

Autumn 2012

CHRISTIAN LIBRARIAN



The Journal of the
Librarians' Christian Fellowship

CONTENTS INCLUDE

- **SATURDAY 6 OCTOBER 2012:
ANNUAL LECTURE IN BRISTOL**
- **FINDING WORK IN SPITE OF THE WORK PROGRAMME**
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EVENTS AT A GLANCE

●THURSDAY 6 SEPTEMBER 2012: VISIT TO HODDER AND STOUGHTON

338 Euston Road, London, NW1.
Details: Graham Hedges 020 8599
1310.

●SATURDAY 6 OCTOBER 2012: ANNUAL PUBLIC LECTURE

**Redcliffe Anglican/Methodist
Church Centre, Bristol.** Speaker:
Robert Hicks, *Creative Publishing*,
on *Lost Christian Letters of the
First Century*. Details: p. 8.

●SATURDAY 28 APRIL 2013: ANNUAL CONFERENCE: “BEYOND LIBRARIANSHIP”

**Methodist Central Hall, Warwick
Lane, Coventry.** Speakers: Prof.
Donald G. Davis, Jr., Heather Lewis.
Details: p. 11.

●SATURDAY 19 OCTOBER 2013: ANNUAL PUBLIC LECTURE

**New Road Baptist Church, Bonn
Square, Oxford.** Speaker: Rev. Dr.
Michael Ward on C.S. Lewis.
Details: p. 11.

PRAYER NOTES FOR AUTUMN 2012

PLEASE PRAY FOR

●LCF's Executive Committee as it considers the response of members to the recent postal ballot on changes suggested by our review group.

●Our forthcoming activities including the annual public lecture and next year's conference and lecture.

●The work of our friends at *Transform Work UK* as they start a “*new beginning*” in their work.

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

●The Christian communications media and the work of booksellers and suppliers represented in *Christian Resources Together*.

●The work of our friends in the (American) *Fellowship of Christian Librarians and Information Specialists* and their annual meetings during conferences of the *American Library Association*.

●The work of our friends in *Christians at Work* who are celebrating their seventieth anniversary this year.



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

MARGARET KEELING considers the breakdown of community spirit in contemporary society and looks at the controversial role of volunteers in providing library services

NO SIMPLE SOLUTIONS

'Civic society has slipped into a state of decay' – shouted the **Times**' headlines on Niall Ferguson's précis of his last Reith Lecture.¹ Ferguson states that as a society, we are no longer involved in our communities. Only one in ten people are involved in any sort of community decision making, and the percentage of people volunteering regularly has dropped to 29%. For many people contact by social networks has taken the place of *'real'* relationships. He believes this *'living apart'*, from our neighbours and localities is a result of an all embracing state having taken over activities and responsibilities previously undertaken by *'voluntary associations and institutions'*. Only active and involved citizenship can help and restore our society, through *'participating in the wider group beyond our families'*.

Ferguson rightly suggests that volunteering is good for us and for our society in terms of getting things done which would not otherwise happen. LCF stands within an evangelical tradition which historically has embraced social action out of concern for the whole person. We have a long history of supplying professional skills and advice for Christian library and information collections at home and overseas.

Currently within library and information work we face a dilemma over the changes in the role of volunteering in library provision. There are signs of a move away from using volunteers to supplement and enhance core services towards job substitution.

The pragmatic argument is that when funding is decimated it may be the only way to keep small community libraries open. On the plus side, there is often the potential for a greater role in the

¹ Niall Ferguson, Civic society has slipped into a state of decay, The Times, 10 July 2012, p.20

'governance' of the library as part of its community. People volunteer out of a sense of the value of libraries to communities and one of the joys of retirement from paid employment is the ability, through volunteering to give something back. Small charities and organisations too have always relied on volunteers to deliver their library and information services.

In February 2010 CILIP Council changed the wording of its policy statement on volunteering in libraries as it was *'too rigid and failed to reflect present day realities where significant expenditure reductions had to be made'*. The concern felt by librarians over this ambiguous stance resulted in further debate, and on 2 July 2012 CILIP moved to a clearer statement that *'CILIP will not assist in recruiting or training volunteers who will be used to substitute the role of qualified, trained library and information worker'*²

What is our stance in this debate as professionals and as a Christian workplace organisation? Although much of the above applies to public and school libraries, it also suggests an underlying devaluing of professional skills at a wider level. And there are issues of social justice. Small libraries in affluent areas may easily attract community support and volunteers and survive. A small library in an area of urban deprivation and decay is unlikely to attract this support.

In today's economic climate, there are no simple solutions. As Christians we are called to show care and compassion to our colleagues who fear for their jobs. Equally we are called to stand alongside those managers who have to implement or challenge unacceptable practices, yet at the same time, remain open to finding solutions and ensuring services survive. Here is a ministry for LCF to care, pray, support individuals and stand for the value of the *'librarian as an active intermediary between user and resources'* (**UNESCO Public Library Manifesto**)

D. Margaret Keeling, BA, MA, MCLIP, PhD, is President of the *Librarians' Christian Fellowship* and worked until her retirement as Head of Services for Libraries, Culture and Adult Community Learning for *Essex County Council*.

² See Comment, CILIP Update June 2012 p.29 Also www.cilip.org.uk/news 2.7.2012

THE SECOND WORD

LOUISE MANNERS expresses doubts about the effectiveness of a current scheme for job seekers and describes her own experiences while looking for a job

FINDING WORK IN SPITE OF THE WORK PROGRAMME



At the 2013 LCF conference Heather Lewis, Librarian, HMP The Mount, Bovingdon, Hertfordshire, will be speaking on redundancy, unemployment and using library skills outside the traditional library and information sectors.

Significant performance statistics on the still fairly new Work Programme are due out in August 2012. The Work Programme has a Payment by Results model whereby organisations have bid to cover their costs from the results they achieve. It was anticipated that use of social media would change the experience of job seeking completely. What has happened is that job seekers who do not have access to computers find themselves locked out of the system, but prospective employers have lots more opportunities to

check up on prospective employees before they start work. A job seeker who enrolls on the Work Programme is supported for two years.

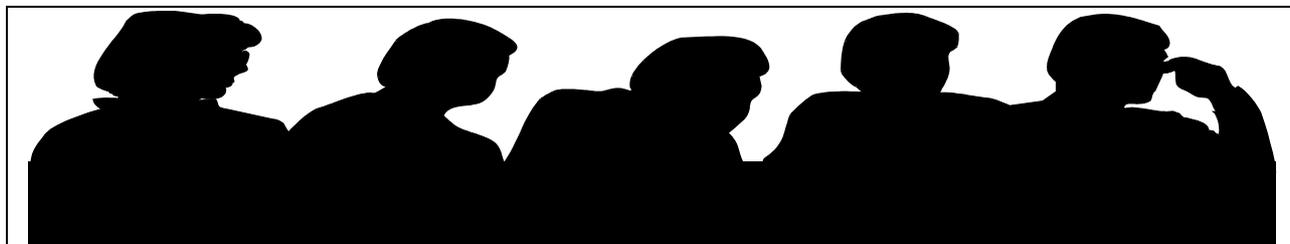
My own experience of the Work Programme, which involved finding work in spite of the efforts of the Work Programme staff, is not encouraging. I had volunteered to go on the Work Programme. The centre which I attended had only one member of staff who spoke and wrote good English when I started. The English of the other members of staff did improve and new members of staff were recruited with good English. During my time attending the centre I was given the wrong time for an interview. I was sent to an interview near The Oval for 11 am. When I arrived I was informed that the interview was scheduled for 9:30 am. The Work Programme staff sent my CV away to be updated. When it came back they did not check it before they returned it to me because they would have noticed that all my qualifications up to degree level and my first degree had been removed.

During my time attending the centre appointments to attend the centre were cancelled during my journey to the centre. I would arrive and there would be no one to see. A training session I attended was pitched at a too high level for the participants. The trainer with excellent English used words I did not understand, and certainly not most of the other participants for whom English was not their first language. The trainer should have also been informed that because it was Ramadan most of the participants would be fasting. The content of the training session was delivered very fast and those fasting appeared to be having difficulty following. I considered that job seekers were better supported by the job centre than by the Work Programme.

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

**JOIN US IN BRISTOL FOR LCF'S
ANNUAL PUBLIC LECTURE**



SATURDAY 6 OCTOBER 2012
from 2.30.p.m.

**REDCLIFFE ANGLICAN/METHODIST
CHURCH CENTRE, PREWETT STREET,
BRISTOL, BS1 6PB**

GUEST SPEAKER

ROBERT HICKS

Creative Publishing

**LOST CHRISTIAN LETTERS OF
THE FIRST CENTURY**

SPEAKER AND SUBJECTS

“Lost Christian Letters of the First Century” is the title of the *Librarians' Christian Fellowship's* Annual Public Lecture to be held on **Saturday 6 October 2012** in the **Redcliffe Anglican/Methodist Church Centre, Prewett Street, Bristol, BS1 6PB, from 2.30.p.m.**

Guest speaker **Robert Hicks**, founder and proprietor of *Creative Publishing*, is our guest speaker and will be giving his talk in two parts (a) The echoes of lost First Century documents in our New Testament and (b) A reconstruction of St. Paul's Letter to the Romans. This two-fold talk is through the eyes of a publisher of thirty five years' standing.

Robert's story is itself extraordinary. Born during a bombing raid in February 1941; born into the overcrowded slums of Birmingham; born severely tongue-tied and dyslexic; born into a family of ten siblings – four of whom he has never seen; deserted by his mother when he was eleven; physically and emotionally abused by his father; he was trapped in his own mind.

