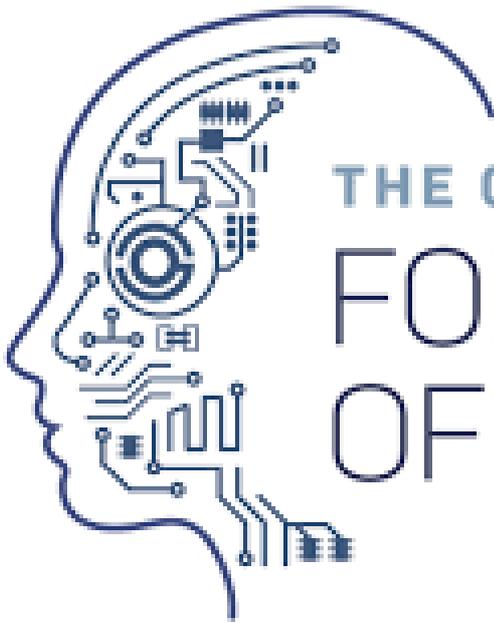
NEW MEMBER

Meldrum, Miss Judith, Surrey

LATE RENEWALS

Flowers, Miss Gwynneth M., 29 Haydon Road, Dagenham, Essex, RM8 2PA – tel. 020 8599 6009, email gwynflow@hotmail.com

Nicklen, Mrs Anne, Development Officer, Somerset C.C. – tel. 01934 876842, email ANicklen@somerset.gov.uk



THE CHURCH, ROBOTICS + A.I. FOR THE SAKE OF THE FUTURE

GRAHAM HEDGES reports on a recent Conference held at the *British Library Knowledge Centre* in London

'For the Sake of the Future' was the theme of a conference organised by the Christian organisation **CARE** (*Christian Action, Research and Education*) and held at the *British Library Knowledge Centre* in London on Friday 29 June 2018 with contributions from a number of eminent speakers.

Nigel Cameron, author of *The Robots are Coming* (CARE, £9.99, ISBN 978-0905195230), set out a number of questions raised by the development of artificial intelligence and the increasing use of robots. Who will be in charge and who will control the flow of data? Will the rise of robots lead to an end of full employment and how will people spend their time in a supposed new age of leisure? Should we talk about a rise of a new leisured class, or a new period of long term unemployment

Nigel Cameron developed some of his points in a later seminar stressing the possibility of disruption in the labour markets as a result of the development of robotics. One possible solution would be to *lower* the retirement age, a measure that would reverse the current trend towards *raising* the retirement age. The speaker suggested that these issues were '*too hot a topic*' for the trade unions to pick up. Nobody wants to be seen as a Luddite!

John Lennox, Professor of Mathematics at the *University of Oxford*, drew attention to the rise of a movement known as '*trans-humanism*' as set out in current best-sellers such as ***Homo Deus*** by Yuval Noah Haran (Vintage, £4.99, ISBN 978-1784703935). This pre-supposes that advances in technology and bio-chemistry will make it possible to re-invent human beings and free them from the restrictions of physical life. Might it be possible in the future to upload the contents of someone's brain into a computer so that the person could escape physical death and continue to live as part of a machine? The trans-humanist agenda rests on materialistic assumptions and as such is diametrically opposed to the Christian view which sees humankind as more than material and made in the image of God.

In conclusion, Dr. **Patrick Dixon**, described as '*Europe's leading futurist*', presented a generally positive view of the potential of artificial intelligence while acknowledging that technology can have '*unintended consequences*' and that all science can be used for good or evil.

No doubt these discussions will continue and we will be able to give them an airing at our own conference in Oxford on Saturday 6 April 2019.

Graham Hedges, *MCLIP*, *Hon. FCLIP*, is the Secretary of *Christians in Library and Information Services*

GRAHAM HEDGES finds volunteering at a leading Christian organisation a positive experience but questions whether the value of library and information services is fully appreciated within the Christian sector

INFORMATION VOLUNTEERING

Wednesday 1 August 2018 was a happy – yet at the same time sad – occasion in my life as it marked the official end of my appointment as the Information Volunteer in the London headquarters of the *Evangelical Alliance*.

Founded in 1846, the Alliance is the oldest and largest network uniting and representing evangelical Christians and making an evangelical view known to the wider Church, the media, the government and the general public. As currently constituted the Alliance is active on several fronts and is organised into several teams: Advocacy, Communications and Membership, Unity for Mission, and Administration and Finance.

I first became a personal member of the Alliance in 1978 when I was invited to do so by the then General Secretary, Gordon Landreth. In 1980 the annual general meeting of the *Librarians' Christian Fellowship* (as we then were) accepted my proposal that we should become a corporate member of the Alliance. Some years later, I was appointed as my church's local EA rep., giving me a threefold link with the organisation.

