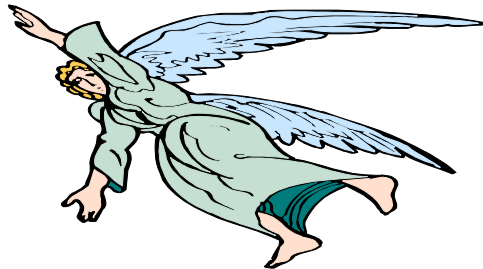


Winter 2012

CHRISTIAN LIBRARIAN



The Journal of the
Librarians' Christian Fellowship

CONTENTS INCLUDE

- ***ANGELS AND PINNACLES***
- ***PUBLISHING GREAT CHRISTIAN BOOKS***
- ***IN SEARCH OF LOST WRITINGS***
- ***FAITH AND LITERARY WORKS***
- ***THE SAMOVAR STORY***
- ***BREAKING THE DEAFENING SILENCE***



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*

**CHRISTIAN LIBRARIAN: THE JOURNAL OF THE LIBRARIANS' CHRISTIAN
FELLOWSHIP [incorporating Librarians' Christian Fellowship Newsletter]. (ISSN
0309-4170) No. 59, Winter 2012.**

Secretary and Publications Editor: Graham Hedges, *Hon. FCLIP, MCLIP*. Address: 34
Thurlestone Avenue, Ilford, Essex, IG3 9DU, England. Tel. 020 8599 1310. E-mail
secretary@librarianscf.org.uk

Printing: Concisely Supplies 4 Business, Chelmsford, Essex.

Views expressed in this journal are those of the contributors and not necessarily those of
the Fellowship as a whole. Acceptance of advertising leaflets does not indicate official
endorsement by LCF.

Librarians' Christian Fellowship minimum subscription for 2013: £26.00. Reduced rate for
student, retired and unemployed members/subscribers: £16.00.

© Librarians' Christian Fellowship and contributors, December 2012.

SELECTED CONTENTS

04:Margaret Keeling: Angels and Pinnacles

06:Louise Manners: Faith in the Dock

15:Annual General Meeting Minutes for 2012

19:Graham Hedges: Publishing Great Christian Books

22:Diana Guthrie: In Search of Lost Writings

28:Robert Foster: Eye on the Profession

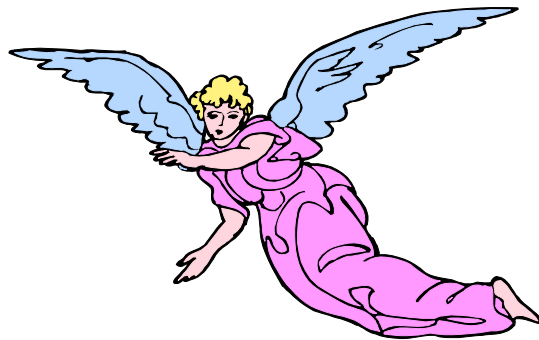
33:Louis Hemmings: The Samovar Story

39:Graham Hedges: Breaking the Deafening Silence

THE FIRST WORD

MARGARET KEELING discovers a new project to highlight the 'dazzling treasure' of our religious heritage; looks forward to Advent and Christmas; and anticipates a new era for Christians in the library and information professions

ANGELS AND PINNACLES



I came face to face with a banner bearing this intriguing phrase during the summer, when visiting one of the large and beautiful 'wool' churches in Suffolk

It is a new heritage learning project aimed at older people, tourists and children in order *'to help you discover the dazzling treasure of our religious heritage'*. The project uses workshops and a web site in an innovative way to encourage people to notice more, and understand the stories behind the materials - glass, stone and wood - of ancient churches. The web site <http://angelsandpinnacles.org.uk> uses beautiful photographs and *'quirky facts'* to *'capture those who have not been involved in learning about church heritage before'*

Angels and pinnacles. Material buildings and heavenly beings. A new way of bringing to life old and often familiar buildings for people who may have little understanding of the way churches have

grown and developed over time.

At a different level, Advent is the time in the Christian year when we recall the '*dazzling treasures*' of our salvation heritage. Readings, hymns and prayers remind us of the long line of prophets, kings and ordinary people open to God, and essential links in the coming of the long awaited Saviour. A '*dazzling treasure*' unknown to most people but without which Christmas however family centred is a hollow commercial festival. It's interesting to see how many churches are responding to this challenge of lack of understanding of the real story of Christmas. Innovative ideas are being used to '*capture*' the attention of those who cannot see beyond the sentimentalised images on Christmas cards to the reality of Incarnation – God entering our world and our life. (See the Baptist Union '*Get in the Picture*' www.getinthepicture.org.uk for example).

This last year has seen the decision to make changes, to go forward into the future with a new name, as *Christians in Library and Information Services*. Before we move on, we too need to look back at the spiritual heritage of our own organisation. It's good to be reminded that we are only here because of the vision, prayer and work of past members.

We are making changes in order to make our understanding of God at work in our profession more visible and open to people in library and information services who don't know who we are and what we do. In practical ways we want to '*capture*' the interest particularly of new entrants to our profession

We know the coming year will again be a difficult year for people in our profession facing the problems and challenges of technological and organisational change. As *Christians in Library and Information Services* we can be encouraged by the past to go on to fulfil our calling to make Jesus known within the profession.

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

THE SECOND WORD

LOUISE MANNERS is worried by recent challenges to the expression of Christian faith in secular society

FAITH IN THE DOCK

The experience of Justice Jeremy Cooke, a member of the *Lawyers' Christian Fellowship* and a vice-president of the *Lawyers' Christian Fellowship* until December 2010, is very worrying. His comments when jailing a woman for attempting to murder Member of Parliament Stephen Timms and when sentencing a woman to eight years in prison for taking a drug to procure a miscarriage at thirty-nine weeks have been criticised. Terry Sanderson, President of the *National Secular Society*, is quoted by ***The Guardian*** as saying, "*The Lawyers' Christian Fellowship appears to have a large number of influential legal representatives among its members. It purports simply to promote Christian fellowship among them, but one of its stated primary objectives is 'applying God's justice on the ground'... There is nothing wrong with a judge being a Christian, but that is a very different thing to being a 'Christian judge' who wants to apply biblical principles to judgments when those principles might not accord with the civil law that he or she is charged to uphold.*"

The plan to open a Catholic secondary school in Richmond-upon-Thames has been vociferously opposed by secularists. It is true that Richmond-upon-Thames currently has a very successful faith secondary school, an Anglican school, and a previous Catholic secondary school failed, but the outcry appears to be out of all proportion.

January 2013 approaches and, with it the annual jamboree of the *Six Book Challenge* leading up to *World Book Day*. Following widespread criticism that previous ambassador pop singer and author Peter Andre was not sufficiently serious to be an ambassador for the *Six Book Challenge*, former SAS soldier Andy McNab has been chosen as the ambassador for the *Six Book Challenge* 2013. The *Six Book Challenge* has been successful in the past in prisons so hopefully Andy McNab's involvement will help there and in addition increase *Six Book Challenge* participation in the army.

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*.



LIBRARIANS' CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP

CHRISTIANS IN LIBRARY, INFORMATION AND ARCHIVE WORK

REPORT ON RESULTS OF POSTAL BALLOT VOTE

The Executive Committee would like to express great appreciation to all who took the time to complete and return their ballot papers. We are very pleased that 66% of the membership returned the papers by 31 August 2012.

The majority of votes were in favour of the proposed changes; however we shall certainly take into account the concerns of those who voted against. We very much appreciate your continued support, and trust that as the implementation of the proposals is worked out, your concerns will be allayed.

It should be stressed that the Fellowship is still committed to its traditional statement of faith although in future we will not require individual members to give formal assent to this, unless they wish to hold office within the Fellowship.

Section A

Amendments to the constitution requiring more than 40% of the membership to vote in favour if they are to be accepted.

This requires at least 67 votes in favour of each amendment. At least 74 voted in favour of each amendment (64.3%) so these are all carried.

The detailed voting figures are:

1. Clause 5a and 5b(iii): deletion of membership declaration:
74 for, 33 against, 3 abstaining

2. Clause 5b, new wording regarding joining requirements:

82 for, 25 against, 2 abstaining

3. Clause 3, addition regarding Officers' agreement with Doctrinal Statement:

87 for, 8 against, 3 abstaining

4. Clause 13, new wording regarding interdenominational basis:

88 for, 16 against, 4 abstaining

5. Clause 14, deletion of clause restricting religious beliefs of speakers:

77 for, 23 against, 7 abstaining

The committee will now re-draft the above clauses of the constitution agreed for amendment.

Section B

Other (non-binding) suggestions for changes.

1. Clause 1, name change to "*Christians in Library and Information Services*"

85 for, 11 against, 9 abstaining

2. Clause 2, re-statement of Aims :

100 for, 4 against, 2 abstaining

3. Clause 9, Officers of the Fellowship: removing posts of Regional Representatives:

98 for, 3 against, 5 abstaining

4. Clause 15, Revision of the constitution: tidying up the wording to match other revisions:

91 for, 12 against, 5 abstaining

These clauses will require further discussion before suggestions for changes are brought to the AGM.

Vernon Burgess

Janice Paine

(Scrutineers)

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 site 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**.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The Annual General Meeting of the *Librarians' Christian Fellowship* will be held on **Saturday 20 April 2013**, from 11.20.a.m., at the **Methodist Central Hall, Coventry**, as part of the annual conference programme.

Nominations for office and notice of any motions to be put to the meeting should be in my hands not later than *Saturday 23 March 2013*.

Nominations for the following executive committee posts are invited: Secretary, Overseas Secretary, Web Site and **E-Newsletter** Manager, Library Assistance Manager, Midlands regional rep., Southern regional rep., Western regional rep., Irish regional rep., Members Without Portfolio (two positions).

Each nomination will require a

proposer and seconder and each candidate should indicate their willingness to serve in writing.