Leaving school at the age of fifteen, unable to recite the letters of the alphabet, he accepted the only job available as an errand boy for a family grocer. In spite of all these obstacles, he became one of the most successful retailers in the country, before becoming a publisher out of a *“love for books”*.

The story of Robert's life has been published as a paperback

book, James Hastings' *“Thank You King James”* (Day One, £6.00, ISBN 978-1846252327), which will be available at the meeting.

LUNCH ARRANGEMENTS

We have not arranged an official “morning activity” prior to the lecture this year but it is planned that those who are able to get to Bristol in time will have lunch together in a local restaurant, from about 12.00. noon.

If you would like to join the lunch party, please inform the Secretary. There is no need to book to attend the afternoon lecture itself.

TRAVEL

Bristol is ideally located close to Britain's motorway network at the junction of the M4 and M5. Rail communications are equally good with a fast inter-city service linking with London Paddington in only one and a half hours. Other inter-city services from Temple Meads and Parkway Stations serve South Wales, the Midlands, the North, the West Country and the South Coast (the latter trains from Temple Meads only).

We trust that Bristol will prove to be a convenient venue, especially to members and friends living in our London, Southern, Midlands, Welsh

and Western regions. A quick glance at the national rail timetable reveals that it is only one hour and forty minutes from Birmingham; one and a quarter hours from Exeter, and one hour from Cardiff.

The venue has been chosen for its close proximity to Temple Meads station. Please note, however, that a few services only connect with Parkway station which is in a different part of the city.

JOIN US IN BRISTOL

Our meeting promises to be an informative and stimulating time together. We are looking forward to organising our first major event in Bristol in eighteen years. However, attendance is **not** restricted to librarians, and all are welcome to attend. Admission is free although donations towards the cost of the event will be gratefully received.

Please help us to make the lecture known by bringing the arrangements to the attention of friends and colleagues likely to be interested.

Further details of the lecture, and of the wider work of the *Librarians' Christian Fellowship*, are available from The Secretary, **Graham Hedges, 34 Thurlestone Avenue, Ilford, Essex, IG3 9DU. Tel. 020 8599 1310. E mail secretary@librarianscf.org.uk Web site www.librarianscf.org.uk**

OTHER ATTRACTIONS

The following Bristolian attractions may be of interest to LCF visitors, especially those who might want to combine attendance at the lecture with a weekend break in the city.

The church of **St. Mary Redcliffe**, in Colston Parade, was built between the 12th - 15th centuries and was allegedly described by Queen Elizabeth I as "*the fairest, goodliest and most famous parish church in all England*". It is renowned for the beauty of its gothic architecture and the height of its spire which is said to be the third tallest of England's parish churches.

On 6 October there will be a full peal of bells between 9.00. a.m. - 2.00. p.m.

Guide books can be purchased from the church shop and information can be found at <http://stmaryredcliffe.co.uk>

The recently opened **M Shed** museum at Princes Wharf, Wapping Road, located on the historic dockside, tells the story of Bristol from prehistoric times to the present day. More information: <http://mshed.org>

John Wesley's **New Room**, at 36 The Horsefair, is the oldest Methodist chapel in the world and can be seen just as it was in the eighteenth century. It was built by the founder of the Methodist movement at the time he began preaching outdoors to the poor of Bristol. More information: www.newroombristol.org.uk

LIBRARIANS' CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP NEWSLETTER



From The Secretary: Graham Hedges, Hon. FCLIP, MCLIP, 34 Thurlestone Avenue, Ilford, Essex, IG3 9DU. Tel. 020 8599 1310
E-mail secretary@librarianscf.org.uk;
Web www.librarianscf.org.uk

LCF EVENTS FOR 2013

Please book the date for next year's Annual Conference. We will be returning to the **Methodist Central Hall, Warwick Lane, Coventry** on **Saturday 20 April 2013**. The theme will be *Beyond Librarianship* and our speakers will be our Life Vice President Dr. **Donald G. Davis, Jr.**, Emeritus Professor of Library History at the *University of Texas at Austin* and **Heather Lewis**, Librarian, *HMP The Mount*, Bovingdon, Hertfordshire.

Heather's address will deal with such topics as redundancy, unemployment and using library skills outside the traditional library and information sectors while Donald

will be speaking on the theme of Retirement.

2013 will mark the fiftieth anniversary of the death of the famous apologist and novelist **C.S. Lewis** and our Annual Lecture will take a new look at the enduring influence and legacy of this noted Christian writer. Dr. **Michael Ward**, author of *Planet Narnia*, will be our guest speaker and the lecture will be held on **Saturday afternoon 19 October 2013** at the **New Road Baptist Church, Bonn Square, Oxford**.

ELECTRONIC MATTERS

LCF has had a group on the social networking site *Facebook* for some years but at the time of writing we only have fourteen members. We lost most of our existing members when the group was migrated to a new format!

If you would like to join or re-join the *Facebook* group you will need to join *Facebook* (if you are not already a member), search for *Librarians' Christian Fellowship*, and then send a request to join the group.

David Matsweru, a member of our *Facebook* group, tells us that he has started using *OpenBiblio* for cataloguing. Is there anyone with experience in using this free on-line source? David needs help.

School librarian Lisa Gonzalez-Newton, another member of the group, has posted that she is doing a

blog on issues of faith and librarianship.

To respond to David's request for help, or to learn more about Lisa's blog, please contact our Web Site manager Mary Wood at mary@the-woods.org.uk

Mary Wood, who has managed LCF's web site and related activities for several years, is interested in finding someone who can take over her role, although her official term of office has until April 2013 to run. If you have the necessary ability to maintain and update the Fellowship's web site, and would be willing to assist the Fellowship in this way, please contact Mary for more details.

A sample back issue of ***Christian Librarian*** (not the current edition) can be found in the "Publications" section of our web site at www.librarianscf.org.uk It can also now be read in the "Reading Box" on the web site of my local church, *Barking Baptist Church*, at <http://barkingbaptist.blogspot.co.uk>

PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL NEWS

- Past LCF speaker **Stewart Henderson** is the author of ***Poetry Emotion: Fifty original poems to spark an imaginative approach to topical values*** (Barnabas In Schools, £6.99, ISBN 978-1841018935).

Intended for use in the

classroom, Stewart's book includes poems that address such issues as "Who Am I?", "Who is My Neighbour?" and "What's So Special About the Bible?" and comes with notes for teachers.

LCF readers will especially enjoy *Book Ends*, a poem about library closures, written from a child's point of view.

- Congratulations are due to two friends of the Fellowship who recently received awards for their services to the Christian book trade.

LCF associate member **Eddie Olliffe** received the *Long Service Award: Supplier*. Eddie was previously head of the *Wesley Owen* bookshops, spent seven years working for the Christian charity CWR, and is now working in a consultancy role within the book trade.

Past ***Christian Librarian*** contributor **Guy Marshall** was given the *Long Service Award: Retailer*. Guy worked for many years as manager of the Christian bookshop in St. Albans which, for a time, shared premises with the *St. Albans Music Centre*, owned by LCF's founder Elizabeth Barber.

Eddie and Guy are both trustees of the *Christian Book Promotion Trust*, sponsors of the *Speaking Volumes* library scheme.

The awards were presented at the *Christian Resources Together* retreat held in June at the *Hayes Conference Centre*, Swanwick, Derbyshire.

CHRISTIAN RESOURCES TOGETHER

Eddie Olliffe has sent us his report on *Christian Resources Together 2012*, the book trade event held at the *Hayes Conference Centre*.

Almost three hundred delegates and over fifty suppliers met together for this year's event. The most memorable aspect of the two days was the chance to hear three really engaging speakers.

Opening the retreat, **Mark Stibbe**, of the *Father's House Trust*, described *Borders Bookstores* as "an icon of a bygone age". He spoke of the book trade facing huge challenges and being in "the perfect storm requiring prayerful and careful navigation".

On the second day, **Charlie Cleverley**, Rector of *St. Aldate's*, Oxford, was the guest devotional speaker and commenced with "God has not yet finished with the printed book".

Alister McGrath, of *King's College*, London, was the final speaker. He is the co-author of the best-selling *The Dawkins Delusion* (SPCK, £7.99, ISBN 978-0281059270) and he commented first on the Diamond Jubilee of C.S. Lewis' *Mere Christianity*, whose spiritual impact has been "simply colossal".

Professor McGrath moved on to discuss the development of the "New Atheism" kicked off by Richard Dawkins and Christopher Hitchens in 2006. Ironically, the public debate

had rekindled interest in God and, as a result, it is now much easier to talk about faith and spirituality. There seems less enthusiasm for the new atheism, which indeed seems to be fading, but there remains in society a lingering interest in who God is and in the "big questions".

CHRISTIAN MARKETPLACE

Another Christian periodical is biting the dust! *Premier Christian Media* and *CCP Ltd.* Have announced that their bi-monthly book trade magazine *Christian Marketplace* is to cease publication after a final September 2012 issue.

The publishers have explained that they have reluctantly reached this conclusion "as a consequence of increasing costs outpacing revenues, declining numbers of high street Christian bookshops and the rise of digital sales".

However, the consumer magazine *The Christian Marketplace*, provided free of charge via Christian bookshops and given away with copies of *Christianity* magazine, will continue to be published on a twice-yearly basis.

Premier/CCP are also launching a new bi-monthly magazine *Childrenswork* intended for Christians who work in this "strategically important ministry".

NEW BEGINNING

Our friends at *Transform Work UK* report that the organisation is facing a “*new beginning*” and that they have re-organised themselves into two groups.