Since school days I had hoped that, at some time in the future, I would be able to obtain a job in a Christian organisation, and when I qualified as a librarian I hoped that there might someday be an opportunity to use my librarianship training in a Christian context. It seemed to me that the *Evangelical Alliance* was in an ideal position to provide an information service for the wider Christian community and in 1982 I wrote to Gordon Landreth suggesting the creation of an information officer role at the Alliance and proposing myself for the position! Gordon replied in fairly neutral terms but I discovered, years later, that he had written to the then chairman of the Alliance's governing body suggesting that I might be considered for a job along the lines suggested. That correspondence remains in the EA's archive collection but there is no record of any written reply from the then chairman!

Gordon was shortly to leave the Alliance to take up another job and my guess is that the chairman told him, in conversation, that it might be best to delay any additional staff appointments until the new General Secretary had been appointed.

LCF/CLIS has maintained its membership of the Alliance for many years and Gordon Landreth was a speaker at our conference in 1981. In 1989, Peter Meadows, then the Alliance's Communications Secretary, gave our annual lecture. Two speakers – Martyn Eden and Keith Ewing who were then on the staff – gave our annual lecture in 1996 and I took part in a joint interview with them for local radio. The EA did eventually appoint Maggie Harding as its first information officer and Maggie hosted a visit of LCF members to the Alliance's Kennington offices in 2004.

On several occasions over the years I wrote to the Alliance enquiring about the possibility of a job but the reply was always that there were '*no suitable vacancies*'. In 2011 I was considering the possibility of taking early retirement from my job in the public library service in *Wandsworth* and wrote to the *Evangelical Alliance* asking about a possible job. The then Human Resources manager replied that there were no relevant paid jobs available but that I might consider joining the Alliance team as a volunteer assisting the Senior Information and Research Officer.

I did not respond immediately, but over the following few months there were developments taking place in the library service in *Wandsworth*. The senior management purchased self-service issue equipment for their branches and, after assuring staff that no employees would lose their jobs as a result of automation, decided to delete my job in order to pay for the new equipment.

Although there were other jobs in the borough for which I could have applied, I decided to take early retirement and, in the end, received a good financial settlement from *Wandsworth*, being given both redundancy money and a lump sum from the pension fund.

So it was that, after an informal interview, I began working as a volunteer in the EA offices in Kennington, London, in September 2011. I worked closely with the Senior Information and Research Officer, Kim Walker, who was, like myself, a Chartered Librarian with experience in reference and information services. For the first few months I worked one day a week, but this was later increased to two.

In those early days, my main duties were indexing the Alliance's past and present magazines and newsletters and creating entries on the *Liberty* library management system. I also did some work on the archive collection, transferring documents from 'ordinary' cardboard boxes to special archive boxes and creating catalogue records on *Liberty*.

For the first eighteen months or so I worked in the Kennington office, which was a rabbit warren of a building and located on several floors. I got to know several of the staff on my own floor, but the staff and departments on the higher floors were a bit of a mystery to me.

Then, in 2013, the Alliance moved to new premises in Copenhagen Street, in London's King's Cross area, which I found to be a much more enjoyable working environment. The Copenhagen Street resource centre, as it is called, is a large open plan office, all on one level, and it was good to be able to get to know staff in other teams and gain some idea of the work they were doing.

I enjoyed the work and believed that it was important, but I also appreciated the social aspects of my role, getting to know the staff and getting back into a workplace environment. The *Evangelical Alliance* employs a dedicated and talented staff team and I was glad to be a part of it, albeit as an unpaid volunteer. It is also quite a young team (with some exceptions) but I enjoyed working with people who were thirty or even forty years younger than me!

At Copenhagen Street there was a specially designed room for the archives and work on the collection continued. We created and catalogued a book library, consisting mainly of review copies sent by publishers, and I continued to index past publications including the magazines *idea* and *Crusade*. I also started work on *Evangelical Christendom*, the journal that the Alliance had published from the 1840s right through to the 1950s. This was probably the most difficult task as the journal had very small print, tightly packed pages, and references to people and events about which I had little knowledge. It also reflected the views and ideas of an earlier age, with plenty of references to 'Romish priests' and 'popery'.

As I have said I enjoyed the social aspects of the work, such as going out to lunch with members of staff, attending farewell tea parties for people who were leaving, and attending the annual staff Christmas lunch. This was held in various venues and in 2014 we enjoyed our seasonal meal in the restaurant run by the prisoners in *Brixton Prison*. I attended the monthly *Together* staff meetings and monthly worship sessions and led the morning

staff prayers on several occasions. I was disappointed that I was not invited to attend the annual staff conference at the *High Leigh* conference centre but appreciated that adding volunteers to the guest list would have increased the costs significantly.

As the Information Volunteer I worked mainly with the Communications Team and carried out some additional roles for that section. I helped the advertising manager with a list of advertisers, wrote a number of book reviews for *idea* magazine and the web site, and helped with the first round of judging for a short story competition announced by *idea*.

In the autumn of 2014 we organised a visit of CLIS members to the Copenhagen Street premises and Kim Walker explained the work we were doing and provided an exhibition of some of the most interesting archive items. These included the original minutes books from the first great Billy Graham campaign in London in 1954.