Some existing committee members may be willing to stand for re-election but, as explained below, we are always keen to attract newcomers onto the committee.

A formal agenda for the meeting will be circulated to members not less than two weeks before the meeting.

SOONER OR LATER

Spring 2013 will mark my thirty-fifth anniversary as LCF's Publications Editor and my thirty-third anniversary as Secretary of the Fellowship.

I suppose that I could try and emulate the record of a one time Editor of the *Christian Herald* who was still editing the newspaper in his nineties and was listed in *Guinness World Records* as the world's oldest serving editor. However, sooner or later, I am going to have to 'retire' from office as both Secretary and Editor.

It may be that there are existing members who would be interested in serving in either or both of these positions. Our Fellowship is moving into a new era, following the recent report of our Review Group and postal ballot, and needs to find key people who can help to lead the organisation forward as it responds to the challenges of the future.

Serving as Secretary/Editor has been hard work, but it has been

immensely rewarding to have met so many Christians involved in library work and to have had such a close involvement in both the library profession and the wider Christian world of para-church organisations.

Is this a way in which *you* could assist in the future development of the Fellowship? If you might be interested in either or both of these roles, or would like to discuss what might be involved, I will be very pleased to hear from you.

Our Review Group report also envisaged the creation of new committee roles – including Recruitment Officer and Prayer Secretary. Again, if you think that you might have a contribution to make in either of these positions, please get in touch.

OVERSEAS ASSISTANCE

From time to time we are approached by Christian organisations, at home or abroad, who want advice or practical assistance with their libraries. These requests are usually publicised in *Christian Librarian* or our *E-Newsletter*.

Keith Ferdinando, of the *Universite Shalom de Bunia*, in the Democratic Republic of Congo, approached us to say that his institution was looking for a volunteer librarian for a short-term consultancy.

LCF's Overseas Secretary,

Eleanor Neil, corresponded with Keith and established that the library uses the *Open Source Software* product ISIS for its on-line catalogue. What they are wanting is assistance with identifying and installing a circulation module integrated with ISIS.

No volunteers have been forthcoming from the LCF membership. However, since ISIS is relatively common in African libraries, Eleanor has urged Keith to make sure that both library and IT staff are in contact with a support group and has also suggested various individuals and organisations in the UK and USA who might be able to give advice.

We were also approached by the *Phnom Penh Bible School* in Cambodia who need a volunteer librarian for at least six months, partly to give training to an existing Cambodian library assistant.

Shirley Sinclair, who is co-ordinating the search for a volunteer librarian recommends that the volunteer goes out under the auspices of *OMF Cambodia*. A member of the OMF team would be able to arrange accommodation and other matters, although the volunteer would still need to be self-sufficient.

If you could help with either of these projects, or would like more information, please contact Eleanor Neil, 563B Mah Vrang, East Road, Algies Bay, Warkworth 0920, New Zealand.

E-mail LCFoverseas@etelligence.info

PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL NEWS

- Some members of the Fellowship will have known **Edna Coleman**, the mother of our late Treasurer **Linda Coleman** (who died in 1998).

We were sorry to hear that Edna died on 13 September 2012.

Edna took a keen interest in her daughter's friends from LCF and the wider library world and contributed to the work of our Fellowship by typesetting our *Issues in Librarianship 2* booklet published in 1996 to coincide with our twentieth anniversary.

We were recently informed that Edna has left a generous gift to our Fellowship in her will, for which we are very grateful.

Readers will want to give thanks for Edna's life of Christian service and remember her friends and any remaining family members in their prayers.

- Past LCF speaker **Colin Duriez** is the author of *J.R.R. Tolkien: the making of a legend* (Lion, £8.99, ISBN 978-0745955148) and *Amazing and Extraordinary Facts: J.R.R. Tolkien* (David and Charles, 30 November 2012, £9.99, ISBN 978-1446302699).

Colin will be making a further contribution to Inklings studies in the new year with the publication of his *C.S. Lewis: a biography of friendships* (Lion, 22 March 2013, £8.99, ISBN 978-0745955872).

- Our member the Rev. **John Waddington-Feather** tells me that his *Blake Hartley* mystery novels are now being taken up by *Kindle*. Two titles – ***The Moorland Mystery*** and ***The Bradshaw Mystery*** - are published already but he hopes that in time all of his novels will be available.

John comments that this will provide a steady income – and by-passes the London publishers' editors!

CHANGING THE CITY

Everyone wants to change the City, but how do you change a highly complex and highly incentivised social structure? A welcome contribution to the debate has been provided by past LCF speaker **James Featherby** in ***Of Markets and Men***, published by the *Centre for Tomorrow's Company*, in conjunction with the *Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales* and the *London Institute for Contemporary Christianity* (price £10.00, ISBN 978-0957294912).

This important new book (which deserves to be widely stocked in libraries) can be ordered from the Centre for Tomorrow's Company, Samuel House, 6 St. Alban's Street, London, SW1Y 4SQ.

BONUSES, BENEFITS AND BAILOUTS

Bonuses, Benefits and Bailouts: the morality of the King James Bible was the title of a second exhibition

organised by LCF member the Rev. **David Smith**, proprietor of the *Museum of the Book*, and mounted at the Church of *All Hallows By the Tower*, London, between 22 June – 23 September 2012.

The brochure for the display explained that this was an “*exhibition of manuscripts, first edition bibles, prayer books and other artefacts challenging our thinking on legality versus morality using the King James Bible as a starting point*”.

Following on from last year's four hundredth anniversary of the ***King James Bible*** the exhibition included a first edition from 1611 and other early editions of the KJB and the ***Book of Common Prayer***.

Other historic editions on display included an original Gutenberg Bible, a 1583 ***Geneva Bible*** produced by English exiles fleeing from the persecutions of “Bloody Mary” and a “Restoration Bible” dating from the time of King Charles II's return to Britain. This last named included an impressive fold-out illustration of Adam and Eve and the Garden of Eden.

A special feature of the exhibition was a Bible owned by Elvis Presley and recently sold at auction for £59,000. This Bible, which was bought by a private collector and loaned for the duration of the exhibition, included handwritten notes and comments by Elvis. The Presley Bible was displayed in a glass case with a rare 1953 Coronation Bible: the Queen of Britain alongside the King of Rock 'n' Roll!

Artefacts from biblical times on show included a harvesting sickle from Mesopotamia, dating from around 3000 BC, and a 2,600 year old cuneiform tablet mentioning the Babylonian King Nebuchadnezzar.

Other items of interest included a Spencer Family Bible, signed by some of Princess Diana's ancestors from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and a Bible and other objects belonging to Reggie Kray. The East London gangster's autobiography describes how he had "*become close to God*" while serving a prison sentence.

The battle against slavery was illustrated by iron shackles and copies of books written by leading abolitionists such as Olaudah Equiano, John Newton and William Wilberforce.

The testimony of Eric Liddell, athlete and missionary, was highlighted by letters, photographs and a theatre programme from the current stage version of ***Chariots of Fire***. This part of the exhibition also included a Bible belonging to King Edward VIII who, as the Prince of Wales, had tried to persuade Liddell to run on a Sunday against his conscience.

THE CHURCH OF EVERYWHERE

Journalist **Cole Moreton** was the special guest speaker at a meeting of the *Arts Centre Group* held in the *Cafe Eterno* in Covent Garden, London, on Thursday 27 September

2012.

Cole provided an account of his varied career in the newspaper industry. He had begun as a reporter on the ***Church Times*** where part of his brief had been to "*explain evangelicals*" to the editorial staff and their readers. After completing a university course he had given himself six months to break into the national press and had managed to sell an article to a leading newspaper at the very end of this period.

During his successful career in journalism Cole has interviewed such well known figures as Peter Mandelson, Tony Blair and Nick Clegg as well as religious leaders such as the late John Wimber.

Cole explained that a personal spiritual crisis, prompted by the imminent death of a friend, inspired the writing of his book ***Is God Still an Englishman?*** (Little, Brown, £20.00, ISBN 978-1408701805).

The book charts the decline of organised religion in England and the demise of the "*old Imperial*" idea of God which links the Christian religion with the political and social establishment. Cole believes that this approach to religion enjoyed its "*last flowering*" at the time of the wedding of Charles and Diana.

The *Church of England* still has the status of the established church but "*all bets will be off*" when our present Queen dies.

Although only a small minority now attend church, opinion polls suggest that belief in God and prayer remain high. Many people seem to belong to the "*Church of*

Everywhere” rather than to the traditional denominations and new forms of spirituality are emerging.

We are now living in a “*post-multi-cultural society*” which is marked both by secularisation and by the return of religion to the public agenda. We should “*celebrate what we are becoming*” rather than trying to hold on to an imagined golden age from the past.

Cole's thought provoking - and controversial - address was followed by a questions and answers session which touched upon such matters as the likely disestablishment of the *Church of England* and the lack of influential Christians in the media who can follow in the footsteps of figures from earlier generations such as C.S. Lewis, Malcolm Muggeridge and Gerald Priestland.

CURRENT AWARENESS

● Matthew Grimley's article *Private Lives made Public* introduces the latest on-line supplement to the **Oxford Dictionary of National Biography**.

The new supplement provides biographical accounts of sixty individuals who made important contributions to the history of the Christian churches in twentieth century Britain. The compilers recognise that some religious groups – notably Evangelicals and Roman Catholics – are under-represented in the original **Oxford Dictionary** published in 2004.

Well known evangelicals

featured in the supplement include (past LCF speaker) Raymond Johnston (1927-1985), Director of the *Nationwide Festival of Light*, and David Watson (1933-1984), who made the church of *St. Michael-le-Belfrey*, York, a centre of the British charismatic movement.

Churchmen of other persuasions featured in the supplement include Alec Vidler (1899-1991), the radical Anglican clergyman who declared that he was “*bored with parsons*” and attracted audiences of fifteen hundred to his weekly Cambridge lectures.