The first will continue to work directly with and supporting Christian Workplace Groups and Professional Groups. (Past LCF speaker) **Ros Turner** and **Trevor Payne** are leading this stream of activity. In order to increase their effectiveness they are developing a team of nationwide ambassadors who will be able to advise and assist Christian groups throughout the UK.

Their second activity stream is concerned with delivering workplace ministry initiatives and is led by **Adrian Miles**. This involves the delivery of workshops and presentations, including the Management of Workplace Stress and Developing Christian Workplace Groups. They also hope to be able to provide advice on career development and potential redundancy issues in the near future.

These two delivery aims are supported by their Executive and Communications team led by **Jayne Payne**, **Michael Coveney** (LCF's recent conference speaker) and **Jeff Steady**, which will also include ongoing development and maintenance of the web site.

You can obtain more information about *Transform Work UK* from TWUK, 1 Christie Drive,

Hinchingbrooke Park, Huntingdon, Cambs., PE29 6JD. Tel. 01480 390 165. E mail office@transformworkuk.org

FIFTY YEARS AGO

It is good to know that, more than a decade before the *Librarians' Christian Fellowship* came into existence, Christian librarians were encouraging their fellow believers to support and make use of the public library system.

Writing in September 1962, L.M. Bickerton assured his readers that “*the conception of a public library as a disseminator of doubtful literature, or at the best, of grubby tattered volumes ... is now twenty years out of date*”. Since World War II libraries had been regarded as an essential part of educational and social life, with a general increase in staffing, book funds and financial support.

Turning his attention to the provision of Christian literature in libraries, Mr. Bickerton explained that in most libraries Dewey class 200-299 would include recent publications representing all shades of opinion. Book provision would reflect demand and “*if there were regular demand for evangelical literature it would be provided and the library staff would welcome suggestions of books which might be purchased. Readers interested in spiritualism make good use of the public library: why not*”

Evangelicals?”

Reference libraries were given a special mention and it was suggested that these would normally include such major works as Young's **Concordance**, Hastings' **Dictionary of the Bible**, Keller's **The Bible as History**, and many of the translations of the Bible published since 1611.

The late Len Bickerton served as the Borough Librarian and Curator of Worthing. *Books for All: making use of the public library* appeared in **Crusade** for September 1962, pp. 20-21. His later article *Forty Years in Public Libraries: a Christian's story 1930-1974* appeared in **Christian Librarian**, No. 21, 1997, pp. 24-35.

FIFTY SHADES OF GRACE

EL James' 'erotic' best-seller **Fifty Shades of Grey** continues to break sales records with over a million copies sold in the UK alone since publication in April.

Now the Christian publisher *Darton, Longman and Todd* is offering readers the chance to dip into a more realistic exploration of sex, betrayal, and complicated relationships through tweeting a series of extracts from Karen Jones' book **Babe's Bible**, on a Twitter page called **@50ShadesGrace**

David Maloney, DLT's Editorial Director explains, *“We wanted to present **Babe's Bible** as a worthy*

*alternative. It's a book for women, it deals with sex – but in a far more real and responsible way than **Fifty Shades of Grey**. It's the first book in a trilogy – so the story is not over yet”.*

@50ShadesGrace already has over three hundred and fifty 'followers' and DLT are continuing to tweet fifty short extracts from the book over the next few weeks and will be making a free chapter available on-line and running a competition for some **Babe's Bible** 'goodie' bags!

To become part of the story visit **@50ShadesGrace** at www.twitter.com

CURRENT AWARENESS

- Martin Saunders' article *Grey Areas: How explicit literature went mainstream* looks at this year's publishing success story: EL James' **Fifty Shades of Grey** (Arrow, £7.99, ISBN 978-0099579939) and its two sequels.

Described as *“Mummy Porn”* by the media, James' 'erotic' novel is said to have sold more than ten million copies worldwide after having originally been written as a piece of **Twilight** fan fiction and published on a web site. The success of the book has helped to make sexually explicit material socially acceptable and other publishers are known to be rushing releasing similar titles.

Saunders expresses concern

that so many readers want to read badly written fiction that seems to suggest that, against all expectations, women really want to be sexually oppressed and mistreated after all.

The response of the Church, however, should not be to campaign against books of this kind but to promote a more positive and healthier approach to sex and relationships.

The article appears in **Christianity** for August 2012, pp. 14-15.

- Karen Jones' novel **Babe's Bible: Gorgeous Grace** (Darton, Longman and Todd, £10.99, ISBN 978-0232529203) was written in response to her daughter and other people who believe that the Bible is boring.

The novel tackles real issues in today's secular world, and tells the story of four women living in the first and twenty-first centuries. The author hopes that her book will be able to break into the mainstream media by addressing such issues as adultery, sex, friendship and mourning.

Amaris Cole's article *A Bible for Babes* appears in the **Church of England Newspaper**, England on Sunday, 27 May 2012, p. E5.

- John Capon's *C.S. Lewis: 'the vernacular is the real test'* marks the seventieth anniversary of the publication of Lewis' **Broadcast Talks**, later re-published as part of

the collection **Mere Christianity**.

The Problem of Pain (Collins, £7.99, ISBN 978-0007461264) Lewis' early work of Christian apologetics, brought him to the attention of the director of religious broadcasting at the BBC who requested his help in declaring "*the truth about God and his relation to men*".

Lewis' first series of talks was broadcast live on the BBC Home Service in 1941 and was followed by several others. **Mere Christianity** (Collins, £7.99, ISBN 978-0007461216) went on to sell twelve million copies and is recognised as one of the most influential religious books of the twentieth century.

C.S. Lewis responded to theological criticisms of his book by arguing, "*Any fool can write learned language. The vernacular is the real test. If you can't turn your faith into it, then either you don't understand it or you don't believe in it.*"

The article appears in the **Church Times** for 13 July 2012, p. 14.

- Sarah Meyrick's *Telling Tales About Alpha* profiles the author of a recent controversial novel which presents a thinly disguised critique of the Alpha Course pioneered by *Holy Trinity Brompton*.

Alex Preston's **The Revelations** (Faber, £12.99, ISBN 978-0571277582) tells the story of four ex-Cambridge friends who become caught up in a highly attractive religious movement known as "*The Course*".

The author claims that “*Alpha doesn't offer a belief that is long-lasting or profound. It is picking up on a phase in life*”.

He is not an atheist, as wrongly assumed by the **London Evening Standard**, but struggles with his faith and prefers an approach that allows a greater place for doubt and uncertainty.

The article appears in the **Church Times** for 24 February 2012, pp. 20-21.

- Mark Wood's *Royal Devotion* reviews the recent *Lambeth Palace Library* exhibition “*Royal Devotion and the Book of Common Prayer*”.

The exhibition marked this year's three hundred and fiftieth anniversary of the 1662 edition of the **Book of Common Prayer** but also explored earlier links between the monarchy and religious devotion.

Highlights of the display included a 1549 printing of one of the earliest versions of the prayer book of the reformed English church created by Henry VIII as the price of his divorce.

Other items included a **Book of Hours** owned by Richard III, possibly present in his tent on the eve of the Battle of Bosworth, and a prayer book used at the wedding of Queen Victoria.

The author argues that, while Queen Elizabeth II is a sincere Christian believer, some of her predecessors have been “*thoroughgoing rascals*” who have viewed the Church as a nuisance, a cash cow, or a department of state!

The article appears in the **Methodist Recorder** for 31 May 2012, p. 16.

- Having written in an earlier edition of **Christian Librarian** about religious themes in the songs of Paul Simon, I was interested to read an article about the singer/songwriter's meeting with the late John Stott.

Simon visited Stott in his London flat in 2004 after reading a newspaper article about the well known evangelical leader and thinker. Simon was impressed by Stott although the latter did not change his way of thinking.

Although Paul Simon claims not to be '*religious*', he admits that God is often mentioned in his songs and that he enjoys thinking about '*spirituality*' although he does not understand it. You can read the article *Paul Simon: 'God comes up a lot in my songs'* at <http://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/music/interviews/2012/paulsimon-january09.html>

MEN IN CAPES

When I was at school most of my teachers disapproved of comics. No doubt they believed that their pupils should be devoting their time to more worthy reading material. Undaunted by their disapproval, I became an avid reader of American comic books, and even began to write and distribute my own comics featuring a not very original range of super-heroes of my own.

Several decades later, with the advent of so-called graphic novels and a more adult approach to the writing and illustration of comics, the humble comic has become more intellectually respectable, although some critics still take exception to the graphic level of violence found in many titles.

Some readers have noticed implicit religious themes in super-hero comics and this subject is considered in Greg Garrett's ***Holy Superheroes!*** (Westminster John Knox Press, £10.99, ISBN 978-0664231910).

This and similar themes were explored in a recent talk by Mark Meynell, of *All Soul's Church*, Langham Place, entitled *Why We Love Men in Capes: super-heroes as western yearnings in a post-messianic age* and given at the *London Institute for Contemporary Christianity* on Monday 2 July 2012..

Mark argued that there is a link between contemporary super-heroes and the heroes of mythology, such as Achilles. Super-hero stories resonate with the deepest yearnings of the human person, including the need for a Saviour figure. The creation of super-villains such as the Joker and Two-Face can be seen as a search for a “*vocabulary of evil*” in an age that is reluctant to use words like “*right*” and “*wrong*”.

The emergence of super-hero comics in the 1930s can be seen as a response to the de-personalisation of the American city – as reflected in Batman's Gotham City.

Super-heroes fall into two main categories. Super-heroes “*from*

below” include Spiderman, an ordinary adolescent who gained his powers from the chance bite of a radioactive spider. Characters like Superman - the “*incarnational alien*” from a higher world - are “*heroes from above*”.