Special events during my time at the EA included the official opening of the Copenhagen Street centre in August 2013, when the Archbishop of Canterbury, Justin Welby, was our special guest and the one hundred and seventieth anniversary event at *All Soul's, Langham Place*, in November 2016. In October 2017 I was privileged to attend the *Movement Day* conference at the *Westminster Central Hall* which called for the social and spiritual regeneration of our towns and cities and in which members of the staff were heavily involved.

In early 2015 I found myself in hospital undergoing an operation on my foot and I was absent from the office for most of the year while my foot recovered. Then, in 2017, I unexpectedly found myself back in hospital undergoing more surgery and there was a further extended period when I was unable to travel.

Shortly before my second hospitalisation, the suppliers of the *Liberty* system decided to significantly increase their prices to an extent that was not really acceptable to the Alliance. The price hike was justified on the basis of new enhanced features which had no relevance to the Alliance. A decision was made to discontinue the subscription to *Liberty* and to transfer the cataloguing data to a new system, rejoicing in the name *Simple Little Library System*, and provided by the company *Bailey Solutions* of Hove. The new system was demonstrated to me but there was no opportunity for me to use it before I went back into hospital.

One interesting development during my second major absence from the Alliance was that my colleague, Manoj Raithatha, who works part time for the Alliance as the co-ordinator of the *South Asian Forum*, took on the additional role of interim pastor of *Barking Baptist Church*, the church of which I am a member. In addition to preaching regularly on Sundays, Manoj has invited several of his EA colleagues to visit the church as guest preachers. Among his various roles, Manoj runs the publishing company, *Instant Apostle*, and CLIS members will have a chance to meet him when he speaks at our conference in April next year.

Then, in March 2018, I was shocked and saddened to receive an e-mail from Kim Walker explaining that she was no longer employed by the *Evangelical Alliance* and that the job of Senior Information and Research Officer was being abolished. A subsequent telephone call to Kim's home revealed that she was being made redundant along with two other members of staff. The Alliance's current *Strategic Plan* proposed new priorities for the organisation with a reduced emphasis on information services and archives.

I wrote to Steve Clifford, the General Director, to express my concerns and later received a reply explaining the thinking behind the redundancies. Steve made it clear that making staff redundant had not been an easy decision, but that as staffing was the organisation's major expense, they had to be sure that they had the right people doing the right jobs. Fortunately, Kim was able to find a new job fairly easily and is now working as the Data Protection Officer at the YMCA in Hove, a subject area that she had researched extensively during her time at the Alliance in preparation for the introduction of new data protection regulations.

I have always thought that making staff redundant sits a little uneasily with the ethos of a Christian organisation. Redundancies may be unavoidable when organisations are struggling financially, but this does not seem to be the case at the EA where several new appointments have been advertised since Kim's departure.

I had hoped that I would be able to return in my Information Volunteer role when I was able to travel but it was explained to me that this would not be possible in the present changed circumstances. This was disappointing as I had hoped that I would be able to keep the archive and library 'ticking over' following Kim's departure. I returned to the Alliance for my farewell tea party on 1 August 2018 and it was good to be able to say goodbye to familiar colleagues and meet some new members of staff who had joined during the previous ten months. I was photographed with many of the staff members and the photograph later appeared on *Facebook* with a short tribute to my

work as a volunteer. I was grateful for the kind words and the leaving present of a book token (as if I needed an excuse to buy more books!)

Steve Clifford assured me that the archives would remain as an important resource for the future and that they were expecting someone to visit the offices shortly to research the EA's past record on abortion. I am not sure that the present leadership team entirely understands the need for a suitably qualified person to retrieve information from an archive, and the importance of the collection's catalogue. As a librarian I believe that information is a vital resource for organisations of all kinds, and recent events at the EA do seem to be another example of organisations not properly recognising the value of library and information services and professionals.

Despite my disappointment over recent events, I remain as a committed member and supporter of the Alliance. Perhaps my role as a volunteer is not entirely over as I hope to write more book reviews and I have recently been invited to help 'road test' the EA's re-designed web site which is planned to go live in September. I hope to keep in touch with some of the staff members on *Facebook* and I am looking forward to this year's *Christian Resources Exhibition* at which the Alliance staff will be actively involved. I would like to find another volunteering opportunity somewhere else at some point in the future.

It has been a great pleasure and privilege to work at the Alliance, though I had hoped that this would continue for some time to come. I remember telling several people, in jest, that I would probably still be indexing ***Evangelical Christendom*** when I was ninety! Despite the way in which my role came to an end, my several years as a volunteer at the Alliance were a positive experience and I do not regret any of the time I gave to the organisation. I would certainly recommend volunteering to others with time on their hands. I dare say that many of our retired members are actively involved in voluntary activities, whether in their churches, local communities, national Christian organisations, or professional associations. Please send me your experiences and we will include them in a later issue.

You can obtain more information about the *Evangelical Alliance* from 176 Copenhagen Street, London, N1 OST. Web site www.eauk.org

Graham Hedges, MCLIP, Hon. FCLIP, is Secretary of *Christians in Library and Information Services*.

