

Autumn 2009

CHRISTIAN LIBRARIAN



The Journal of the
Librarians' Christian Fellowship

CONTENTS INCLUDE

- **SATURDAY 17 OCTOBER 2009:
ANNUAL LECTURE IN MILTON KEYNES**
- **DARWINISM AND CREATIONISM**
- **ONE AFTERNOON IN WESTMINSTER**
- **ACAPELLA SINGING UNDER THE UMBRELLA**
- **ARE E-BOOKS THE FUTURE?**
- **ADAM AND DEWEY**
- **DESERT ISLAND TEXTS: RESOURCES FOR INTEGRATING
OCCUPATION AND VOCATION**

EVENTS AT A GLANCE

● **TUESDAY 22 SEPTEMBER 2009:**
VISIT TO ST. PAUL'S
CATHEDRAL LIBRARY, from 2.30.
p.m.

Details: p.10.

● **SATURDAY 17 OCTOBER 2009:**
ANNUAL PUBLIC LECTURE

Church of Christ the Cornerstone,
Milton Keynes, from 2.30.p.m.
Speaker: **Alan Howell**, "*Changes and*
Challenges in Literature Outreach".
Details pp. 7-9.

● **SATURDAY 14 NOVEMBER**
2009: TRANSFORM WORK UK
CONFERENCE

Birmingham Christian Centre.
Details: p. 11.

● **SATURDAY 24 APRIL 2010:**
ANNUAL CONFERENCE

Connaught Hall, London. Speakers:
Tony Jasper and Eddie Olliffe.
Details: p. 10.

● **SATURDAY 23 OCTOBER 2010:**
ANNUAL PUBLIC LECTURE

Manvers Street Baptist Church,
Bath. Speaker: Rev. Dr. Alan
Garrow, Vicar Theologian, Bath
Abbey. Details: p.10-1.

PRAYER NOTES FOR AUTUMN 2009

PLEASE PRAY FOR

● The *Librarians' Christian Fellowship Annual Public Lecture*, to be held in Milton Keynes on Saturday 17 October 2009.

● **Alan Howell** and the work of *KITAB Bookshop*, plus the work and witness of the *Church of Christ the Cornerstone* and the wider Christian community in Milton Keynes.

● Suitable volunteers who are willing to respond to requests for assistance with Christian library projects at home and abroad.

● The work and witness of the *Methodist Central Hall, Westminster*.

● Our committee member **Malcolm Walker** who will shortly be spending a year in China teaching English to university students.

● Our committee member **Robert Foster** who hopes shortly to make contact with Christian Unions in universities offering undergraduate courses in librarianship and information studies.

● Our friends at *Transform Work UK* who are arranging a major conference in Birmingham on Saturday 14 November 2009.



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. 46, Autumn 2009.**

Secretary and Publications Editor: Graham Hedges, *Hon. FCLIP, MCLIP*. Address: 34
Thurlestone Avenue, Ilford, Essex, IG3 9DU, England. Home Tel. 020 8599 1310. Work Tel. 020
8871 7467. E-mail secretary@librarianscf.org.uk

Printing: Shergold & Co. Printers, Chelmsford, Essex. Conference Transcript: Robert
Foster.

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 2009: £22.00. Reduced rate
for student, retired and unemployed members/subscribers: £14.00.

© Librarians' Christian Fellowship and contributors, September 2009

SELECTED CONTENTS

04:Gordon Harris: Darwinism and Creationism

18:Jean Woods: One Afternoon in Westminster

21:Graham Hedges: Acapella Singing Under the Umbrella

23:Mary Barker: Drinking Champagne and Tinkering With Dewey

30:Anne MacRitchie: Eye on the Profession: Are E-Books the Future?