A footnote to the article explains that selected lives from the supplement are available free of charge on the **Oxford DNB** web site until the end of the year. The **Dictionary** as a whole, and its supplements, is also freely available on-line to members of most public library services in the UK.

The article appears in the **Church Times** for 28 September 2012, pp. 23-24.

● Sophie Lister's *Tolkien's World* looks forward to the December release of ***The Hobbit: An Unexpected Journey***, the first part of a new film trilogy based on the works of J.R.R. Tolkien.

Tolkien's stories have their roots in traditional fairy stories but the author also draws on his own experiences during the First World War.

Although Tolkien was a devout Catholic, there is no explicit Christian allegory in his novels. However, Middle Earth is presented as a place

created good, but now fallen and subject to evil forces that seek to corrupt and control. His heroes are complex characters, capable of selfishness as well as heroism.

There are glimpses of an unnamed benevolent and redemptive force at work in Middle Earth. This all adds up to what Tolkien called *eucatastrophe*, the joyous reversal, the happy ending, which the author believed foreshadowed the resurrection of Christ.

The article appears in *Idea*, the magazine of the *Evangelical Alliance*, November/December 2012, p. 32.

- Dr. Rowan Williams, Archbishop of Canterbury, talks about his book *The Lion's World* (SPCK, £8.99, ISBN 978-0281068951) in an interview with Sameer Rahim which is intriguingly titled "*Aslan is on the Edge of the Erotic*".

Dr. Williams argues that C.S. Lewis' *Chronicles of Narnia* novels for children are notable for their sensuous as well as spiritual pleasures and cites the episode in *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* where the resurrected Aslan romps with the children Susan and Lucy.

The Archbishop admits that Lewis was writing in a different age but argues that Lewis' attitude to non-Christian religions was more open-minded than some of his critics are prepared to admit.

Dr. Williams believes that Lewis' finest book is his *A Grief*

Observed, written after the death of his beloved wife, Joy.

The interviewer suggests that Dr. Williams has been misunderstood by his evangelical critics, and by atheists, and that the Archbishop has a firm belief in the divinity of Christ and the empty tomb.

The interview appears in *The Times* for 28 July 2012, *Review*, pp. R20 – R21.

- Simon Parke explains how he has attempted to update John Bunyan's puritan classic *Pilgrim's Progress* with the help of modern psychology.

Bunyan's original book is the seventh best-selling book in the English language and helped to prepare the way for the literary genre of the novel. However, Bunyan was a man of his times who wrote in the context of the seventeenth century when non-conformists felt threatened by the restoration of the monarchy and the resurgence of Roman Catholicism. In our present age the book is still regarded as a classic but as one that people do not read very much.

There have been earlier attempts to update the Bunyan formula for the present day. These have included C.S. Lewis' *The Pilgrim's Regress* and Enid Blyton's version for children, *The Land of Far-Beyond*.

Parke's *Pippa's Progress: a pilgrim's journey to heaven* (Darton, Longman and Todd, £9.99, ISBN 978-0232529458) describes the spiritual journey of a present day

pilgrim. Along the way the central character, a woman named Pippa, meets such characters as Breathless, Terrified, Shame and Shaw Thyng. The novel differs from Bunyan's original in that it shows a more positive attitude to creation and a less exaggerated emphasis on sin and guilt.

Simon Parke's article *Pilgrim's Revamp* appears in ***Third Way*** for November 2012, pp. 22-25.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING



EBSCO PUBLISHING

The *Librarians' Christian Fellowship* has an electronic licensing relationship with *EBSCO Publishing*, "the world's most prolific aggregator of full text journals, magazines and other sources". The full texts of our two main publications - the ***Librarians' Christian Fellowship E-Newsletter*** and ***Christian Librarian*** - are available on EBSCO Publishing's databases. Subscribers are able to retrieve articles from our publications and the Fellowship will receive a small commission for each article

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of the Librarians' Christian Fellowship held on Saturday 28 April 2012 in the Chancellor's Room, Hughes Parry Hall, 19-26 Cartwright Gardens, London, WC1.

About twenty-seven members and friends of the Fellowship were present. The President, Margaret Keeling, was in the chair. She began the proceedings by welcoming members and guests to the meeting and by presenting "apologies for absence" from a number of members and friends including Derek Fawcett, Anne MacRitchie, Elizabeth Pool, Kirsty Robinson, and Susan Rugg. Acceptance of the minutes of the meeting held on Saturday 2 April 2011 was proposed by Philip

Hayworth, seconded by Robert Foster and agreed by the meeting although it was noted that the annual accounts presented at the meeting had been for the year **2010** not 2009 as stated.

ANNUAL REPORT

Copies of the annual report for the year 2011-2012 had been circulated to members prior to the beginning of the annual general meeting.

This reported that some of the year's activities had been linked to the four hundredth anniversary of the **King James Bible**. These had included the April 2011 Conference, with guest speakers Rob Cotton and Canon Pete Wilcox, visits to Bible exhibitions at *All Hallows Church*, London, and the *Bodleian Library*, Oxford, and a walking tour of Oxford following in the footsteps of the KJB translators.

The Bishop of Exeter, the Rt. Rev. Michael Langrish, had been the preacher at the Service of Thanksgiving held during CILIP's *Umbrella* conference at the *University of Hertfordshire*.

The October 2011 lecture in Reading by Dave Roberts had provided a Christian response to themes in the novels of Dan Brown and Stephenie Meyer.

The LCF Review Group, set up to advise on the future work of the Fellowship, had held several meetings during 2011.

The Fellowship currently had 114 paid up members with a further eighteen still to pay their

subscriptions for 2012. There were an additional thirteen subscribers to **Christian Librarian** with two renewals still outstanding. Thirty-seven complimentary copies of the journal were sent to relevant organisations and publications.

After the report had been received by the meeting, Robert Foster led a prayer of thanksgiving for the lives of Ken Bakewell and Norah Sayer, who had both died during the past year.

TREASURER'S REPORT

Our Treasurer, Nick Horley, distributed copies of the accounts for the year ending 31 December 2011.

The balance carried over from 2010 had been £6345.65. Income during the calendar year 2011 had been £6102.93. Expenditure had been £6019.10. Income had, therefore, exceeded expenditure by £83.83. The balance carried over into 2012 had been £6429.48.

Acceptance of the Treasurer's report was proposed by Vernon Burgess, seconded by Richard Waller, and agreed by the meeting.

ELECTION OF OFFICERS

As all candidates were unopposed, no ballot was held and the following candidates were declared to have been appointed to office.

President: Candidate: **Margaret Keeling**

Proposed by: Executive Committee

Chair: Candidate: **Louise Manners**

Proposed by: Graham Hedges and Janice Paine

Secretary: Candidate: **Graham Hedges**

Proposed by: Janet Danels and Kim Walker

Membership **Secretary:**
Candidate: **Janice Paine**

Proposed by: Margaret Stone and Thelma Morgan

Northern **Regional** **Rep.:**
Candidate: **Philip Hayworth**

Proposed by: John Marrison and Richard Waller

Southern **Regional** **Rep.:**
Candidate: Diana Guthrie

Proposed by: Kirsty Robinson and Mary Barker

Welsh **Regional Representative:**
Candidate: **Mary Barker**

Proposed by: Diana Guthrie and Graham Hedges

Motion: Proposed by: **Nick Horley** for the Executive Committee

“That from 1 January 2013 the annual subscription of the Librarians’ Christian Fellowship for both members and subscribers should be £26.00. The reduced rate for

student, unemployed and retired persons should be £16.00.; the rate for two members/subscribers living at the same address and receiving one copy of each LCF publication should also be £16.00 per person.”

Acceptance of this motion was proposed by Diana Guthrie, seconded by Christine Gagan, and passed unanimously by the meeting.

THE NEXT THIRTY YEARS

There was some discussion on the executive recommendations of the LCF Review Group which had been published in the Spring 2012 edition of ***Christian Librarian***.

Gordon Harris explained that the Group had been set up to consider the future work of the Fellowship in the light of a declining and aging membership. The Group had been chaired by Michael Coveney, of *Transform Work UK*, and the other members had been Vernon Burgess, Margaret Keeling, Louise Manners, Mary Wood, and Gordon himself.

The Group had considered such topics as the role of the Fellowship, strategy, recruitment, and the need to mobilise members. It was agreed that there was a need for change although the basic aims of the Fellowship should remain the same.

It had been suggested that there was a need for modernising communications and that someone

should be appointed to take responsibility for recruitment. Other changes to the committee were also proposed. A change of name for the Fellowship might also be necessary in order to reflect the diverse fields in which librarians and information officers were now employed.

It was proposed that the doctrinal basis should be retained but that, in future, individual members should only be required to indicate formal assent if they wished to serve as officers of the Fellowship.

Philip Hayworth noted that the Review Group had envisaged publishing ***Christian Librarian*** in electronic form only. This might be acceptable to some members but would not be suitable for those who lacked access to computer equipment.

Gordon Harris said that the content of ***Christian Librarian*** was excellent but the journal was expensive to produce and the money involved could be used for outreach activities. Michael Coveney suggested that it might be possible to print off a limited number of copies for those without computer access.

John Wickenden suggested that greater use should be made of social media. Michael Coveney said that the Fellowship should be promoted by a combination of the web site and *Facebook*.

Robert Foster commented that evidence from the student world seemed to suggest that most communications on the social media were with individuals already known.

Annabel Haycraft said that she was not a fan of *Facebook* or *Twitter* as they did not encourage active participation.

Nick Horley said that he did not enjoy reading publications on a screen.

Michael Coveney said that the answer was to use *all* of these media and to mix and match as necessary. There was a need to understand the technology.

Diana Guthrie suggested that the major question was how to motivate people to join the Fellowship.

Margaret Keeling said that we needed to look at what we offered to potential members.

Mary Wood said that her hope was that more people would become involved with the work of the Fellowship but that each participating individual would need to do less.