What cultural and legal obstacles stand in the way of Christians sharing their faith with their colleagues and contacts in working life? MARK JONES provides a lawyer's perspective and looks at some landmark cases

GOSPEL FREEDOM AND THE WORKPLACE

*An Address to the Christians in Library and Information Services Conference 'Freedom and Truth' held on Saturday 14 April 2018 in the Princes Street Room at the Salvation Army's Regent Hall, 275 Oxford Street, London, W1C 2DJ and edited for **Christian Librarian** by Janice Paine.*

Are we free to share the gospel? The starting point is “yes, *there is freedom*” but there may be limitations on where and how we share the gospel. Those limitations are not just legal but cultural as well. Where they're legal they may derive from statute law or case law, and within a workplace environment from contracts of employment, policies or a handbook.

These limitations on our ability to freely express the gospel are themselves misunderstood and are subject to limitations themselves, so the authority of the state to limit what we can do is, in itself, limited, e.g. by certain individual rights. For example, if I were to enter into a contract with my employer that says I agree that I will not pray, that is not something that is going to be enforceable: the rights that I have outside that contract would override what the contract said. However if I was to be working with you and decide that whenever I want I'm going to belt out “*Shine Jesus shine*”, is that going to be appropriate? There are limitations. It's a question of where do we draw the line, and about the context: would it be appropriate if I was in a theatre – on a train – in my

home – in the workplace; these are things that all impact the assessment.

Balancing act

As a starting point, there is an historic acceptance by the courts that there is a wide benefit to Christianity and Christian beliefs, and there's a legitimate purpose for expressing those beliefs. There's a balancing act between the rights I have to express my beliefs and the rights of others not to have my beliefs imposed upon them. So it is this juggling act that causes so many of the issues – the freedoms we have are the same freedoms other people have; my freedom to talk about my faith, and your freedom not to hear it, or indeed your freedom to talk to me about your contrary beliefs (and those contrary beliefs may be ones that denigrate Christ). But the freedom that we would want to express our beliefs and to talk about the gospel, means that we have to be prepared to give others that same ability to express their contrary beliefs. So where is the line drawn in law? We'll come to that in a moment;

Cultural limitations

First I want to talk about where the line is drawn culturally. There's a lot of talk about British culture at the moment and British values and what those all amount to. I have my own ideas which slightly differ from the government, things I find people have in common tend to be things like we tut when people push into the queues, in a restaurant we never take the last bit of popadom, you have to break it down to smaller and smaller bits, and we all think we're a better than average driver. And culturally we tend to be law-abiders. If we think something is against the law, even if we think the law could be wrong, we step back a bit. Generally if we think someone will think less of us if we do something that we think is against the law, that influence means we step back.

My first question is: culturally, is there marginalisation for Christians in terms of wanting to speak about the gospel? If you were to look at media

reports, newspapers, you would conclude that there was. Let's start from a position that there is; why would that be and how is it manifested? There are various reasons:

1) those who are in positions of authority (in the workplace your employer or line manager), are concerned that expressions of religious belief may leave them open to claims, that somebody might say, I'm feeling harassed by somebody expressing a view that is contrary to mine or that is challenging of my lifestyle; I'm feeling harassed, you're my employer, you have to do something about that.

2) I think also there is more open hostility to the gospel now, it is something that people are less used to. The statistics are quite disturbing – when you look at the number of people who used to go to Sunday School or who were exposed to the gospel and the numbers who go now and who understand Christianity. That means there is a more open hostility without necessarily realising it's a hostility because people are just not used to Christians, and we're a bit more on the fringe. So there is a greater religious illiteracy with that as well, which means I could talk very openly about my beliefs here, you would understand that and see nothing unusual, but if you take a random selection from outside, they would think, *"that's all a bit odd"*. Indeed, they may think they understand Christianity and know what it is, but they may not be able to reconcile what I'm saying Christianity is with what they understood. And so that strikes them as a little odd, and perhaps makes them fear I'm a bit of an extremist as well.

3) There is that idea as well, for which we can perhaps thank Tony Blair a little bit, that you can separate your religious beliefs away from your job. You can leave them at home, and when you get to the workplace you get on with it: *"we don't do God"* here.

4) And there is the idea of a more acceptable face of Christianity, there is John Major's image of the maids cycling to church through the mist; it's non-offensive, non-confrontational, it's providing teas, coffees, hospitality, and a lovely old building, to take a photograph of. And for those who step beyond that, there's a lack of public sympathy, whereas generally we like the underdog, we don't like anybody claiming victim status. We will react a bit against that.

Whether that cultural marginalisation is good news or bad news depends on how we respond and how we engage with it; do we see God's hand in control, what's our response? Do we look back and mourn what we think we have lost, or do we try and engage with the culture as it is today? We are certainly not facing persecution in this country, nor are we facing exile for being Christians, but I think that time will come. So I think perhaps there is a climate of fear at the moment but one that isn't entirely justified. If you have an employment dispute, a workplace issue, the forum for dealing with that is an employment tribunal (what used to be called an industrial tribunal).