The speaker continued by considering “*rumours of redemption*” in super-hero stories and drawing parallels with “*the one true super-hero*” - Jesus himself.

The idea of the super-hero as a redeemer figure willing to lay down his life for his contemporaries crops up in the new Batman film ***The Dark Knight Rises***. I enjoyed the film on a recent visit to the cinema although the recent tragic shootings during a showing in Florida again raise the vexed question of how far violence on the screen is related to violence in the real world.

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THE LION, THE WITCH AND THE WARDROBE ON STAGE



SUE RUGG enjoys seeing C.S. Lewis' children's classic performed on the London stage on Saturday 16 June 2012

On a very blustery Saturday in June ten of us escaped to the land of Narnia, although when we arrived there we discovered that it was always winter and never Christmas. However, seven of us had been fuelled by a leisurely lunch at a nearby Italian restaurant before venturing over to Kensington Gardens, where a temporary theatre had been erected in the form of a thankfully very stable tented structure – the near gale force winds might have otherwise transformed the experience into something more akin to *The Wizard of Oz*.

As the stage was circular (hence the name *The threesixty Theatre?*) and revolved at times, there were probably no bad seats in the house, but I reckon ours were among the best, facing the entrance

to the stage and high enough to give a good overall view. It was a view worth seeing, with imaginative costumes; trap doors through which characters and the wardrobe emerged and disappeared; actors suspended by wires from the roof; and projection of images onto the ceiling of the tent. Aslan was particularly impressive, being represented in the form of a giant puppet operated by two people inside and another beside him, reminiscent of the stage version of *War Horse* and so well done that those controlling the puppet were hardly noticed.

Having read the book and seen animated and acted film versions it was interesting to see a staged version, faithful to the original story but using different means to tell it. The consensus, reflected in the prolonged applause at the end and the delighted faces of children and adults, was that the production was very well executed and thoroughly enjoyable. We were by no means the only all-adult party there, so if there is another chance to see it you do not need a child to take along to avail yourselves of the opportunity.

As we emerged after the show into bright sunshine it seemed that Aslan had done his work in our world too and that summer might at last be on its way.

Our thanks to Graham Hedges for organising the outing and to C. S. Lewis for making it all possible.

Susan Rugg, BA, DipLib, MCLIP, works as an Assistant Librarian at the IET Library, London.

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 and one rejoined member. Also listed below are those who have renewed their membership since early June. We would greatly appreciate it if payment could be sent before the end of April. If you have changed address, job or e-mail, please let us know as soon as possible.

NEW MEMBER

WELLS, Miss Charlotte, 6 Hulme Hall Avenue, Cheadle Hulme, Cheshire SK8 6LN - Student, MA Lib. & Info. Management, Manchester Metropolitan University. Tel: 07985488101 - Email: charlotte448@hotmail.com

REJOINED MEMBER

EDMONDS, Mrs Diana, BA(Hons), DipLib, FCLIP, The Vicarage, Presents Lane, Belton, Leics., LE12 9UN - Head of Libraries, GLL. Tel: 01530 223447 - Email: dianaedmonds1@btconnect.com

LATE RENEWALS

BISHOP, Mrs Judith H., 112 Brickley Lane, Devizes, Wilts SN10 3BT - Info. & Archives Officer, Barnabas Fund. Tel: 01380 720488 - Email: judithhsmith@hotmail.co.org

FERGUSON, Mrs Mary, 31A Newmarket, Laxdale, Isle of Lewis, HS2 0DY Tel: 01851 704686 - Email: mary31n@gmail.com

PLAISTER, Miss Jean M., 3 St.Regis Close, Alexandra Park Road, Muswell Hill, London, N10 2DE - Tel: 0208-444-8860 - Email: jean.plaister@tiscali.co.uk

REED, Mr David M., 39 Main Street, Wolston, Coventry, CV8 3HH - Community-based Learning & Engagement Manager, Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council. Tel: 02476 542516 - Email: dandreed@hotmail.co.uk

TILLY, Mr Nigel J., The Moorings Residential Home, Egypt Hill, Cowes, Isle of Wight PO31 8BP - Tel: 01983 299048

CHANGES TO ADDRESS, JOB ETC.

HEMMINGS, Mr Louis, 'Avonberg', Newtownpark Avenue, Blackrock, Co.Dublin Ireland - Tel: 00 353 12 891403 - Email: samovarbooks@googlemail.com

MARSHALL, Mrs Trish, 57 Whaddon Way, Bletchley, Milton Keynes, MK3 7DX - Libn., Lending Services, Central Milton Keynes Lib. - Email: trish.marshall@virgin.net

OLLIFFE, Mr Eddie, 8 Victoria Way, Liphook, Hants GU30 7NJ - Freelance, Charity & Retail Portfolio Management. Tel: 01428 729114 - Email: eddie.olliffe@virgin.net

TAYLOR, Miss Hilary, Staceys, School Lane, Broomfield, Chelmsford, Essex CM1 7HF - Office Manager, Natural England, Peterborough. Tel: 07747 811895 - Email: hjtaylor.183@btinternet.com

REVIEWS

Earlier this year members of the public were invited to vote for the Christian books that they would most like to see on the shelves of their local libraries. MARGARET KEELING and ANNE MACRITCHIE give their reactions to the winning books in the adult and children's categories

THE ULTIMATE CHRISTIAN LIBRARY BOOK(S)

FAITH UNDER FIRE:

*WHAT THE MIDDLE EAST CONFLICT HAS TAUGHT ME ABOUT
GOD*

Andrew White

Monarch, £8.99, Pbk.; 160p., ISBN 978-1854249623

To win the *Ultimate Christian Library* award, a book must grab the average non-Christian reader at first sight. This year's winner, Andrew White's, does this and more, gripping the reader from its very first word. Andrew's journey unfolds from successful medical career to life in St. George's courtyard in the Red Zone (unprotected area) of Baghdad. He's shot at, kidnapped, targeted by extremists, surrounded by security guards, grieves over members of his 'flock' murdered for their faith – in the words of the title, living literally and metaphorically under fire.

His engaging and straightforward style in sharp contrast to the dramatic and moving stories he relates, makes them even more telling. It is the story of a man clearly directed by God, who recognises His '*other plans*' as he moves from medicine to ministry, obeying each new call, spiritual and political. This is risk taking faith lived out on the edge, and, by a man undeterred by the physical limitations of MS. It is a calling prepared to engage with '*nasty people*' in his work for reconciliation.

It is also the story of an amazing church, St. George's, and its ministry of care for the practical aspects of life in a war zone – medical help, dental care, groceries, security and sanctuary. A church which

experiences miracles, which sees signs and wonders, as God works in extreme situations in extraordinary ways. It demonstrates that '*when Jesus is all we have left, then that is all we need*'

This book meets all the criteria for the Award, as a nail biting story of one man's adventures for God. It is also a wake up call to us as Western Christians, in that faith which shows a miracle working God is not developed in safe places, or under few challenges.

Clear language, clear faith, strongly and simply stated – a book to read, and recommend.

D. Margaret Keeling, BA, MA, MCLIP, PhD, is President of the *Librarians' Christian Fellowship* and worked until her retirement as Head of Services for Libraries, Culture and Adult Community Learning for *Essex County Council*.

THE LION CLASSIC BIBLE

Andrea Skevington

Lion, £12.99, Hardback, 256p., ISBN 978-0745961064

This is a lovely book, beautifully illustrated by Sophy Williams. All the main stories in the Bible are brought to life evocatively and in a lively way that will appeal to younger readers, whether they are reading themselves or having them read to them. The illustrations also really bring the tales to life.

Those using it as a teaching tool will be relieved that any potentially embarrassing bits are put in such a way that awkward questions are unlikely to be asked. All the main stories and histories in the Old Testament are included as are the teachings of Jesus, his miracles and healings. The crucifixion is handled well without being too graphic. The Acts of the Apostles and St. Paul's letters are also included as is The Revelation of St. John. It is fairly easy to find any particular story thanks to a detailed breakdown of the contents at the back. It is indeed a Bible to treasure.

Anne MacRitchie, MSc, serves the *Librarians' Christian Fellowship* as Regional Representative for Scotland.

ARTICLES

Subjects tackled at a recent professional conference ranged from the image of Jesus in art to the provision of e-books in libraries. BETH AVERY reports from across the Atlantic

EYE ON THE PROFESSION

Images and Elephants



This year the *American Library Association* met in Anaheim, California, from 22-25 June 2012. The *Fellowship of Christian Librarians and information Specialists* (FOCLIS) had their annual meeting there on 25 June. Our speaker this year was Dr. Edward J. Blum. He spoke on “*Jesus in the Archives*” detailing his experiences doing research for his upcoming book ***The Color of Christ: The Son of God and the Saga of Race in America***. As a historian Dr. Blum realised there was a history to the image of Christ he had grown up with. He began the discussion with the text “*The Word was made flesh*” and observed that the flesh was then made word and what we were left with was the Bible.

When he began his investigations he discovered “*Jesus*” appears more times in the library catalogues of the *Library of Congress* and *Harvard University* than either Shakespeare or baseball. While the gospels say nothing about the physical appearance of Christ, the images of Christ have changed through the centuries. The Sallman 1941 “*Head of Christ*” is the most reproduced image in history and for many serves as “*the correct image*”. The Puritans in the Americas destroyed all images of Christ. It wasn't until 1810-1820 that images of Christ appeared again in America. This led to a spirited discussion of

our individual images of Christ. He ended by asking us how we put flesh on the Word and encouraged us to live the message.