In response to a question from Barbara Gilman, it was explained that there would not be a vote on the Review Group recommendations at the present meeting, but that there would be a postal ballot of members later in the year.

Louise Manners stressed that it was important for members to vote as certain changes would need the support of more than 40% of the current membership.

There was no further business and Margaret Keeling declared the annual general meeting for 2012 to be closed.

PUBLISHING GREAT CHRISTIAN BOOKS

GRAHAM HEDGES enjoys an overview of current religious publishing – and of famous London landmarks – from the board room of *Hodder and Stoughton*

Sixteen members and friends of the *Librarians' Christian Fellowship* took part in a visit to the offices of the publishers *Hodder and Stoughton*, in London's Euston Road, on Thursday 6 September 2012.

Our host for the afternoon was Ian Metcalfe, Publishing Director of *Hodder Faith*. Ian received us in the *Hodder* board room many floors above street level from which we enjoyed a magnificent view of London's landmarks such as the *British Telecom* Tower, the *Shard*, the *Gherkin*, the *London Eye* and even *Battersea Power Station*.

Ian Metcalfe has worked for *Hodder Faith* for four years having originally been appointed to the company to reinvigorate the ***New International Version*** of the Bible. He had previously spent twelve years with *HarperCollins* where he had experience of publishing and marketing other contemporary editions of the Scriptures.

Hodder and Stoughton has a long and distinguished history as a publisher of religious and other books. The company was founded

in 1868, originally to publish Christian books, but later developed into a general publisher whose output included popular authors such as John Buchan, the *Moffat Bible* and other Christian titles, educational books, and the famous ***Teach Yourself*** series.

Hodder developed its publishing of evangelical titles during the 1960s and 1970s under the direction of the late Edward England (a past LCF speaker) who introduced the ***New International Version*** to the UK market and published many books from the charismatic end of the spectrum.

By the end of the 1980s, however, *Hodder* had become something of a “*monolith*” and the time was ripe for change. This came in the form of a takeover by the comparatively new publishing company of *Headline*, a very commercial enterprise with many successful trade titles to its name. Although this was, in many ways, “*a minnow swallowing a whale*”, *Headline* purchased *Hodder and Stoughton* in the early 1990s and *Hodder Headline* became a new name in British publishing.

Further change came in the later 1990s when *Hodder Headline* was sold to *W.H. Smith*. This was not a particularly happy time for the company but in the early 2000s *Hodder Headline* was sold to *Hachette*, a major French publisher with a significant share of the market in Spain and the United States.

Hachette introduced a different way of working. The company is “*resolutely federal*” with its

constituent imprints and divisions guaranteed independence within certain bounds.

In the United Kingdom *Hachette* now has seven major divisions and imprints which include *Octopus*, *Little Brown*, *Orion*, *Headline* and *Hodder and Stoughton*.

Hodder and Stoughton as a whole has an annual turnover of some £60 million and its current authors include such well known names as John Le Carre, John Grisham, and Stephen King.

Hodder Faith is now an imprint of *Hodder and Stoughton General Books*, and is under the overall direction of the last remaining member of the Hodder family to be involved in the business.

Hodder Faith aims to continue in the tradition of “*publishing great Christian books*”. The imprint currently has six or seven staff and its sales are split fifty-fifty between Bibles and other Christian books.

Wm Paul Young's novel ***The Shack*** (Hodder, £7.99, ISBN 978-0340979495) has been Hodder's all-time best-selling religious title with total sales of some 600,000 copies. Some readers have questioned the book's theology but Ian Metcalfe is keen to stress that the novel is not a theological treatise but a “*thought experiment in how things might be*”. Ian is aware of one evangelical publisher who, while condemning the book in public, has privately recommended it to friends!

The Shack is to be followed by a second novel ***Crossroads*** (Hodder, November 2012, £16.99,

ISBN 978-1444745986), which Ian considers to be an even better book than its predecessor.

Other leading Christian authors currently on the *Hodder Faith* list include Philip Yancey, Joyce Meyer, R.T. Kendall and Timothy Keller. The last named writer's ***Every Good Endeavour*** (Hodder, November 2012, £12.99, ISBN 978-1444745122) stresses the importance of integrated living, with daily work and worship both being part of the Christian's service to God.

Nick Page has written several books on the history of early Christianity and his latest title is ***Kingdom of Fools*** (Hodder, £14.99, ISBN 978-0340996256). ***Red Letter Christianity*** by Shane Claiborne and Tony Campolo (Hodder, £12.99, ISBN 978-1444745399) carries a recommendation from the rock star Bono of U2.

Other forthcoming books coming from *Hodder Faith* include the final instalment in the ***Sacred Diary*** series from Adrian Plass, and ***C.S. Lewis: a life*** (Hodder, April 2013), a major new biography from Alister McGrath.

More controversial authors represented on the *Hodder Faith* list include Brian McClaren, whose latest title ***Why Did Jesus, Moses, the Buddha and Mohammed Cross the Road?*** (Hodder, £12.99, ISBN 978-1444703696) deals with inter-faith relations. Dave Tomlinson, pioneer of the “*post-evangelical*” movement, is the author of ***How to Be a Bad Christian ...***

and a better human being (Hodder, £12.99, ISBN 978-1444703849).

Backlist titles still available from *Hodder* include books by Jim Packer, Brother Andrew, Nicky Cruz and Jackie Pullinger.

As mentioned above, Ian originally joined Hodder to reinvigorate the **New International Version** Bible and in the past year he has published a revised text of the NIV, in various bindings and formats, to coincide with the four hundredth anniversary of the **King James Bible**.

Hodder are keen to work with churches, organisations and festivals and in the recent past the company has published a children's Bible, incorporating *Scripture Union* teaching materials, and a *Soul Survivor* Bible to tie in with the annual youth festival. This last named sold 20,000 copies at *Soul Survivor* in its first year.

Ian noted that we are “*living in interesting times*” and that the way in which books are being sold is changing fast. Across the entire *Hodder* range twenty to thirty per cent of book sales are now in electronic form but the total for Christian books is only ten per cent. However, there is considerable interest in reading the Bible in e-book form and sales of the NIV for *Kindle* and similar devices now account for fifteen or twenty per cent of Bible sales.

Fifty per cent of *Hodder Faith's* sales are currently through the general book trade (including *Amazon*) while the remaining fifty per cent are through the specialist

religious book trade. Independent Christian book shops are becoming increasingly important following the demise of *SPCK* and *Wesley Owen*.

Ian does not believe that the growth of the e-book market will lead to the death of the printed book. People will read books in electronic form that they do not need to keep but will buy printed books if they intend to keep them on their bookshelves.

Ian's spoken presentation was followed by a lively questions and answers session which touched on such matters as the need for downloadable audio books; the presence of imported American books in Christian bookshops; the decline of hymn book sales; and the apparent lack of recent biographies with widespread appeal.

Members of the LCF group enjoyed this informative glimpse into contemporary Christian publishing and were grateful for the generous free gifts of books from the *Hodder* range.

The present writer especially enjoyed the afternoon as a past “*Hodder author*”, of sorts. As I explained, my earliest writing effort for the former **Buzz** magazine was later reprinted in an anthology published by *Hodder and Stoughton*.¹

Graham Hedges, *Hon. FCLIP, MCLIP*, is the Secretary of the *Librarians' Christian Fellowship*.

¹ Graham Hedges, “If Only”. In *Little Fat Buzz*, compiled by Chris Spencer. Hodder and Stoughton, 1977, ISBN 0340214848, pp. 25-29.

IN SEARCH OF LOST WRITINGS

**DIANA GUTHRIE reports
on LCF's annual public
lecture held in Bristol on
Saturday 6 October 2012**

Members and friends of the Fellowship assembled in Bristol's *Redcliffe Anglican/Methodist Church Centre* on Saturday 6 October 2012 to hear **Robert Hicks**, founder and proprietor of *Creative Publishing*, speak on the subject *Lost Christian Letters of the First Century*.

Robert began with a very brief resumé of what had led him to become a Christian, which involved writing out the New Testament by hand.

Over the years he began to wonder why there are only twenty seven books in the New Testament. What happened to the Sanhedrin's letters authorising Saul to persecute the Christian communities? Where are the letters from people who wanted the Gentile Christians to conform to Jewish practices? St. Paul mentions additional letters he has written, for example to the Corinthians and the Philippians,

but they no longer exist. Did the Apostles never write to each other? There were Christian communities in the great cities of the Roman Empire, but no records have survived of the written communication between them that must surely have taken place.

Robert reckons that we may have only 1% of the documents produced by the Christian communities of the first century, although a greater proportion has survived from the second and third centuries. (This is in contrast to the four thousand plus letters by John Wesley that have come down to us). Indeed for a long time some 19th century scholars maintained that no original first century New Testament documents had survived except in a form doctored by late second century writers. However, the wonderful discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls in the late 1940s proved the authenticity of much very early Christian writing and cleared away a lot of intervening interpretation, which had been clouding our understanding of the New Testament. And even more miraculously, the few New Testament books that have come down to us have been enough to inspire the Christian Church to grow beyond the wildest dreams of the early church.

Early versions of what became the books of the New Testament would have been

written on scrolls, which presented practical problems when being read, and a large part of this Testament consists of short units – of narrative, argument, and so on - which would have been easily legible when part of a scroll was unrolled, which is why we can read and understand small portions without having to read and understand the whole Testament. The first three (Synoptic) Gospels have between seventy and one hundred and ten units each, dealing with specific events, teaching and stories; St. John's Gospel has roughly the same number of units, but is much more concerned with 'Who?', 'How?' and 'Why?'. The letters vary enormously, and Robert divides them into Paul's correspondence, '*Pilgrim Letters*' (those of James, Peter, Jude and the one to the Hebrews), whilst the three letters of John he categorises as '*Apostolic*'. He describes Revelation's format as a series of cartoons – very visual, brightly coloured and lively.