The last full year we have statistics for, 2015/16, there were about 84,000 cases that were brought, and of those, let's take age discrimination: a bit more than one in seven cases had an element involving age discrimination, So of those 84,000 how many do you think involved religious discrimination? The figures for religious belief are 0.4% of cases. There could be various reasons for this, such as people of faith generally don't like conflict; if you were to go by press reports generally on how many of these cases get reported you would think there were far more legal cases involving Christians than something like age discrimination. When it comes to the awards tribunals make by way of damages, the median award for religious discrimination is higher than for age, race, sex or even disability discrimination.

So there is part of me that makes me wonder whether we are looking more for excuses - because we're afraid - not to talk about our faith in the workplace, and sometimes people will look for cases that mean "*if I talk about it I'll be sacked so therefore I can't talk about it*". That there is such disproportionate reporting of it shows there is a big interest in Christianity, there are people wanting to know more, there is a vacuum for information and the coverage can provide a great opening for discussions about the gospel.

There are other reasons why there can be an increased fear of what will happen if we speak up about our faith: I think the press doesn't help, there are cases reported that are hardly encouraging for people to share their faith; reports both before during and after cases are brought. If a

politician wants to get themselves in the papers all they have to do is make a comment, as Tim Farron found out, about their religious beliefs; people are instantly interested and they get somewhat ostracised. So there is a fear of sticking our head above the parapet because there may be consequences for us. It would be naïve to say there isn't a spiritual factor here; fear can arise from a lack of faith. Also with cases that do get reported in the press, a lot are misunderstood or misreported (and I will talk about specific cases later on) - if you do read about a case in the press or receive a press release through your post, have a look and see what the case actually says - that is so important. When you get a press release, there's often an underlying motive and it's not all about sharing information with you. I've spent quite a depressing amount of my time having to comment on cases and point out that what the press reported isn't actually what happened in the case.

Culturally we're told not to conform but be transformed in Romans 12:2, so what do we do about that? As I said earlier, part of us likes to conform as well, it's part of human nature, a "*religion*" by way of a routine can appeal to people, it's our nature to find solace in a routine and religion, and we don't like to make a fuss or feel that we've made anybody feel uncomfortable. So if we think that talking about Jesus is going to make someone feel uncomfortable, that means it's not a very Christian thing to do, so perhaps we won't do it. In consequence, by not having these discussions it's left to the more "*fringe elements*" – people who may be less well equipped to handle it, those people who we summed up as "*innocent as snakes and shrewd as doves*" unfortunately! I'm obviously speaking to a room of educated articulate people, and there is a particular importance and an obligation upon us to help articulate the gospel to those we come into contact with. If they don't hear it from us what they may hear is from someone less equipped to properly and truthfully explain it.

A problem we are going to be facing as well is the way the culture we are in has shifted with regard to the younger generation, sometimes called Generation Z, and the whole concept of tolerance. Tolerance as I understood it used to be the idea of "*I may not like what you say but I'll fight for your right to be able to say it*". Now it's gone through rather extraordinary change in that tolerance means to show you tolerate me

you must protect me from ever hearing something I don't like. If someone is going to preach the gospel at me and I don't like that, you show tolerance by shutting them up. The nation's conscience in general has hardened against expressions of religious belief, certainly expressions that go to the uniqueness of Christ, judgement and about where salvation comes from. It quite likes equivalence: all roads lead to God; what you believe is good for you, what I believe is good for me, we're all good people trying to do the right thing and I'm sure we'll all end up in heaven at the end of the day. But something that challenges an individual's conscience - the conscience of the country has hardened against that.

Legal limitations

Now let's consider the legal limitations on free speech at work. These are examples: if you were to make a threat to kill somebody, the law would quite rightly say that's a bit rum, you should reign that in; provocation of violence - **Public Order Act** – that is something that is reined in. There is an element of the person's perception there, not as straightforward as a threat to kill the person may perceive there is a threat of violence there, which can lead to some slightly odd situations.

There was a case where the police got very interested in somebody who was talking about heaven and hell and judgement, and the individual hearing that understood it to be a threat of violence. The police were marginally interested until they properly understood the situation. Is it likely or intended to stir up hatred on the grounds of race, religious belief or sexual orientation which covers threatening abusing or insulting words or conduct, that's a way in which free speech can be limited, if there's a belief that your words are harassing somebody. If I were to be speaking to a colleague in the workplace and I'm sharing the gospel with them, and they say, Mark that's great but I don't want to hear that again, and I was to continue doing it, that's a course of conduct that could amount to harassment. Generally harassment requires two or three events to qualify as harassment unless it is so obviously unwelcome.

There is the whole “*Prevent*” strategy in the background which the government is trying to get their head round, what is extremism and who is an extremist. I’m not sure where we’re going to go with that, there is all sorts of fun with trying to draft it. In terms of statutes, in 2003 there were the ***Religion and Belief Discrimination Regulations***, that was then incorporated into the ***Equality Act*** of 2010. Underpinning everything we have the ***European Convention on Human Rights*** which has a number of articles that have been incorporated into UK law by the ***Human Rights Act*** and is not going to change when we leave the EU, these will be no less enforceable under UK domestic law. The ***European Convention*** gives the following freedoms:

Article 8 the *Right of Private Life*, which extends to the workplace, it doesn’t mean you have to leave your faith at home.