On Sunday morning, Dan Ariely, Professor of Psychology and Behavioral Economics at *Duke University* spoke on his latest book ***The Honest Truth About Dishonesty: How We Lie to Everyone – Especially Ourselves***. His studies with students show that cost benefit analysis is not accurate in describing how actions are controlled. People tend to do whatever they perceive they can get away with. He observed, “*Cheating is all about rationalisation. What actions can we take and still feel good about ourselves?*” He then asked the audience for rationalisations for mendacity. It was amazing how many reasons were mentioned formally and in the sub-chatter – self-preservation; seeing others get away with it; seeing it as a one-time event; entitlement; and not hurting anyone only a corporation. Efforts to decrease dishonesty through punishment are ineffective. Moral codes are often more effective deterrents to dishonesty. Experiments have shown that reminding people of moral codes, signing honour codes prior to taking a test tends to keep people honest by reinforcing an honesty mindset. Signing such a code after the fact has little effect. In libraries this means that posting the rules will have less effect than having patrons sign rules of conduct agreements ahead of time. Dr. Ariely concluded by saying that what we usually encounter are fundamentally good people faced with conflicts of interest and not intrinsically bad people.

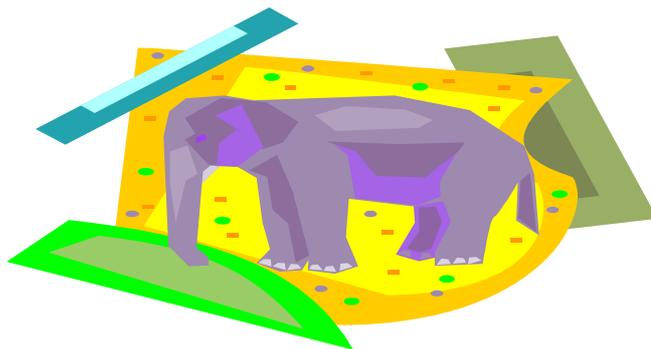
Mentoring and accession planning were on the agenda. Heather Krasna presenting at the Llama President's Program talked about how jobs change throughout one's career and how at all stages in your career you have the opportunity to mentor or be mentored. She led the audience through an exercise to help them create a vision for their career by identifying what inspires them and how their vision can keep them on track in times of change. She encouraged the audience to remember five to six times in their life when they encountered and reacted to a problem. These stories can help you identify which skills you use successfully. She also suggested that the audience identify their most important, non-negotiable values, such as work/life balance, location, benefits, etc. She encouraged the setting of SMART goals – specific, measurable, attainable, relevant, and time-bound to increase your probability of success. The difference between succession planning and merely appointing a successor was highlighted by a panel of *Association of College and Research University Libraries* members, “*The Librarian Has left the Building: Keeping Knowledge Alive through*

Succession Planning".

The challenges of e-books and patron driven acquisitions and how they are transforming library collections was the “*elephant in the room*”. Many programs dealt with selecting, acquiring, using, assessing and the future of e-books in the collection. Programs included “*The E-book Elephant in the Room: Determining What's relevant and Effective for Your Patrons and Making Effective Decisions for your Future E-Collection*”, “*Integrating 'e' and p': Building a New Monograph Approval Infrastructure*”, “*Patron Driven Acquisitions in Consortia*”, “*Using Patron Driven Acquisitions Technology to Connect 455,000 Users at Twenty-Three College Campuses*”, “*The Rise of E-Reading*” and “*Advisory Services for the E-Book Era*”.

Information Literacy was another hot topic. The role of the embedded librarian in on-line classrooms was discussed in several programs. As was teaching information literacy to prepare students for academic success, and teaching under-served populations.

Transforming our buildings into the cultural centre of their community generated much discussion. Whether we are transforming existing spaces or building new spaces, libraries need to be offering the traditional quiet spaces in addition to social spaces. This philosophy needs to be reflected in our on-line presence – from user friendly on-line libraries to a library presence in social media. Libraries need to be destinations for discovery and learning.



Beth Fuseler Avery is Co-ordinator of Collection Development at the *University of North Texas University Libraries* and edits the newsletter of the *Fellowship of Christian Librarians and Information Specialists*.

MICHAEL COVENEY outlines some principles that will help us to live out our faith in the workplace in an era of gloom, despondency and economic slowdown

FLOURISHING AT WORK



An Address to the Librarians' Christian Fellowship Conference "Librarians and Disciples in a Time of Trouble" held on Saturday 28 April 2012 in the Chancellor's Room, Hughes Parry Hall, 19-26 Cartwright Gardens, London, WC1.

No matter where you look, doom, gloom and despondency surround us. And yet in the midst of a global economic slowdown where the threat of redundancy casts an ever-growing long shadow, the Bible tells us to 'look up' and to be cheerful. Not only that, it promises that those that love God will flourish irrespective of what is happening around them.

So what does the Bible mean by '*flourishing*' and how do you shrug off the despair that surrounds so many people? This practical article aims to answer these questions and will equip you to thrive no matter where you work. All Bible verses are from ***The Message*** translation.

Throughout history in good times and in bad, God has consistently blessed his children. Everything that God does is to bless, prosper and make us rich:

"How blessed is God! And what a blessing he is! He's the Father of our Master, Jesus Christ, and takes us to the high places of blessing in him. Long before he laid down earth's foundations he had us in mind, had settled on us as the focus of his love, to be made whole and holy by his love. Long, long ago he decided to adopt us into his family through Jesus Christ. (What

pleasure he took in planning this!) He wanted us to enter into the celebration of his lavish gift-giving by the hand of his beloved Son". (Ephesians 1: 3 – 6).

Christians are the most blessed people on earth. Our God prospers and honours those who honour him. "*The lives of God-loyal people flourish*". (Proverbs 15: 6).

Flourish means to thrive, grow, increase, prosper, to do well. So how does this translate into today's workplace experience? Are God's promises just as valid or has he withdrawn them? Or maybe he didn't quite mean what we read?

For most people their financial and social wealth will come from the workplace. It's where we spend most of our adult life (64%) and from it the quality of life we enjoy. But so often work is seen as a necessary evil, something to be got out of. If that's how we see it then we've totally missed the point and we'll miss out on the blessings that God has in store for us.

As I look back through my career I see the hand of God in guiding me, blessing me and helping me to achieve things that I thought were not possible. And it was because his blessing was upon me, not because I deserved it but because he is a God who loves to bless.

I'm saddened when I meet Christians who hate their jobs. Of course there are times when I faced people and situations I didn't care for, but it was in those times I saw God at work. I've been threatened with demotion because my boss didn't like me, but God brought me through this situation and into a better place than I had before.

Now you may be thinking "*It's alright for him, he doesn't know my situation, the difficulties my profession faces, the people I have to work with*". In answer to this I want to look at what the Bible says about work and the importance of our attitude towards it.

God's view of work

To begin with, God is a God of work. Work is part of God's DNA, just look at creation. God's plan for us is to work, to go into the world and subdue it, to be fruitful. It's through a job well done where we gain satisfaction. What did God say after each day of creation? He saw that it was good.

Is that how we look back on our work day? It is God's intention that **every** Christian should thrive, grow, increase, prosper, and do well

at work.

Keys to Prospering at Work

The Bible has many examples of how God wants us to be at work, Joseph and Daniel being two of them. Both were put into work environments that initially they would not have chosen. Both found themselves in a foreign land, were unjustly treated, falsely accused, were plotted against. At one stage both thought they had lost everything, their livelihood, future prospects, and yet they both achieved fame, respect and wealth. God was able to turn around each of their circumstances and bless them, but only because of the following right attitudes they had to the work they were given.

Remember who you are, no matter where you are placed

Ask anyone about themselves and they will usually respond with their job title. However, we can't impress God with either a job title or how much we make. If we judge success at work in terms of position or earnings then we will never be satisfied.

As Christians, our workplace is our mission field. It's the place where God has appointed us to be his ambassadors, the place where God has said he would never leave or forsake us.

You may say that you only put books back on a shelf, that you are just a cleaner, or that you've been repeatedly overlooked for promotion and ignored. But this isn't how God sees you.

'But I hate my job' you may say. Why? Is it beneath you? You are not an employee but a prince, a valued servant under the protection of Almighty God. He has a plan for you and he will bring you out of it when your work is done and when you are ready.

There is much said about pressure and stress in the workplace. Pressure is generally something that other people place on you, but stress is how you respond internally. Stress is a spiritual attack. To avoid it you must constantly see yourself with God's eyes as to who you really are.

Work Hard Without Complaint

“Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart as something for the Lord”. (Colossians 3: 23) The Hebrew word for work and worship is the same: *Avodah*. When we work we worship God. The more we put in, the more we'll get out of it.

Today's bonus culture implies that organisations only get performance if staff are given an incentive. However, a recent study published in the ***Harvard Business Review*** showed that not only is this untrue, but it can actually have a bad effect on performance.

Both Joseph and Daniel were the best they could be, irrespective of how they were rewarded. Joseph in his early work life was not even paid, but each saw their service as being towards God and it was God who honoured them.

Joseph and Daniel proved themselves, and it didn't go unnoticed!

In Daniel 1 we read that *“In every matter of wisdom and understanding about which the king questioned them, he found them ten times better than all the magicians and enchanters in his whole kingdom”*. This was the result of God's strength and their hard work.

Joseph was put in charge of the jail even though a prisoner himself. Why? Would Joseph and Daniel's promotions have happened if they had both, with some human justification, complained about their lot?

In our workplace we represent God. And if our colleagues know we are Christians they will judge God by the way we act. Would God steal things, time, fiddle expenses? It's all about attitude and if that attitude is wrong then how can God promote us?