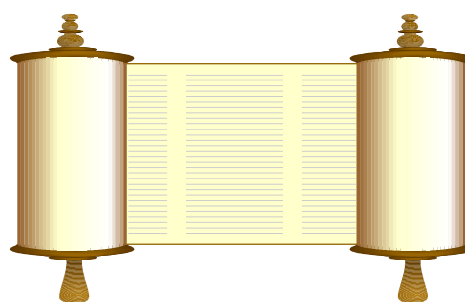
St. Paul remains the great communicator of the Early Church, but we usually have only one side – his - of the dialogues that took place; we have his replies in his letters, but often not the questions that prompted him to write.

The second part of Robert's talk dealt with the letter to the Romans, which he divides into

five '*articles*', each written from the point of view and in the style of someone holding a position in the early church: a prophet (God's wrath), a priest (God's grace), an apostle (God's people), a missionary (God's word and work), and a pastor (God's culture).

In the discussion that followed the talk, Robert said that although no women wrote any of the New Testament books, their influence would undoubtedly have been very strong, as it is known that several had prominent positions within individual churches.

He also believes that in contrast to specialists, who tend to revisit well-trodden paths, much original thinking about the Bible comes from '*ordinary people*', with their more varied experiences and thought patterns.



Diana Guthrie, MA, serves on the executive committee of the *Librarians' Christian Fellowship* as Southern Regional Representative.

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***

Listed below are those who have renewed their membership since early June, also those who have changed their details. Please inform the Membership Secretary of any *changes of address, job etc.*

LATE RENEWAL

ROBERTSON, Ms Christina H., Grace Villa, 1 The Grove, Musselburgh, East Lothian EH21 7HD - Tel: 0131 665 8634

CHANGES TO ADDRESS, JOB ETC.

COOPER, Miss Lois M., Camp Cottage, Camp Road, Freshwater, I.O.W. PO40 9HN - Library & Information Co-ordinator, Freshwater P.L. Tel: 01983 753295 - Email: mail@lmcooper.plus.com

NEIL, Mrs Eleanor M., 563B Mahurangi East Road, Algies Bay, Warkworth, 0920 New Zealand - Libn., David Yaxley Memorial Lib., Lifeway College. Email: librarian@etelligence.info

PARKER-DENNISON, Mrs Diana C., Lamb Farm, Dalwood, Axminster, E. Devon EX13 7HT - School Libn., Chilton Cantelo School, Somerset. Email: dianapd2003@yahoo.co.uk

WOOD, Mrs Mary E., 446 London Road, Leicester, LE2 2PP - Info.Researcher, Chartered Management Institute, Corby. Tel: 0116 210 1338 - Email: mary@the-woods.org.uk

REVIEWS

FAITH AND LITERARY WORKS

GOD AND CHARLES DICKENS:

RECOVERING THE CHRISTIAN VOICE OF A CLASSIC AUTHOR

Gary L. Colledge

**Brazos Press (distributed by SPCK), £10.99,
Paperback; 202p., ISBN 978-1587433207**

Arguing that his '*Christian voice is conspicuous and pervasive in his work*', the author is convinced that Charles Dickens was a Christian and that his faith underlay all he wrote. He claims that although Dickens did not write overtly Christian novels, he did write for Christians, seeking to divert them from the inward-looking preoccupations of the church and to rouse them to their moral responsibility towards the needs around them.

He acknowledges that thoughts expressed by characters in novels are not necessarily those of the author, but points out that Dickens said that all his good characters reflect at least some of Jesus' teaching. He counters the view that some of them are over-idealised by arguing that this was deliberate, to show what Christians should be like. On the other hand, some of his less sympathetic characters exhibit a pompous religiosity, not living out the faith they profess.

Extensive reference is also made to Dickens' non-fiction writings – letters, journalism, speeches and his one overtly theological work ***The Life of our Lord***, written to instruct his children. Many examples are cited of Dickens referring to Jesus as Saviour, along with evidence of his belief in evil, judgment and the need for repentance and new birth.

As regards Dickens' life, issues surrounding his failed marriage and relationship with the actress Ellen Ternan are given rather short shrift. Of course they do not disqualify him from being a Christian, but might have warranted more than one page of discussion in one hundred and seventy four pages of text.

That aside, the book is well researched and thorough, albeit with some repetitiveness, and I felt that points are rather laboured at times. Those familiar with at least some of Dickens' work should find it interesting and quite readable. The author also hopes that it will inspire others to read Dickens for the first time, although I wonder whether such people would actually be

reading this book. I would advise some knowledge of Dickens' works first – then read this and see whether you agree with the author's conclusions. For serious students there is an extensive bibliography which would also be a starting point for further research.

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

THE LION'S WORLD: A JOURNEY INTO THE HEART OF NARNIA
Rowan Williams
SPCK, 2012, £8.99, Pbk., 152p., ISBN 978-0281068951

This short volume of reflections on the theological meaning of C.S. Lewis' well known series of children's stories has already attracted the attention of reviewers from the national press. The author's musings on Lewis have also been parodied in the pages of *Private Eye*. The book is based on a series of talks that Dr. Williams, Archbishop of Canterbury, gave in Canterbury Cathedral during the Holy Week of 2011.

Dr. Williams discovered the Narnian chronicles as a teenager after reading some of Lewis' works of Christian apologetics. As an adult reader of Lewis, and as a skilled theologian who is also well acquainted with our literary heritage, he is well qualified to bring out the theological themes that lie beneath the surface of this popular series of children's fantasies.

Dr. Williams responds to some of the criticisms of Lewis that have been expressed by Philip Pullman and other writers. While acknowledging that Lewis wrote as a man of his times, and that he is not above criticism, the Archbishop provides a thoughtful response to charges that Lewis was a misogynist and that he used racial stereotypes in his portrayal of the race of the Calormenes.

As the fiftieth anniversary of the death of C.S. Lewis approaches, there is likely to be increased interest in his life and works. *The Lion's World* provides an excellent guide to the Christian insights that inspired so much of his writing, not least his children's stories.

Graham Hedges, Hon. FCLIP, MCLIP, is the Secretary of the *Librarians' Christian Fellowship* and worked until recently for the public library service in the *London Borough of Wandsworth*.

CAPE REFUGE (Book 1 in series)
Terri Blackstock
Zondervan, 2002, £7.99. Pbk., 400p.; ISBN 978-
0310235927

I found this while browsing in my local public library in High Wycombe and a welcome find it was too. Amidst the masses of titles dealing with various unsavoury fictional scenarios I didn't really want to delve into, this was a breath of fresh air.

While the subject matter is murder, the background is that of an American small town community largely unused to crime of this scale. The main characters are the daughters of a couple who run a halfway house ministry. After their parents are murdered, they spend the rest of the book dealing with their grief and trying to work out together who did it.

The subject is sensitively handled and the characters believable. The author keeps it simple and as a result the narrative is both smooth and entertaining. Yet there are real gems of insight into human nature and the grieving process. The author is quite explicit about faith, and the book deals with prayer in times of trial and suffering in a useful and constructive way. This is all done in the context of a novel which is at the same time thriller, romance and detective story.

As the section at the end of the book states, "[the author's] *books are about flawed Christians in crisis and God's provision for their mistakes and wrong choices. She claims to be extremely qualified to write such books, since she's had years of personal experience.*" The narrative certainly bears this out, with each of the main characters struggling with one or several issues, and experiencing the full range of human emotion. There is also a section which helpfully mentions her own experiences of bereavement and seeks to comfort and encourage.

I found the book both gripping and touching and would thoroughly recommend it. If you have access to the Internet there is a web-site about the author at : - <http://www.terriblackstock.com/>

Nicholas Horley, BA, Msc(Econ), is Treasurer of the *Librarians' Christian Fellowship* and is currently studying for the Graduate Diploma in Law at the *BPP School of Law*.

ARTICLES

ROBERT FOSTER introduces a residential library based on the personal collection of a British Prime Minister; looks at library services for unemployed people; and looks forward to Christmas

EYE ON THE PROFESSION

Gladstone's Library

The cover photo of CILIP's **Update** for August 2012 shows *Gladstone's Library* in Hawarden. Inside is a special feature on the library known to some librarians as *St. Deiniol's*.² The change of name reflects the fact that William Gladstone's personal collection formed the foundation of the collection. Some readers of **Christian Librarian** will be well acquainted with this library, as it's particularly useful to researchers in Christian theology and biblical studies. The re-naming of the library after the former British Prime Minister is likely to bring it to greater attention, and also highlights the fact that Gladstone's books, once distributed around the library within their subject areas, are now being drawn together to form a permanent special collection and exhibition.

The reassembling of the Gladstone archive may well generate interest from political historians and biographers, as according to the article it will "*afford scholars a wonderful insight into the mind of one of the great Victorian polymaths and enable them to see more clearly the connections he made between, say, Homer and the New Testament as well as his insights into the situations in Afghanistan*". Perhaps this aspect will interest some members of LCF. Gladstone was a deeply committed Christian and he founded the library '*for the pursuit of divine learning*', which included '*the various branches of human knowledge, especially history and philosophy*'. One wonders what Gladstone would have made of the article title which describes the library as a '*living shrine*' to him; but there does seem to be a good argument for putting his own collection into

² Lewis, A. 'Living Shrine to the Grand Old Man: Gladstone's Library'. In *CILIP Update*, August 2012, pp. 26-27

context by bringing it together.

The author, Annette Lewis, describes the library as the only residential library in Britain, and looking at the pictures it does look a very appealing place to stay. At this point, though, I would like to mention those libraries in Christian retreat centres around the country, even though none of them has a library anything like that in Hawarden. These collections and reading spaces can provide a useful facility for guests, and probably the community members too. I was able to use such a library whilst on holiday this summer, and my stay would have been poorer without it.