Article 9 the *Freedom of Conscience, Thought and Religious Belief*, which is broken into two parts: the freedom to believe something, which is absolute – you can believe whatever you want however ridiculous; when it comes to manifestation there is a qualified right to take into account the rights of others and what may be considered appropriate in a democratic society.

Article 10 *Freedom of Expression*, Article 11 *Right of Assembly*, so we all have the chance to meet together here as believers, and Article 14 covers general discrimination, which you can rely upon when there is another breach of the convention.

The *European Court* has historically been unaccommodating of Christians. One of the first key cases involving religious belief of Christians in the UK was the case of Copsey and an issue of Sunday working. The court’s approach there was “No” – the fact that you’re not happy to work on a Sunday doesn’t mean the right to manifest your religious beliefs has been infringed in any way because you can always resign from your job then you can do whatever you like. That was the historic rather unaccommodating approach.

Then in 2013 there was a volte-face in the case of *Eweida vs UK* when the *European Court* said actually, no, we got it a bit wrong, in order to have these rights they do not have to leave the workplace in order to do it. In the *Eweida* case the court said *British Airways* had got it slightly wrong. *Eweida* is a case that troubles me, although it was a victory, the court decided there had been an element of discrimination, a key factor in the decision was that BA changed their approach. If BA had been more belligerent and not changed their uniform policy in order to then allow Ms *Eweida* to have a visible cross, the court may well not have found in her favour. So the message for employers is to be rather less accommodating: even if you think you could have done something, stick to your guns.

A key quote from the *Eweida* case is that a healthy democratic society needs to tolerate and sustain pluralism and diversity. Also because of the value to an individual who's made religion a central tenet of his or her life, it's important that they are able to communicate that belief to others. So a blanket policy saying you can't have a cross on display was inappropriate because it impacts on the ability, the central tenet, of the right to communicate your religious beliefs to another person.

In 1993 there was the case of *Kokkinakis*, a Jehovah's Witness seeking the right to proselytise beliefs contrary to the Christian orthodoxy of the country. The court upheld that right. The Greek court understood that the JW's beliefs were an attempt to intrude on the beliefs of Orthodox Christians with the intention of undermining them, but the court said that needs to be allowed. They said, helpfully, particularly for Christians for whom it is such a central part of our faith, that bearing witness in words and deed is bound up in the existence of religious convictions, that if you believe something, we diminish the value of that if you're not able to share it with somebody.

In 1979, in *X v UK*, a teacher established in the *European Court* that he had a protectable interest to be protected from being exposed to evangelism from his Christian colleagues. So it goes both ways. The ***European Convention on Human Rights*** is a floor the courts can't go below.

Cases

How is this law filtering down in actual cases? Judges in employment tribunals, and courts tend to find it a little bit easier to adjudicate on cases that involve religion and religious aspects: needing a prayer room, particular dietary requirements, particular clothing - the stuff that can be codified, that they can get their heads around. Where we start talking about things like the Holy Spirit, religious conscience, gospel freedom – they may not quite get it. A further issue is that you have a person coming before a judge saying “*as a Christian this is what I believe and what I want to be able to tell people*”, but they may be seeking to persuade a judge who possibly thinks they are a Christian already, although they don’t share your beliefs, they don’t believe what you say, don’t actually like what you’re saying and can’t understand why someone else would want to be doing this or how it can be so important.

I’ve talked already about why something in the public domain isn’t always accurate or helpful. I’m going to talk about Felix Ngole. He was on a course training to go into social work. He put comments regarding sexuality on his *Facebook* page and was subsequently taken off the course. The press coverage was very strong that he was taken off the course because of his Christian beliefs, and that this shows that Christians can no longer express their beliefs, in particular relating to orthodox views of marriage and sexual behaviour. When you read the judgement (para 129), it says that the university’s actions is **not** argued to be justified by Mr Ngole’s conduct in making the postings by itself i.e. the university is not saying they removed him from the course because of what he posted. The judge goes on to say that, if that had been the reasons, it is hard to maintain that would have been proportionate, i.e. it would have been an unlawful over-reaction as the seriousness of that breach and the seriousness of the consequences do not look remotely commensurate. The judge is saying, that’s not how it’s argued, and if the university had argued that I’m going to have a big problem with them as it would not be a proportionate response to remove him from the course for what he posted.

The university's position, which the tribunal accepted, was that it was not because of what he posted, i.e. not a question of his religious beliefs nor his manifestation of those religious beliefs, but because he showed insufficient understanding of the impact he would have on people – he was perhaps a bit belligerent about it, lacking the gentleness and respect we're told in 1 Peter 3:15 to demonstrate when we communicate. The university tried to talk to him about it - you're going into social work and making judgements upon people, they need to have confidence in you; when you're saying things that can impact upon other people, you can't just say as a solvent for whatever you do, it's in the Bible therefore I can do it, you have to show some insight into the potential impact upon other people.