Being faithful in a few things, will determine if we can be faithful in greater things. Romans 12: 1 – 2: *“So here's what I want you to do, God helping you. Take your everyday, ordinary life, your sleeping, eating, going to work and walking around life and place it before God as an offering. Embracing what God does for you is the best thing you can do for him.”*

We could add here that embracing the workplace where God has placed us is the best thing we can do for him! The verse goes on to say:

“Don't become so well adjusted to your culture [a culture of complaint, mediocre performance] that you fit into it without even thinking. Instead, fix your attention on God. You'll be

changed from the inside out. Readily recognise what he wants from you, and quickly respond to it. Unlike the culture around you, always dragging you down to its level of immaturity, God brings the best out of you, develops well-formed maturity in you.”

Respect Your Boss

“Slaves obey your earthly masters with respect and fear, and with sincerity of heart, just as you would obey Christ”. (Ephesians 6: 5). Paul in writing to the Ephesians told them to respect those who have the rule over them. It applies equally well to us today and that includes your boss. And there is good reason for this.

“Real wisdom, God's wisdom, begins with a holy life and is characterised by getting along with others. It is gentle and reasonable, overflowing with mercy and blessings, not hot one day and cold the next, not two-faced.

You can develop a healthy, robust community that lives right with God and enjoy its results only if you do the hard work of getting along with each other, treating each other with dignity and honour”. (James 3: 17).

A recently published study showed that those who help others at work without being asked and because they want to, are 40% more likely to receive a promotion in the following year, have significantly higher job satisfaction, and feel ten times more engaged with where they work.

God wants you to honour your boss, no matter what kind of tyrant he may be. Why? Because it is the mark of a faithful servant. Also no one is going to recommend promotion for anyone who disrespects them.

Stand Firm in Your Faith

Don't compromise your faith and service to God, even though it threatens your position. Joseph refused to sleep with Potiphar's wife. Daniel refused to pray in secret. In each case their godly life style clashed with what was expected of them in the workplace. But each stayed true to God, but without being a pain.

This is where a life that has honoured your boss pays off. Character works itself out by who we are and what we do. Decisions at work should always be made from the perspective of a life lived for God.

Seek to Improve Yourself

Many people at work try to do the absolute minimum, their contract and nothing more. Then they wonder why they don't get promotion. Promotion isn't a long service medal. It's usually because you have better skills and experience that others don't have.

Invest in your own career. Don't leave it up to the company you work for or others. Your career is your responsibility. Asking God for guidance is not a cop out from taking responsibility.

When going after a promotion or a new job ask yourself whether that position is attainable. Do you have the right skills, the right experience, and in some cases the right contacts? If you don't then you need to invest your time and resources to acquire them.

I'm convinced that God will bring you into situations and contact with people where you'll gain experience, develop skills and develop contacts.

Don't go it alone. Meet up with others who have done it before and ask them for an honest opinion about your suitability. But only do it with those who have that experience and have been successful. It's like learning to fly a 'plane. Go to another pilot who is a great pilot for advice, not a bad one or one who thinks he can fly.

Join up with Other Christians

God doesn't expect us to work alone, we are many members of one body. *Transform Work UK* believes that the workplace and the nation can be changed by Christians getting together to pray for their workplace, their colleagues, their managers and to help the organisation adopt good Christian principles, which are also good business practices.

Check out the Christian Workplace Group directory on the web site www.transformworkuk.org to see if there is a group in the organisation where you work. If not, then why not start one up? A booklet is freely available from the *Transform Work UK* web site that shows you how to do this. It's amazing what two or three Christians can accomplish when they meet in Christ's name.

Summary

To summarise, the experiences that Joseph and Daniel went through helped them to flourish and become prosperous in their workplace, even though they didn't realise it at the time.

Joseph's experience in managing Potiphar's house and the jail helped him later on to meet the right people and to manage the land of Egypt. Daniel's training in Nebuchadnezzar's palace gave him access and respect from the king at the right time.

Neither of them realised where they would end up, but it was the way they handled the tasks they were given, the way they treated their bosses, how they lived out their faith in God, and their attitude to be the best that made them the right people for the jobs they ended up with. And God can do exactly the same for us as well.

Michael Coveney is an effective communicator with more than thirty five years of experience in helping organisations around the world plan and manage corporate strategy. He is the author of a number of business books, a course developer/leader for the *Antwerp Management School*, and runs workshops on the subject of performance management for senior executives of major organisations. Michael is also a trustee of *Transform Work UK*, a Christian charity that encourages and supports Christian groups to transform the places where they work.

GORDON HARRIS considers some verses from the New Testament that have a bearing on our working lives and outlines some principles that he has learned in his current role as a personal coach

DISCIPLESHIP AND AMBITION



An Address to the Librarians' Christian Fellowship Conference "Librarians and Disciples in a Time of Trouble" held on Saturday 28 April 2012 in the Chancellor's Room, Hughes Parry Hall, 19-26 Cartwright Gardens, London, WC1.

What I would like to do in this session is to look at some Bible verses about our work, our motivation, and so on, and then move on to talk about the profession in which I am now involved, which is that of personal coaching, and the perspective that this gives on the way in which people can develop, not only in their careers but in all sorts of other areas as well.

Biblical foundations

Some verses from the New Testament indicate our attitude both to work as a means of earning a livelihood, and to the place of work in a Christian's scale of values.

To begin with, Paul writes in 2 Thessalonians ch. 3 v. 10: *'For even when we were with you, we gave you this rule: "If a man will not work, he shall not eat."* '

This verse, of course, was famously quoted by Margaret Thatcher in an address to some Scottish church leaders, but we won't go there! It is quite clear, however, that if we *can* work, if we are *able* to work, this is our main means of livelihood.

"Knowing You, Jesus", is a good modern song and it reflects Paul's words in Philippians ch. 3 v. 8 where he says: *'What is more, I consider everything a loss compared to the surpassing greatness of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them rubbish, that I may gain Christ.*

In other words, everything is rubbish – careers, money, success, winning the lottery – compared with knowing Jesus as Lord. This is a sobering verse.

In another letter, in Colossians ch. 3 v. 23-24, Paul says that actually we are working for God. He is the boss. *'Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for men, since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving.'*

This verse reminds me of someone I met, about ten years ago, when I briefly visited Kazakhstan, which at that time was quite an open country. I met an expatriate who told me that she was there to introduce people to the gospel, though her official job was as a teacher of English as a foreign language. But, although her main motivation was to introduce people to the Lord Jesus Christ, her official job was something that she should do *"as working for the Lord"* and she quoted the above verse. We have to do what we do well, because we are doing it for our Saviour.

If we look at the gospels, in terms of ambition, some of the disciples were real go-getters. They wanted to be top dogs. Yet, in Luke ch. 9 v. 46-48, we are told that when *'an argument started among the disciples as to which of them should be the greatest, Jesus said to them ... "He who is least among you all – he is the greatest."* '

Jesus completely turned the world upside down. That is what Jesus does, in our own lives, in the Scriptures, throughout the gospels, everything is turned upside. The world's values, our culture, everything. He who is least among you, he is the greatest.

The GROW Model as a pattern for a coaching session

These are some of the values from the Scriptures that we need to take into account when we are thinking about developing our careers. In the context of coaching, which is the new area that I have moved into in the last two or three years, our ambition, or our sense of calling, is very much akin to what we would call the final goal, the ultimate goal in coaching. When clients come for coaching, they are asked: “*What is your ultimate goal, where do you want to be, where do you want to reach?*”

Start with the End in Mind

Habit Number Two in Stephen Covey's ***The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People***³ is: “*Begin with the end [goal] in mind*” This is the starting point for coach and client. Don't think about what you are doing right now, think about what are your ultimate goals. Start from there and work back. The GROW model in coaching starts with **G** for **Goal**. G-R-O-W stands for four different stages in the interaction between the coach and his or her client. For the Christian the true goal is to become the person God has equipped us to become. Where is God leading us? Where does God want us to be? It is what Christians have traditionally referred to as Calling or Vocation.

Congruence and Shalom

Often a client will go to a coach, explain their life situation, and it transpires that they do not actually have a goal, they just want to move away from a bad work environment. Often it is the role of the coach to say, alright, you want to move away from a bad situation, but you also have to think about what is the ideal. What is the best scenario? Clients perceive they need coaching if there is incongruence in their lives, in other words if their lives do not hang together. Good practice for a coach is to discern where this incongruence or sense of unease is

³ Simon and Schuster, 2004, £14.99, ISBN 978-0684858395

coming from. Often you can sense that this search for congruence is a bit like longing for “*shalom*”. When Anglicans say “*the peace of the Lord be with you*” during the Communion Service they are actually saying “*shalom*” a prayer that everything about your life will receive blessing, completeness, togetherness.

A Whole-Life Approach

When I meet new clients I ask them to complete the “*Wheel of Life*”. This is a useful tool which enables clients to consider their life as a whole – not just career or material gain. Consideration of the whole of life should determine what a client’s goals should be. Clients consider satisfaction or congruence in: spirituality, church, career, current job, confidence and well-being, finance, housing, friendships, intimacy, health, family, leisure, and fun. They normally like to discuss then the areas of life with which they are most dissatisfied.

You can then get a greater sense of the congruence that is needed in their lives. It is not just a matter of someone feeling stuck in their career or wanting to move on.

Articulating the Ideal Scenario

The first part of the session between coach and client is speaking about what they really want, what they feel they are being called to, what is the ideal scenario in their lives. Often they are not Christians, of course, and you have to deal with them in that context. Sometimes they *are* Christians (I have coached both) and this calls for a different approach.