Helping job-seekers

A detailed article in the American journal *Public Libraries* shows how public libraries in a number of States are making a particularly concerted effort to helping the unemployed find work.³ A librarian from Monrovia, California, says: "*During these tough economic times, the role of librarian has changed to that of a career guidance counselor. People from all age groups and experience levels come to the library daily for help with filing unemployment, searching for jobs, or creating a resume. Many have never been to the library or used a computer before*". There they run a bi-monthly ninety minute workshop which allows the participants to drive the agenda, and from time to time they host an all-day workshop sponsored by *Friends of the Monrovia PL*, which is well-supported by volunteers. All aspects of looking for work are covered including mock interviews.

Maine State Library runs something similar "*thanks to a significant collaboration of Maine Libraries, the Maine State of Labor, and a significant grant made possible through the Broadband Technologies Opportunity Program Grant (BTOP)*." The report continues: "*MSL staff ... realised much more needed to be done to meet the needs of Maine's unemployed. Many unemployed Maine citizens have no computer skills and no idea how to begin a job search on-line. As a start, MSL asked the Department of*

³ Hill, N.M. 'Public Libraries and Services to the Unemployed'. In *Public Libraries*, 51 (2), March/April 2012, pp. 14-21.

Labour how its information could be shared with Maine libraries and their patrons. MSL began a mutually beneficial partnership with the Center for Workforce Research and Information (CWRI) to make their data more user-friendly for librarians and Maine citizens. CWRI wanted to help libraries determine what resources would be needed to set up a solid collection that would be easily accessed by the unemployed at libraries." The BTOP grant enabled the library to purchase one hundred and seven computers.

In Plainfield, Illinois, the library had offered help for job-seekers since 2007, again especially in the area of on-line applications, this being essential to finding work there. However, after a time it became clear that they "*needed to offer instruction and assistance beyond the qualifications of our reference staff. Proof-reading and counselling were not part of the primary mission of PPLD [Plainfield Public Library District], and staff members were not experts in this area. How could we address these needs with our existing budget? The next step identified was to recruit volunteers and create partnerships which would bring in this type of expertise.*" Happily someone offered their services and a regular class was set up, giving help with computers, selected career choices, resume writing, interviewing skills, LinkedIn and other library resources. The librarian notes that:

- the volunteer arranges for the majority of free speakers and leads the meeting
- library staff market the event and prepare handouts
- the library provides space and refreshments

She also notes their partnership with a church: "*A local church has job club meetings twice a month that are open to all community members. We exchange flyers to share with job seekers, and some of their coaches have offered presentations at the library's job club.*"

It should be mentioned that many libraries in the UK offer services to the unemployed, and have done for some time. Just doing a keyword search on the web brings up job club services run by Barnsley, Derby, Essex, Merton, Sussex and Lichfield District Libraries to name but a few. Incidentally, the latter runs alongside a church-run job club. It would be interesting to know how successful

these are.

Partnerships seem to be the answer to libraries doing more for the unemployed and perhaps voluntary groups, including church-based groups, could be one answer. In the UK, CILIP has argued that volunteers should not "*undertake core service delivery or be asked to replace the specialist roles of staff who work in libraries. CILIP is opposed to job substitution where paid professional and support roles are directly replaced with either volunteers or untrained administrative posts to save money.*" This statement appeared in a news column in September's **Update** in response to the *Society of Chief Librarians'* statement that it wants to promote volunteering in libraries.⁴ Perhaps the job club idea is one where there might be some agreement. In fact, UK libraries, including some of those mentioned above, are already asking for volunteers to help with job clubs. And a great number offer some sort of information services. *Manchester City Libraries* advertise a job-seeker's pack, for example. Perhaps more could be done to show how valuable libraries can be in tough times.

Seasonal cheer

In some places, just mentioning the word '*Christmas*' in a publicly funded service seems to raise eyebrows. Yet behind the scenes, county and borough libraries and their inter-library loan departments have been busy supplying church choirs and choral societies with thousands of copies of music which celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ. As a subscriber to the IAML (*International Association of Music Libraries*) e-mail list, I am used to seeing up to ten e-mails per day asking if anyone can help them find thirty copies of this or ten copies of that, and these are just the ones which their own region can't supply. Here are some examples from September:

3 Sept. Can anyone help with the following please? Sandstrom Es ist ein Ros Entsprungen (Sikorski) 110 copies
Higgins Christmas on Broadway (Hal Leonard) 145 copies

⁴ 'Chief Librarians Issue Volunteer Policy'. In *CILIP Update*, September 2012, p. 12.

Pinkham Christmas Cantata (Leduc) 145 copies
Carols for Choirs 1 60 copies
They are all needed 01/11/2012 until 15/01/2013

7 Sept. Hi there, Can anyone possibly help us with the following music requests please?

Bush, Geoffrey. Christmas cantata. Oboe orchestral score. Required ASAP- Dec 12 ...

Messiah. 30 vocal scores, Watkin Shaw ed. Required ASAP - Jan 13 ...

All vocal scores must be SATB please. Sorry it's a list but many thanks for your time.

13 Sept. Hello, Please can anyone supply: Chilcott ---- On Christmas Night 50 Required Asap until 01/01/013

25 Sept. And my final request for today, and I expect far too late, but can only try. My customer is after 70 copies of either the Novello Youth Chorals Christmas Classics or Faber's Merry Christmas Everybody, SATB version. Yes, for this Christmas, unfortunately - wanted from 3rd November until end of year. Ho ho ho indeed.

27 Sept. No results so is anyone able to help us with the following vocal set please? :

Chilcott: On Christmas night = - Vocal set (up to 100 copies) OUP Required 1/11/12 - mid Jan '13 .

If this is the tip of the iceberg, our county libraries really are helping many people to enjoy - and celebrate - Christmas.

Robert L. Foster, BA, DipIM, MCLIP, works as Counter Services Deputy Supervisor, Library Services, *King's College* London, and serves on the executive committee of the *Librarians' Christian Fellowship* as a member without portfolio

LOUIS HEMMING recalls a career spent working with books and describes his experiences as Ireland's first on-line used theology bookseller

THE SAMOVAR STORY



I was brought up to appreciate books. There were “rainy day” art books pulled out for bored boys. There were the hundreds of orange Penguin paperbacks, each side of the fireplace. There were the off-beat, mid-teen purchases: ***Trout Fishing in America*** by Richard Brautigan and ***The Third Policeman*** by Flann O’Brien, both books part of the initial launch of Picador publishing. I was smitten with reading.

When I became a Christian at the age of eighteen, I read three important library books: G.K. Chesterton’s ***Autobiography***, Malcolm Muggeridge’s ***Something Beautiful for God*** - about Mother Theresa - and, most importantly, Richard Wurmbrand’s ***In God’s Underground***, about the Christians suffering under Communism.

Around that time, I also got involved with the remains of the Dublin branch of the *Evangelical Library*. It was housed in a loft room in the YMCA, and was now an anorexic ghost of its better past. I believe there were two active members borrowing books by the time I came on the scene.

Having got permission, I set about re-ordering the room, dumping damp and perished books, while attempting my own crude cataloguing. A few months after I finished this, the library committee met. They decided to throw the library books into black bin bags and donate them to a start-up, rural Bible school ... Ho Hum!

It took another few bumbling years to discover that I really should be

working with books. I had previously worked in a back-street clothes factory; as a kitchen porter; assistant in an art shop; a printer's apprentice; in my parents' mohair textile factory. For a while I also did an internship in an evangelical Christian bookshop. Why I never thought of working with books still has me mystified, thirty five years later.

When I finally figured out my career direction, my first job was in used book selling, at *Carraig Books*, Blackrock, Dublin. It was a biblio-blessing, of which I was to later write:

....See those rows of books jutting in and out: octavo, quarto, small quarto, large quarto, landscape and folio; all of them show flagtips, white cards peeking out the top edges, with my badly typed bibliographic information on them.

Between the pages are forgotten letters, bookmarks, old stamps, rusty paper-clips, and lined note-paper marking pages or passages. Sometimes refutations, pencilled annotations, written in by would-be scholars on the page's edge.

Those books held secret dialogue; clashing ideologies peacefully co-existing at last; breaking through hostile borders, where time has disarmed the guardians of prejudice and hatred ⁵

After two interesting years in that used bookshop, I went to work in *Hodges Figgis*, Dublin, in the unloved bargain book basement. I got that job while selling one of my early chapbooks of poetry to the Irish buyer there. A while later I left, to become manager of the small, re-established A.P.C.K. in St Ann's Church, Dublin.

I was given a free hand in promotion, ideas and stock holding. I advertised Anglican books in Catholic journals, to widen the customer base. I generated copy-writing slogans for a *Lion Publishing / APCK* advert, echoing the sixties petrol slogan "put a tiger in your tank". My witty riposte was: "Put a Lion in your living room!"

One of my early customers at the A.P.C.K. was an elderly theological bibliophile and Baptist pastor. He was almost blind and almost deaf. He and his wife had a garage full of subject-sorted & shelf labelled theology, church history and missionary books. His wife would read them to him, he would mull on their content and pour their passion into sermons. Often I would be invited around to tea at their house and would come away borrowing the same books that I had sold them a few weeks before! Notably, the well regarded Baker Book House reprints.

I visited other religious book shops of all persuasions and saw gaps in the religious book selling market in Dublin. No other bookshop was selling Feminist Theology, Church History or Eastern Orthodox Theology (nor the

⁵ Extract – see <http://cowbird.com/author/louis-hemmings/#1/8928>

choral Orthodoxy liturgical records). Obviously, I started sections for all these non-represented subject areas. I put on sale-or-return book displays at Eastern Orthodox conferences, as well as the mandatory displays at *Church of Ireland* conferences. It was all an exhilarating experience, a privilege, for someone who had not even finished secondary education.

Two years later I left to become assistant manager in a shopping centre general bookshop. At first, I really relished the challenge but a few over-optimistic years later, my entrepreneurial spirit chafed at some of the management structures. I gave it six years of my Christian best, sticking my neck out for the gospel, and sometimes defusing complications. I then down-shifted to working there part time.