Because of his difficulty in doing that – bearing in mind that when he goes into social work he will be acting in a quasi-judicial function – that was why the university had a problem. If he had turned round and said I understand what you're saying, how some people wouldn't like what I have posted, and I will bear it in mind going forward, or when I go into social work I may be in a context where it's not appropriate to share my beliefs on sexual behaviour and I will respect that. But he doesn't, his stance was understood to be one of confrontation backed up with a media campaign against the university - affirming that this is someone who doesn't get the need to be winsome, to act gently and with respect. It should not have been reported in the press, particularly by those wanting to encourage Christians, as a decision that shows you cannot share your faith; the judge said the opposite. Another reason to be wary is that almost all of these cases turn on their facts.

Management decisions

Many cases never reach the courts at all. I have cases where employers make decisions that I would have considered inconceivable twenty, ten, five years ago. This is generally a matter of education for employers. These are not cases that tend to reach the courts because we have the chance to engage, educate, get the workplace to actually change.

Employers may have a misunderstanding of the law, or may misapply it, perhaps they read the media reports and think this is something they can't allow. But few of the cases that are reported are cases where there is a proper infringement of the religious rights of Christians; most of them are where someone has overstepped the boundaries. In workplaces throughout the country every day there are wonderful conversations taking place about Jesus. People are not taking offence, they're not bringing claims, they're not being sacked, it's only a very small proportion of situations where there's confrontation, generally where people have overstepped the mark. There is still a real thirst and a hunger for knowing about Jesus.

Bad outcomes

There are bad cases and there are good cases. There are cases that are brought that should never be brought. I've been approached by organisations and asked whether I'd bring a case and I've said, no, this is not a good case, this is not helpful for the gospel, do not bring it. So the organisation has decided to bring it anyway but go somewhere else, they have brought it and lost it and it was not helpful for the gospel. It is not unjust for a just God to let a bad case lose. It doesn't mean the judge is against Christians, it may just mean it was a bad case. There are sometimes good cases that are badly argued, the best evidence doesn't come out; there can be some truth in the adage that whoever wins the case at the end of the day is the person with the best lawyer - it doesn't always come down to the facts. Sometimes there is a good case that is well argued that comes before a bad judge and is lost, but those are a very small minority of cases.

On the one hand there are employers who are extremely intolerant, they don't understand Christianity or are hostile to it and they want to prevent someone from sharing the gospel in the workplace. On the other hand you have the employee who doesn't know where to draw an appropriate line, or who sees the Bible as an "*automatic solvent*" for whatever they do - that I can say to you whatever I like and the fact that it's in the Bible gives me an automatic get-out-of-jail-free card. These extremes on

either side don't change the factual reality of the freedoms that we have. There are also some very helpful legal authorities.

Legal decisions

We've mentioned some European Court decisions, but there are also some domestic authorities. One of the most famous is the case of *Redman Bate* involving a couple of ladies proclaiming the gospel in the public square. The judge in that case confirmed that free speech includes not only the inoffensive but the irritating, the contentious, the eccentric, the heretical, the unwelcome and the provocative, provided it does not tend to provoke violence; that freedom only to speak inoffensively is not worth having.

The case of *Smith and Trafford Housing Trust 2012* was another one involving *Facebook* comments. Mr. Smith made a comment about same sex marriage, saying "*an equality too far?*" Some of his colleagues complained about that. The judge confirmed that the frank but lawful expression of religious or political views may frequently cause a degree of upset and even offence to those of deeply held contrary views, even when none is intended by the speaker, but this is a necessary price for freedom of speech.

Culture

This brings me back to the cultural point. Even if we have the best legal protection in the world to speak about the gospel, we are doing it within a culture. We have some similarities with our cousins across the pond in the USA, e.g. the CEO of *Mozilla*, a very large organisation, gave \$1000 in the early nineties to an organisation campaigning for traditional marriage. When this came out in 2012 there was a concerted media campaign that he was therefore an inappropriate person to be heading up an organisation like *Mozilla*. The campaign was successful, not because of anything done illegally – in the US there is a First Amendment right of religion, and also the concept of reasonable

accommodation for religious belief, which we don't have in this country - but a fear of shareholders, a fear of public perception and how you might be perceived as an organisation within the culture you're in. It hasn't always been this way, and it may well change in the future, but the cultural pressure is going to continue in one direction, certainly for a little while.

That said, it can be helpful to remind ourselves of where we've come from as well. In 1981 there was a case of *Saunders v Scottish National Camps Association*. In the judgement the written reason for dismissal was that "*information was received that you indulge in Christianity. At a camp accommodating large numbers of schoolchildren and teenagers, it is totally unsuitable to employ any person with such tendencies.*" The dismissal was held to be fair. I have told a slight fib there, and have used the word Christianity in place of homosexuality, but this may help show how the culture has shifted. Would we now say that it's totally unsuitable to employ any person with such tendencies at a camp with schoolchildren and teenagers?