What's Getting in the Way?

The second stage in the GROW Model is R for **R**eality, and it is at this stage that clients can identify what life is like *now* and how far they are away from their Goals. Is there something holding them back? Is it a lack of confidence? Once you have talked through the reality of what is going on at the moment you can help the clients to think of various

things that they could be doing now to help move them towards their goals.

How to Get There in Small Simple Steps

The third (**O**ptions) and fourth (**W**ay ahead) stages deal respectively with “*What could I do to reach my goal?*” and “*What will I definitely do in the next few days and weeks to get further along the journey to my goal?*” Some of the options may seem crazy such as the client seeking an interview with his or her managing director to discuss a particular problem. But the important thing is to identify achievable steps that the clients can take, one step at a time, to take them towards their final goals.

The Christian's Goal of Pleasing Jesus our Judge

In closing, it is interesting to note what the Apostle Paul’s goal was as expressed in 2 Corinthians ch.5 v.9-10 : “*So we make it our goal to please him, whether we are at home in the body or away from it. For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive what is due to him for the things done while in the body, whether good or bad.*”

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JOHN WICKENDEN describes his long career as a Librarian and Information Scientist in the Pharmaceutical industry and recalls ways in which his role has changed over the past years

GOD'S PURPOSE DRIVEN LIBRARIAN



An Address to the Librarians' Christian Fellowship Conference "Librarians and Disciples in a Time of Trouble" held on Saturday 28 April 2012 in the Chancellor's Room, Hughes Parry Hall, 19-26 Cartwright Gardens, London, WC1.

Before I start I need to put this presentation in context. I have been blessed with a lifelong career with the same employer. I was given the job of helping to run the library, at the age of eighteen, back in 1969, without even having an interview, although I had worked there for nine months. So I am not able to help you with how to get a job, perform well in an interview or cope with redundancy, all key areas of expertise needed currently. But I hope I can help you develop your career and library and information service for the benefit of yourself, your employer and to the glory of God.

I want you to understand how to discover God's purpose for you in your job, how to be content and positive in your job, how to be yourself in your job, and how to let God change your environment and look for opportunities for change and development.

I have been employed by a US Pharmaceutical company at their British research and development site in Surrey. I have been there for forty-four years and am now the longest serving employee on the site. I started as a library assistant, but when the chemist who had been running the library retired, I became a Librarian and took the *Library Association* professional qualifications on day release. From 1969 I

worked as a one-person Librarian. I was invited to become an Information Scientist and have served in that role from 1997 to date as part of a Global Library and Information Service team, with its headquarters in the United States. I now specialise in Competitive Information.

Firstly I believe that God placed me in my job forty-four years ago and had a purpose for me there. My career progression has been very conservative. Most of my career I have run a one-person library, so I needed to be self (or rather God) motivated, but I was blessed with a very supportive management who saw the benefit of having a world class library and information service. Therefore I had excellent resources. But throughout my career I had to make many changes which I will detail later.

I had an eighteen month spell of being Team Leader, but after a year my manager and myself mutually agreed that it was not my role. So I returned to a practitioner role. In 1997 I saw the rise of the Virtual Library and the closure of many physical libraries in my industry, so when the opportunity arose for me to become a Biomedical Information Scientist I jumped in. Also in 2007 I specialised still further by becoming part of the Competitive Information Group. I have slowly specialised in my role over the years, but I have been a Jack of All Trades (and not really the master of any of them), involved in archives, records management, information science, and research records.

I have always attended church, as my parents were regular churchgoers. I always had a conviction that God had put me here for a purpose, but did not know what it was. When I was in my late teenage years a faithful Christian started a youth group and when I was twenty we went to a church one Sunday where a well known evangelist was preaching and then doing a session afterwards for the young people. The sermon went over my head, but when he started talking afterwards it was as if he was talking to me. That night I committed my life to Jesus. I had already started my job in the Library so I asked God if it was what he wanted for me, and I believe it was. One verse really stands out in my early Christian walk, John 10: 10, Jesus said, "*I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full*" (abundantly, King James Version).

A year later I was attending a Christian camp and on the last night the speaker said that she believed that a number of people had a word from God to people there. This young man came up to me. He had been annoying me during the week by jumping the queue for water, and he gave me this verse from Psalm 84: 10 - "*Better is one day in your*

courts than a thousand elsewhere; I would rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God than dwell in the tents of the wicked”.

I believe that this mission statement has applied to both my work and church ministry. At work I have been a Gatekeeper of information, pro-actively providing information to my customers. In Church my main role has been welcoming and encouraging people, exercising a “back of church” ministry, and showing people the “Way”.

How many of you know your Church's Mission Statement, and how many know God's purpose/mission for you?

I believe that I have been given three “full time” ministries: at work where I am an Information professional; at Church, where I am currently a Church warden; and in my family where I am a Dad and Husband. I have to give one hundred per cent to all three of them. How can you do that? Only through God and Jesus giving you strength through the Holy Spirit. Please note that I don't always succeed in giving one hundred per cent, but that is the aim.

I have not aggressively pursued career promotions, as I preferred a good work-life balance so that I could pursue activities outside work, such as church leadership and service. I have had a relatively simple lifestyle that did not need a large salary, but saying that I have had a good salary compared with other sectors.

As a Christian you attend a Church and as such you are part of a Team. In church you have a God given role which is important in the fabric of the church, part of the body. It is also important, as a Christian, to be part of the team at work, actively working out your Christian faith. You don't have to preach, but show Christian love to those around you.

The most amazing experience I had was when I was taking part in a activity with a group of people I knew although they were from a different part of the organisation. They asked us to write down the most important thing in our lives. I wrote something like “*Loving and serving God*”. The pieces of paper were then given out and the people had to try and guess who had written what. My paper had gone to a HR manager with whom I had a few interactions. When she read the paper she said, “*I know exactly who has written this*”. I had never spoken about faith directly to her, but somehow she knew.

I always try to be a very active and reliable team member (my natural leaning is to be introverted, but God has changed me in this too. So it is not my strength to network or have deep relations with people). Through this you are respected as a member of the team.

Up until recently I represented the company's library and

information service in an association whose members represent the scientific information departments of the leading international research and development based pharmaceutical companies.

Now part of the company's global library and information service, I still have to be fairly self-motivated as there are just two of us in the UK, the majority of the library and information service staff and resources are in the Corporate headquarters in the USA.

When working in a team it is vital to listen to constructive criticism or advice, and appropriately act upon it. It is vital to learn from your mistakes.

A verse jumped out at me very recently during a sermon at church on 2 Corinthians: *“For to be sure, he was crucified in weakness, yet he lives by God's power. Likewise, we are weak, in him, yet by God's power we will live with him to serve you.”* (2 Cor. 13, v. 4). I believe that, with Jesus at the centre of your life, you don't *need* any status or authority, you don't *need* to be a manager or some high flying person who has all the responsibility. The authority comes from God. I have seen this working in my life. Jesus gives you the authority by just being you, fulfilling the ministry that he has given you and working for him in your workplace.

I have always sought to provide an excellent library and information service by having a practitioner role. I tried management but I believe it was not for me, though I am glad that I tried it. But God still used me to influence decisions without the status or authority of a manager or director.

Here are some of the lessons that I have learned.

- Be informed – get to know your customers' information needs. Meet with key customers regularly.
- Be available – always have time for them, even when you are busy. Listen carefully to what they say.
- Be visible – use lunchtimes to sit with different people/ regularly walk around the site.
- Be supported - develop library and information service advocates/supporters, for extra money and resources.
- Be willing to change – don't get stuck in a rut! Push appropriate boundaries for new technology.

I have very actively promoted my library and information services to the customers (the company scientific staff). I meet regularly with my customers to understand their needs. I also meet regularly with higher management to get support for service improvements, such as purchasing new technology. I also apply these principles at church, but “*Be Supported*” changes to “*Be Supporting*”!

Embrace change. It is not always easy to accept change. It sometimes gets you out of your comfort zone. But I believe God is changing all of us by his Spirit. When we become Christians we are changed. As Paul puts it in 2 Corinthians 5: 17, “*Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, that person is a new creation: the old has gone, the new is here!*” Throughout our Christian lives God is changing us. Through his Holy Spirit I believe that God helps us to identify the correct types of change. Some changes are positive and we should embrace them, but some are damaging and we should stand against them. We should use our credibility and relationships to inspire productive change. We should ask God to help us in identifying good change and standing against unproductive change.

When you give criticism, be constructive. God has changed me over the years, as I used to be very introvert and quiet when I was young, but God changed me to be much more outgoing. But still under stress I revert to my natural self. I hide away and go “all quiet”, until God deals with me. He has changed me, and he needs to work on you, but he is also changing the workplace and he is using you to change the workplace in the right way.

I have mentioned the importance of getting help from your management, your customers, to expand your service and get the best possible library and information service for the organisation. I will give a few examples. My company's Head of Chemistry provided equipment to enable on-line chemistry sub-structure searching in the early 1980s. The IT department helped set up a Library Administration system in 1986. This included integrated document supply, serials and catalogue modules. This was much more than was available commercially at that time. Human Resources caught my vision of a networked library in 1990 and provided the funds to purchase Adonis (CD based electronic journals). We partnered with four other sites in Europe to establish the first electronic journal contract (well before the US headquarters) in 1997.

As I have said, I have been with the company a long time, and there has been a lot of change. In the 1960s the library was a computer free zone. It was the age of LSD, both the monetary and the drug sort.

It was the age of paper and microfiche in the library.