There were times of opportunity on a wider level. Like the incident of the father who came in to report that his young son had stolen books. The father wanted me to “*teach him a lesson*”. That would have been the harsh and detrimental way. What would my heavenly Father have wanted me to do?

I quickly prayed. The pre-teen boy very nervously entered the bookshop alone. I took him over to the area where the books were stolen from, so that he could put them back. I then quietly said: “*I think that you have learned your lesson. I want you to have a book as a present*”, gave him a copy of the redemptive book ***The Cross and the Switchblade*** and sent him on his way.

Basically I see those years as mostly a failure, from a spiritual point of view. I turned the other cheek too often, too easily. But sometimes blessing broke out of this broken jar. When Holly, our stillborn daughter briefly entered our lives, then left for heaven, I got opportunities among staff and customers to open hearts & minds.

My wife and I published a booklet on our experience of stillbirth. I was allowed to sell it at my bookshop and through wholesalers, countrywide. Little did we know, that it was a publishing first in Ireland, for parents to share such a story. Obviously, it had muscular Christian content. To top that publishing adventure, we got thirty minutes of uncensored airtime, on a national shock-jock radio show. All this also gave opportunities for sacred conversations, that naturally came about, in that bookshop.

It seemed that the bookshop was not being allowed to reach its full potential in regards to turnover. One pioneering project that I established there, was the servanthood aspect, of offering to order any book not in stock. The copy-writing slogan I dreamed up for that was: *S.O.S. Special Order Service*.

I was handling a couple of hundred special orders each month. One of my coups with this service happened in an unusual way. A priest ordered a Yale University book, called something like, ***The History of Classical Biography***. It was an expensive book and well outside our non-academic stock range. The priest declined to collect and pay for it, in a rather arrogant manner. I seethed. I thought, I’ll show that brat! So, I photo copied the cover & mailed it to a customer in the west of Ireland, as it somewhat matched his

bibliographic profile.

Reader, he not only bought that expensive book but ordered at least the next five volumes in the series, two of each volume in fact. He became an important special order customer after that event. A nice turn-around, indeed.

But the nagging doubts continued. Nevertheless, over time, the management frustrations and the Sunday Trading issues were my deal-breaker. I was taught by example to hard work & creatively by the example of my parents textile entrepreneurship. I was recently to write a homage to my pioneering parents:-

*.....bless me, paternal hand-crafted cloth,
baptise me, maternal rural-tinted palette,
this dreamer homages such vision:
the fabled family coat of many colours.
O wooden loom, now silent, once you held
my parents hallowed hopes & dreams.
O mohair, brushed plush mohair,
wrap me with hope, faith & love:
your bog-cotton soft song inspires. ⁶*

I decided to try to get my Carriage Books, used bookshop, job back. The owner had by this stage, scaled down staff and didn't need me. However, he offered me about thirty boxes of used theology books and his theology customer mailing list, for a very reasonable price. Of course, that was an offer I found hard to refuse. I bought the lot without hesitation. I was ambitious. I bought myself an expensive table-top photo -copier for my postal mailing lists. Then, shortly after having paid six hundred pounds for that, my brother arrived from the UK with an early Mac computer. He basically said - "*get off that silly photocopier and get on-line*". O Pioneer! There wasn't even an Internet server in Ireland. I was dialing up the American-based *CompuServe* in London to get online!

In those early on-line days of 1991, while still working at the bookshop, I moonlit, selling my used theology books by night. I slowly built up this little business, managing to make myself quite ill, juggling the two jobs. After a few more years as a full-time assistant manager, I changed to being a part-time worker.

I called my modest ministry *Samovar Books*. Why such a name? There are two reasons. I didn't want a typical cringe-inducing Christian cliché name. I also wanted the name to reflect a little of who I am. Apart from being a Christian, I am also a closet Slavophile. I became such through reading the *Keston College* materials published on behalf of (Russia's) persecuted

⁶ Extract – see <http://cowbird.com/author/louis-hemmings/#!/33498>

Christians. My brother drew a samovar tea urn for my invoice and letter head logo. In the centre of the samovar I put the words: *Slava Tebye Gospody!* That Church Slavonic phrase, translated roughly states: “*praise be to you, O Lord*”. Admittedly obscure - but anyone inquisitive can always ask the origin. And some actually did ask.

Selling books on-line was thrilling and very fulfilling. I slowly built up an e-mail mailing list of two thousand seven hundred apparently-interested people, over two decades. How did I do this? I simply sent out a million one-on-one e-mails to clergy, professors, students and anyone that expressed any kind of interest in theology books.

A few recipients of these exploratory, introductory e-mails accused me of spamming them. I preferred to call it “*creative sniping*”. Today I would term those emails “*guerilla marketing*”. I only asked people who I thought might be interested, not just anyone. Such an approach is much harder to do these days, due to web forms and spam filters. Apart from my private mailing lists, I decided to list on the precursor of what is now Abebooks.com. I also listed on other sites, including *Amazon*.

About ten years ago, one Canadian theology librarian asked me to see if I could obtain a certain used book. After a few months I found him a copy. I was about to post it out to Canada when I thought: “*hang on, there’s an opportunity here.*” I e-mailed that customer, asking would he like to see my top fifty books, according to his bibliographic profile. I had catalogued about one thousand books that summer, which few had seen on-line. When he accepted the offer to see my little list he bought about twenty books, to add to his original “wants list” book. Not bad, I thought. Let’s see can we improve even more.

I offered a listing of my one thousand recently catalogued books. He accepted my long-list offer, broken down into (non-Dewey!) categories. In a few days, the original US\$ ten book order turned into a US\$ 700 invoice-value order. Nice one! A lot of my business model is based on this experience. If you don’t ask, if you don’t do creative follow-up, you will never know what might happen. That customer has ordered many books since then. In fact I have created over one hundred multi-book invoices for his library over the past twelve years.

In 2001 I quit working even part-time at the bookshop, to wholly devote my time on-line. There have been ups and downs but its mainly been a fun ride! I have listed over fifty thousand books during that time and sold many thousands. My taxable turnover from 2001 to 2012 has come to over US\$ 130,000.

I've had some terrific exchanges and even made a few friends. One satisfied customer flew my family over to London and put us up in a hotel for a weekend, when they read about our stillborn child. Another customer sent me an epicurean “food parcel” of delicious coffees and dried organic fruits from California!

I constantly tried to think “*outside the box*”. I introduced Irish interest books and a portion of those are cross-sold to my theology customers. I asked a number of times for permission to sell my used books at the *Church of Ireland* General Synod. Another first. These and other ideas added substantially to my quite modest turnover.

Over the past twenty years I have catalogued about fifty thousand books and have generated over ten thousand invoices. I was on-line before *Amazon*, albeit in a rather more modest way! Due to server issues, it had recently been taking me nearly three days to send out each list to what had now become a reduced seventeen hundred subscribers. So, when I got a no-response to my summer list, I asked myself a few questions. Who is reading, interacting or buying? I decided to go through my mailing list and delete all but three hundred and seventy subscribers. I trust that my “season” in used theology book selling is not over. The pruning process rather reminded me of Gideon's steadily God-induced, diminishing army!

In recent, quieter times I offered to look after Carraig Books, so that the owner could go and play a round of golf! We started off this arrangement by me being paid in credit. Useful if there are books I want. The passing trade in one of the last Dublin used bookshops is very patchy. Seeing this and also working on my own various on-line projects, I decided to change my terms and conditions. I now charge the bookshop a sandwich and coffee meal deal per afternoon. Longer working periods have variations on this foody theme!

So, we'll see what the future holds for on-line used theology book selling. The combined effects of the credit crunch and the advent of e-books will impact my business adversely. The last three years have been disastrous financially for selling my used books on-line. Recently, I managed to acquire thirty five boxes of ex-library Irish interest books. This has turned my fortunes around fortuitously. The revived turnover may be the start of something new or it may be the last gasp. Who knows? However, whatever the future holds, I bend the knee and bow the heart to God, for allowing me the privilege of being in a position to do all that I have with used books.

God is a God of second-chances, from the Garden of Eden to post-Celtic Tiger Ireland. One aspect I love in life is second chances. Who doesn't? I like second chances, in particular for neglected, or forgotten, or currently un-trendy authors. Being an ambassador, representing The Christian Author's Second Chance has been a bonus. I trust that some have been blessed, saved or strengthened in His purposes through my pioneering online ministry.

Louis Hemmings is the founder and proprietor of *Samovar Books* and the author of several booklets of poetry.

GRAHAM HEDGES looks at the way in which leading Christian professional groups understand their role in relation to current issues and controversies

BREAKING THE DEAFENING SILENCE

Should Christian professional groups regard themselves as campaigning groups with definite policies on controversial issues in their professions? Alternatively, should they be content with providing an arena in which individual members can discuss issues and reach their own conclusions? And finally, how should we respond to claims that Christians are being persecuted in the workplace today?

Regular readers of ***Christian Librarian*** may recall that I first raised these questions in my article *Contending for the Faith or Spoiling for a Fight?* published in our Winter 2011 issue.⁷ My original article included comments from the representatives of several Christian professional associations. A variety of viewpoints were expressed although a number of the groups had not replied to my questions when I compiled the article. Steven Rouch of *Christian Nurses and Midwives* made the comment that it was often difficult for his group to formulate official policy statements as their appeals for the views of their members were often greeted with a “*deafening silence*”. The experience within our own *Librarians' Christian Fellowship* has often been similar in that requests for contributions to current debates rarely attract much of a response from our members.

My article created a certain amount of interest (though it attracted few comments from within our own membership) and it was later reproduced on the web sites of both *Christians at Work* and *Transform Work UK*.

Since the publication of the article I have received helpful comments from several additional Christian professional groups. These revealed a variety of approaches, as well as areas of consensus, and some of the relevant remarks are summarised below.