Where next?

What do we do? Fortunately to help people we have this little guide called ***Speak Up***. It covers many different areas - in your home, on the Internet, your workplace. There is a small easy-to-read version, and there is a slightly longer version of a hundred pages. Please read it and pass it on to someone who needs to be encouraged. The purpose of ***Speak up*** is to explain there are these freedoms and rights we've got.

I'm not going to say that if you talk about your faith in the workplace you're at no risk of dismissal. But the risk is less than you might think, and we have to bear in mind how important and precious the gospel is and what we are expected to do as Christians. ***Speak Up*** is aimed to try and encourage you to take action; your faith is not simply a private matter – there are people perishing around you who need to hear the good news.

Wise actions

The cases and coverage show there is an interest, and that's my personal experience as well, people want to hear about what you believe, they want to hear about Jesus. At the moment evangelism is perhaps not about getting people into church buildings, because people are pushing against coming into a church. It may be more about creating a church where you happen to be and the workplace is a fantastic area for that - often your colleagues can't get away from you! You've got social contact as well – *“let's have a coffee after work”*, *“what did you do over the weekend”*.

People that you work with generally, I hope they will like you, and will be a bit more open to what you have to say, and we have to do it, because if we don't the landscape will look very different; the more reluctance there is to share our faith the more unusual it becomes. If somebody were to go through their working life and only on one occasion does somebody talk to them about Jesus, that's an unusual event. If once a week lots of different people are speaking up about their faith and they come across it, it's not going to jar or seem unusual, so they won't take the same level of offence, employers will become far more used to it, and we start reshaping and reclaiming the culture. We need to get a bit more vocal, not getting quieter.

How and why should we share?

People have prayed you into the position you are currently occupying. Are you a librarian (or whatever your role is) who happens to be a Christian, or are you a Christian who happens to be in your position – and that position is your particular mission field.

If you're in the workplace, you need to think about who do you need to honour. Your primary reason for being there is to work, it's not to tell people about Jesus, but that doesn't mean you can't take advantage of the opportunities. But you need to honour God, honour your employer,

customers, clients, people you're dealing with, and your family – juggling all these things. It's possible to avoid harassment in the way you talk to somebody about your faith but it is never going to be possible to avoid allegations of harassment. An allegation that you've done something offensive because of something someone may well have misunderstood, or they choose to lie about what you've said because of their hostility to the gospel. When you're doing something that a person indicates is unwelcome, then the wise thing to do is to step back and not pursue it or you ask them, would there be a better time to have this conversation? How about coming round to dinner, or we go out for a cup of tea, and let's have this conversation there instead. Do it with gentleness and respect.

The more there is a two way discussion the better. If you can take them on a journey you have travelled rather than wagging a finger in somebody's face, they'll be more receptive. Rather than saying "*this is what Christians believe*" say "*can I tell you how I became a Christian*". Then after telling them your story, then tell them what your beliefs are.

Christian opinions and expressions are better protected than other expressions of belief. So if you were to talk to somebody about what do you think about coming to church, that probably has no legal protection at all, if the person doesn't like that conversation. But if you were to say to somebody, "*I'm a follower of Jesus, who do you think Jesus was?*" that has legal protection because it is a religious belief and attains to religious beliefs. So establish the relevance of your religious beliefs to the conversation, rather than just skirting around the subject.

Ask questions: what do they believe, who do they think Jesus was. Adapt to the circumstances: where it is a vulnerable person or you're in a position of authority you need to act far more wisely and delicately. You won't win everybody over. The disciples when they moved into towns and people that were not open to the gospel, they were told to move on. Whether someone will come to faith in Christ, it's an act of the Spirit, it will be revealed to them, it's not a matter of our personal persuasion.

Am I here saying everything is rosy, go back to where you happen to be, tell everybody about Jesus then everything will be great? No! Christians who do not leave their faith at home are at greater risk of losing their jobs and greater marginalisation. But we do have massive freedoms, and the freedoms we currently have are probably not going to increase in the short term. Perhaps we've not fully used the freedoms that we've had before. Where there is opposition that's not necessarily a bad thing because opposition itself creates gospel opportunities, such as Paul's appeal in Rome.

Do we need to say anything at all? We are told that the stones will cry out (Luke 19:37) but that's not the purpose of the stones, it is our purpose, we should take responsibility and do it ourselves. So please obtain a copy of the booklet, read it, be encouraged, and when you read a case about how a Christian in the UK is being persecuted or badly treated in the workplace, take stock and think. My personal view is that the crisis this country is facing is not the persecution of Christians, it's rather a crisis of Christians being afraid to tell others about their faith. We would rather cling on to the freedoms that we have and not cause offence, hope that no-one will notice or challenge us, and then step away from the act of personal evangelism, the very important task of saving lives.

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The ***Speak Up*** booklet, compiled by the *Evangelical Alliance* and the *Lawyers' Christian Fellowship*, is available from the Alliance at 176 Copenhagen Street, London, N1 0ST and can be downloaded from www.eauk.org