The 1970s were the age of BITS. Computers began to make an impact. We made use of Tymshare Computing using dial up acoustic modems at 300 baud. "System 2" mainframe computers came in during the late '70s. In 1977 the Library first used on-line searching of computer databases using a dial up modem.

The 1980s were the age of Bytes. PCs first became widely available. BBC and Apple computers were used in the laboratories. Word processing used the Wang system to be followed by the IBM 5520. Then the IBM PC was used in the offices. Digital Vax computers were used in the computer room. In 1986 the library used Vax and System 1032 DBMS to automate systems. In 1988 we had CD-Roms with the Medline database.

The 1990s were the age of Megabytes. The Web/Internet had its impact in the mid-90s. The Library created its own web pages and more and more databases became available on the Internet. This was the age of Linking and electronic journals and the beginning of the Virtual Library.

The 2000s were the age of Gigabytes. We saw the death of the physical library, Web 2.0, Post-processing, Federated searching, Social Networking, and so on. Now we are in the 2010s, the age of the Terabytes.

Over the years I had to regularly adapt to new technologies to ensure customers had a cutting edge library and information service. I believe that my faith helped me identify the correct technologies and techniques.

To summarise: Trust God for strength and consistent witness. With Jesus at the centre there is no need of status or authority. Know your mission and keep to it. Be a *reliable* team player. Learn from your mistakes and accept constructive criticism. Regularly build relationships with key management and customers. Let God change you and the world around you.

John Wickenden, FCLIP, is an Information Scientist working on the research and development site of a large US Pharmaceutical company since 2000. He has worked for the same company all his working life, although he originally was the site Librarian as a "one person band". He is now working part-time as he approaches retirement. He was until recently involved in two Pharmaceutical LIS Groups as the company representative. Outside of work he is a Gideon and an active member of a local evangelical Anglican church.

Should Christians be 'ambitious' in their professional careers or is this at odds with the traditional Christian emphasis on 'humility'? SARA BATTS shares some thoughts from her recent career as a Law Librarian

CAREER DEVELOPMENT FOR THE CHRISTIAN



An Address to the Librarians' Christian Fellowship Conference "Librarians and Disciples in a Time of Trouble" held on Saturday 28 April 2012 in the Chancellor's Room, Hughes Parry Hall, 19-26 Cartwright Gardens, London, WC1.

I have worked in law libraries since 2004. At first this was on a very part time basis – I took a shelving role as a second job when I was struggling with debt. I'm from a Christian family, but stopped paying attention when I was in my teens and really only came back to faith at the time I was studying for my library Masters. That's around around six years ago. I've only worked full-time in the information profession as a Christian, but I've had plenty of experience in other jobs with both feet planted firmly in the secular world.

So what do I think about talent, ambition, humility and faith? Are they compatible? How have I operationalised those things in my library career so far?

I'm going to explain my opinions, and why I think it matters how we relate to the rest of the world.

When I was a child, my father's advice to me was that I should aim as high as I wanted – but make sure I didn't trample on people on the way. And that's advice that has stuck with me. Dad worked as a toolmaker all his life. I discovered recently he spent the first few years as an apprentice being called Bill, since that was his father's name – this didn't bother him, it was just how

things were. Yet instances of unfairness from shop stewards or management will still rankle with him forty years on, even if he was called by his real name (Robin) when they happened. So I think his advice is sound. In fact his insight has helped me lots of ways where we've been able to talk through the difficulties and ambiguities at work.

Dad's advice aside, what do I think about ambition and climbing high? What do I think my heavenly Father might say?

Being ambitious isn't about seeking power over others. Being ambitious isn't about being self-serving, and trampling people.

Ambition doesn't have to mean greed, financial gain and exploitation. Being ambitious is about working to the best of our ability.

My entry into librarianship was a career change from being a conference manager. Was I ambitious? Of course I was. I wanted to learn more. I wanted to create a new professional network. I wanted understand more, to really feel part of the business within which I was employed. I set myself a time limit in that first job – I would move on after a year to a role with more responsibility.

I felt I had a talent for this kind of work – and if I also felt that talent was God-given, did I not have a responsibility to develop and explore the new skills? Ambition to me is being the best law librarian I can be. I also want to be the best runner I can be, the best conference speaker I can be, the best PCC member I can be, the best PhD student I can be, and, yes, when it's my turn, I want to be the best church toilet cleaner, too. Wrapped up in all that is a sense of my own laziness and under-achievement – not the best combination, but I live with the nagging doubt I could have done better.

So I believe that if your talent, enthusiasm and ability is in leadership you should perform this to the best of your ability – you should be a leader, and you should lead well. The ability to influence someone else's working life is a privilege.

What if I get promoted? Should I avoid making a fuss, putting myself forward for things? Does that demonstrate humility?

No. That is a misunderstanding of humility. God made you and God put you in situations so he could use you. (If anyone figures out what it is he's using me for, could you let me know, because I am still working on that one myself). Humility is understanding that you pretty much need him for everything. Humility says '*I rely only on God.*' Pride says, '*I'm proving my humility by refusing promotion.*' Humility is not about refusing the limelight. It is about understanding that the limelight is a place from which you can work for the good of others.

I have been incredibly fortunate in finding opportunities with *SLA Europe*, the *Special Library Association*. I've been to four awesome conferences in the US. Let's face it, in 2009 I never thought I'd have four trips to the US. I led the chapter last year. I'm proud of my achievements – and I know where I have needed God's help along the way. Sometimes

that's only with hindsight, but, hey, life is all about learning. I'm prouder still of the colleagues I have encouraged, the awards I've been part of the judging panel for, the introductions between people I have been able to make. Writing this, I am aware how trite it sounds, but being on stage last year receiving an award, amongst American hoop-la and razzmatazz was fun, but it was tough. All those things when I knew I hadn't been the best I could – missed deadlines, broken good intentions, out and out failures of love, compassion, self-control – these were what I was thinking about (as well as 'don't fall over'). Sometimes it feels like the more I am in a position of influence or authority, the more I become horribly aware of my own failings and shortcomings.

It is hard to be a good leader and to be full of yourself. The needs of others and of the business have to take precedence. You will have to make decisions about other people's lives based on your principles. And you will need to stand by those principles. I want people to notice something different about me at work not because I wear a piece of jewellery, but because I think and act fairly, ethically, respectfully – and that I try as hard as I am able to love my co-workers. And if I am honest, with some people, I struggle. My pride and my ego and the laziness often stop me doing the best I can.

The idea that someone else will map out a career path for me is long gone. I do not expect to stay in a job for life, with carefully spaced promotion and training. All my professional development in the last few years has been self-funded or self-propelled. I've not been in a job with a budget for training for four years. And after all, if I left it to my managers to decide what I needed training on, they'd choose what they wanted me to be, not what I wanted. So in a way I have relished this freedom.

I strongly believe we can do our best as Christians by remembering to be salt and light in this world. How does that affect me in practice?

If you are a meticulous, speedy, knowledgeable cataloguer, and that is your life's work, well, firstly, I take my hat off to you – I am a terrible librarian in some ways because that kind of thing is really not my cup of tea. And I appreciate that my kind of librarianship is feasible only because there are people who care about metadata and MARC fields and worry about the implementation of RDA, XML, and Z39.50. And God wants you to be the best meticulous, speedy, knowledgeable cataloguer you can be, because that's what you're equipped for. So I am not calling for us to take on roles we feel are outside of our talents. But I am calling for us to take on roles that challenge, and stretch us, and put us in places that are outside our comfort zone, because I believe we should never be complacent about our role or our ability to learn or teach others.

Do people understand what you do for a living, and why you bring value to their business? If they don't – whose fault is that? Should we expect to be recognised just for showing up? I don't think so. Are you uncomfortable with the idea of telling people what a great job you do for them? Don't use

humility as an excuse to diminish your professional standing. Should you take or stay in a junior job because you are a Christian? Only if you are comfortable wasting your God-given talents. You cannot be salt and light in the workplace if you have no-one to season or illuminate.

The more people we work with, the more people we can influence. Christians in leadership roles have amazing opportunities to shape the organisations in which they work.

We have to live in this flawed and uncertain world. If we are going to be able to light people's ways, then they will have to take us seriously. That means working as a credible professional colleague. So I look the part, based on my firm's standards. Given that I am the third laziest person in the world when it comes to makeup and haircuts, this does involve a little bit of effort on my behalf, but then I understand other people have to look at me all day so I may as well make it as pleasant for them as I can.

We may not be citizens of this world, but we have to understand its rules in order to be able to subvert them or play by them when necessary. I work in the City so I dress like a City worker. 90% of my working wardrobe is second hand, charity shop offerings – and I do admit I find a quiet satisfaction adding up how little my clothes cost working alongside those whose shoes cost the same as my rent. A friend of mine says that you have to be *'in it to win it.'*

How does that make a difference to ambition and my workplace discipleship? It might not hold great benefit for me as a Christian. But I think we forget sometimes that we might be the one person that represents an entire faith to our colleagues. How would they judge your faith if you were the sole exemplar of a Christian? It's no use saying it's unfair to judge like that, or that one should look at the heart not the person – we know that, but those are our rules. Your secular colleague plays by their rules, and a bit of judging a book by its cover is perfectly normal.

So, to conclude. I think we are accountable in many ways in the jobs we do. We're accountable to God, for the talents we've been given, and our responsibility is to use them well. That is a good ambition.

We're accountable to our colleagues – to lead well, to promote our profession and to be a pleasure not a chore to work alongside. That is a good ambition.

And we owe it to ourselves to learn, develop and challenge ourselves as we work on our jobs and our own journey of discipleship. That is a good ambition.

Am I ambitious? Oh yes.

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