Philip Nicolls, Senior Editor of the *Christian Medical Fellowship*,

⁷ *Christian Librarian*, No. 55, Winter 2011, pp. 37-42.

tells me that his organisation does not see any dichotomy between campaigning and providing a forum in which professional issues can be discussed in a Christian framework. Their approach is *'both and'* and not *'either or'*. While the group seeks to provide support to its members they also lobby the government, respond to consultation papers and stand up for doctors who are badly treated as a result of practising their faith.

The *Christian Medical Fellowship* finds itself on the front-line of Christian campaigning over many issues. These include the government's attempts to re-define marriage, beginning of life issues including the age limit for abortion, and the promotion of under-age sex through a *'no questions asked'* provision of the contraceptive pill to young teenage girls. Other areas addressed by the Fellowship include end of life and palliative care issues, the legalisation of assisted suicide, and the freedom of doctors to practise and appropriately share their Christian faith in healthcare settings.

Philip recognises that CMF members hold a diversity of views on many of these issues and explains that their publications include articles taking particular positions in the hope that these will provoke further thought and study of the Scriptures. CMF members are also active in arranging regional day conferences exploring topics at the interface between medicine and Christianity.

Philip acknowledges that campaigning is, by its nature, negative as one usually campaigns *against* something. However, he believes that the opportunity to put the Christian case forward on many of these issues is a chance for the positive message of Christianity to be heard. Christian values that he believes are relevant to current debates include respect for life, the value of the individual, the need for love and compassion, and the importance of God's design for marriage. He suggests that if Christians fail to speak positively into our society they must be prepared to accept some of the blame for the marginalisation of their views. The support for the current *Coalition for Marriage* petition, Philip suggests, provides evidence that there are still many people who are prepared to speak up for traditional biblical teaching on marriage. Christians are called to be salt and light, not to retreat into ghettos, but to influence the prevailing culture.

A slightly more cautious note is sounded in the response from Russell Whiting, Chair of the *Social Work Christian Fellowship*, who tells me that a recent SWCF conference re-considered the question of how the group should regard its role. During its forty year history, the SWCF has seen itself as a support organisation for Christians in social

work and not as a campaigning group. In part this is because its members come from a wide range of denominations and hold a number of different positions from across the spectrum of Christian opinion and theological belief. So, for example, on the topic of adoption by gay couples there are members from organisations that have objected to this on principle and have discontinued their work rather than comply with current legislation. On the other hand, other members work in organisations who have been able to accommodate themselves to the present legal requirements. In order to provide a fellowship service to all Christians it is not possible to take a single campaigning line.

Despite this traditional reluctance to become involved in campaigning, in recent years there *has* been some pressure for the SWCF to become more overtly political. One of the challenges for the group is to decide how they can do this and still keep their essentially inclusive character. Following this year's conference the SWCF became a formal supporter of the Amnesty International *Still Human, Still Here* campaign which supports destitute asylum seekers in the United Kingdom. It was thought that this was one campaign that the Fellowship could officially endorse and it may be that in the future there will be other similar campaigns.

It may or may not be significant that Philip Nicolls and Russell Whiting describe the theological positions of their groups in slightly different terms. While Philip stresses that the CMF adheres to an evangelical doctrinal basis, similar to that of the *Universities' and Colleges' Christian Fellowship*, Russell says that, in recent years, the SWCF has tried to attract members from across a wider Christian spectrum. In order to emphasise this more inclusive approach some recent SWCF conferences have been held in a Roman Catholic retreat centre. Members, however, are still required to be in agreement with a written statement of faith.

Robert Hall, Membership Director of the *Association of Christian Teachers*, stresses that ACT is a grouping of Christians who work in education and have an evangelical, Bible believing, gospel perspective. It would, however, be foolish to imagine that all have identical views or experiences or come from the same traditions. Members come from diverse denominations and work in diverse fields ranging from prison education departments to early years units. What unites them is a relationship with God who, they believe, cares for their whole lives and particularly their work in education.

Robert is not sure that the ACT members expect their association to take a definite stand on many current issues in education. He is also

concerned that the group should not align itself with the ideologies of either the right or the left. Some sections of society see teachers as left wing radicals seeking to destroy the traditions of our way of life. Robert feels that this is probably the rationale of the “*back to basics*” approach of some politicians who, in education matters, seek to return to an imaginary golden age, generally their own childhoods, when everything was about perfect. ACT members have diverse political views, which they can hold almost as tightly as their Christian convictions and the ACT leadership has sometimes been accused by disaffected members of being too sympathetic to either left or right wing viewpoints.

Robert recalls that a former General Secretary, Richard Wilkins, raised the profile of ACT with his writings on Hallowe'en in schools, but feels that there a few other topics where the organisation could repeat this success. Since the Hallowe'en incident, the secular media's attitude towards churches, Christians, and Christian groups has hardened. The result is that Christians are often seen as being on the fringes of what is acceptable and vulnerable to the labels of extremism and fundamentalism.

Despite his concerns about ACT becoming too politically involved, Robert reports that there *have* been occasions when the organisation has tried to adopt a higher profile. The ACT responded to the *General Teaching Council* consultation on the code of conduct for teachers, and received some positive feedback. In the approach to the last General Election they wrote to each party asking them to respond to a series of questions on educational policy. ACT regularly issues press releases on matters of the day within education, and these lead to Christian radio and television interviews and coverage in the Christian press. One such matter was the exclusion of religious education as a subject in the English Baccalaureate. Coverage in the secular press, however, is much less common. These have all been issues where matters of current importance were being discussed and ACT had a message to put across which was clear, biblical, and acceptable to the vast majority of their members.

Robert spent several years working for members of a trade union and his experience has taught him that “*softly, softly*” is usually the best approach. ACT tends to speak with a quieter voice these days avoiding the confrontational tactics of earlier times. Their work takes place behind the scenes, engaging in dialogue on committees, building relationships and finding common ground. He believes that there is a real sense in which Christians have to earn the respect of the press and government before they can engage in constructive dialogue.

What about the question of the so-called 'persecution' of Christians in the contemporary workplace? Since my original article this topic has been addressed in the ***Clearing the Ground*** report produced by the *Christians in Parliament* group with assistance from the *Evangelical Alliance*.⁸ This report suggests that recent equalities legislation has been responsible for creating, rather than reducing, social tensions. The compilers call for changes in the law, more education about religion in government, better guidance for local government and a review of the workings of the *Equality and Human Rights Commission*. The report is clear, however, that the present situation does not justify the claim that working Christians are being 'persecuted' in the United Kingdom today.

More recently, the *Evangelical Alliance* has welcomed the recommendation that Baroness Onara O'Neill should succeed Trevor Phillips as chair of the *Equality and Human Rights Commission*. The Commission attracted criticism following Mr. Phillip's remarks that religious groups should leave their beliefs "*at the door of the temple*". The EA has called for the Commission to take an approach to equality and diversity that is genuinely appreciative of identity and difference.⁹

A forthright approach is taken by Lord Carey, the former Archbishop of Canterbury, in his book ***We Don't Do God: the marginalisation of public faith***,¹⁰ co-written with his journalist son, Andrew Carey. Responding to recent reports of Christians who have been in trouble for wearing crosses, expressing traditional Christian views about homosexuality, or sharing their faith with colleagues or clients, Lord Carey raises the question, "*How is it possible - in a country which has an established Church and a Queen who by tradition 'defends the faith' - that Christianity is being marginalised and even discriminated against by our twenty-first century society as a whole?*"

An anonymous contributor to the *Transform Work UK* web site admits to having some concerns about so-called 'persecution' in the workplace. He or she notes that, in these cases, we do not always know the full story from the media or campaigning groups. We need to speak out about injustice and unfair treatment, but some Christians are unnecessarily confrontational and seem to prefer to pick a fight than resolve an issue amicably. We should also take on board that many employers feel threatened by equal opportunities legislation and this can

⁸ This report can be downloaded, or a printed copy requested, from <http://www.eauk/current-affairs/publications/clearing-the-ground.cfm>

⁹ Evangelical Alliance press release dated 5 October 2012.

¹⁰ Monarch, £7.99, ISBN 978-0857210202.

cause them to over-react in some cases.

Robert Hall, of the *Association of Christian Teachers*, acknowledges that there have been some high profile cases of Christians who have seemingly been discriminated against. Christians in education are included, although none of these have been ACT members, as far as he knows. Research into these cases sometimes reveals that there is a much more complex story behind the reported headlines, and the persecuted person's Christianity is not the only issue, or indeed an issue at all. Some teachers are simply not good at their jobs while others can be difficult, awkward, obstinate or arrogant and would be best advised to move on professionally.

Russell Whiting, of the *Social Work Christian Fellowship*, agrees that the picture on this topic is often complex. One of the roles of his organisation is to support Christians who are social workers in organisations that are not particularly sympathetic to their values. Often they find that colleagues are not actually critical or persecuting of Christian staff but hold a simplistic view of what Christians values actually are. In general terms in recent years social work as a profession has begun to gain a better understanding of the importance of faith in the lives of some individuals and how it is important to respect that faith.

Another side to this question, Russell finds, is that just as Christians have not always had a welcome in the social work profession, social workers have not always found a welcome place in the churches. Stereotypical and uninformed attitudes to social work have been held, even by church leaders who have seen social work as anti-family, or social workers as intruders into family life. Some of SWCF's work has been to offer an alternative fellowship for Christian social workers, and helping churches to understand more about the nature of social work and why it is important.

I am grateful for the contributions of the various leaders of Christian professional groups who have provided their comments for these two articles.

No doubt these debates will continue and I will be grateful for further contributions, not least from the members of our own *Librarians' Christian Fellowship*. Please break the "deafening silence" and let me know what you think our priorities should be as we seek to provide a Christian presence in the wider library and information professions.

Graham Hedges, *Hon. FCLIP, MCLIP*, is the Secretary of the *Librarians' Christian Fellowship*.