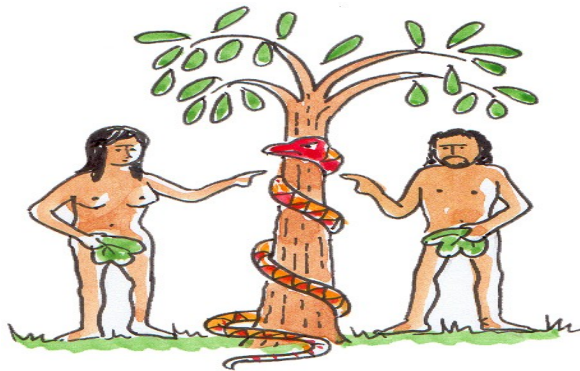
33:Andii Bowsher: Adam and Dewey

38:Rhona Floate: Desert Island Texts

THE FIRST WORD

GORDON HARRIS looks at some recent books by scientists who also believe in the Bible and wonders why they are rarely to be found in the book stocks of public and academic libraries

DARWINISM AND CREATIONISM



Much has been published this year to mark the bi-centenary of Darwin's birth. There have been numerous offerings from scientists with no belief in a personal God, but also some from scientists who regard the Bible as divine revelation¹.

Creation or evolution - do we have to choose?² comes as a welcome volume of authoritative description of the biology behind humankind or *homo sapiens*. It is written by Denis Alexander, Director of the *Faraday Institute for Science and Religion*³, St Edmund's College, Cambridge. He is also a member of *Eden Baptist Church, Cambridge*⁴.

Alexander challenges Professor Dawkins' much-publicised take on the supremacy of Darwinism over creationism. Interestingly

¹ E.g Nick Spencer, *Darwin and God*. SPCK, 2009. ISBN 9780281060825.

² Alexander, Denis. *Creation or evolution – do we have to choose?* Monarch, 2008. ISBN 978 1 85424 746 9.

³ <http://www.st-edmunds.cam.ac.uk/faraday/index.php>

⁴ <http://www.eden-cambridge.org/>

any unease over the word “creationism” is handled skilfully by Alexander when he writes on the first page that “*All Christians are, by definition, creationists.*” Quoting Hebrews 11.2, he continues: “*We cannot come to know God personally by faith without also believing that he is Creator of all that exists*”. (Towards the end of the book however he attacks both fundamentalist creationism and intelligent design.)

The book is a fascinating read on genetics for the layman. Alexander explains the authority and purpose of scripture, emphasising that Genesis should not be read as a scientific account. He knows from his own research over forty years that the earth is old, and that humans have evolved from distinctly different creatures, yet his wonder at God’s creation exudes from every page.

Given Alexander’s qualification to write on these matters, why is his book held by only twelve of the two hundred and eighty four public library authorities in the UK? ⁵

And why is it held in only one academic library (Durham)? Dawkins’ ***God delusion*** (Bantam, Black Swan) is held at nineteen; ***Monkey trials and gorilla sermons*** ⁶ is held at eight; and Coyne’s ***Why evolution is true*** ⁷ is held at seven. ⁸

While McGrath’s ***The Dawkins delusion*** is however held at eight academic libraries, there certainly seems to be a need to bring authoritative works on science by evangelicals more into public and academic awareness. It may be that the fine works by Alexander, Spencer and McGrath cited above would be selected by Acquisitions Librarians if they were published by mainstream rather than religious publishers.

Gordon A. Harris, BSocSc, MPhil, FCLIP, DipKM, is President of the ***Librarians’ Christian Fellowship*** and works as Team Leader, Knowledge and Information for ***Tearfund***.

⁵ Unity UK Database. I am grateful to Graham Hedges for providing this data.

⁶ Bowler, Peter J. *Monkey trials and gorilla sermons: evolution and Christianity from Darwin to intelligent design*. Cambridge MA: Harvard University press, 2007. ISBN 978 0 67402 615 5.

⁷ Coyne, Jerry. *Why evolution is true*. OUP, 2009 ISBN: 978 0 19923 084 6.

⁸ www.copac.ac.uk [Data in this paragraph is taken from the Copac National, Academic, & Specialist Library Catalogue, 15 June 2009. Holdings at the 6 deposit libraries are ignored for the purposes of this article.]

THE SECOND WORD

LOUISE MANNERS responds to changes in her professional and church life and contemplates a possible change to come in her personal life

TRADITION AND CHANGE

Adapting to change is stressful at work, as a Christian and in relations with family and friends. My contact at *Reuters Thompson* has changed from a Scot whom I could just about understand to a French lady, for whom English is clearly her second language. After a long conversation about the wording of the contract she ventured, “*Do you know about copyright?*” “*I am a librarian*”, I replied, trying not to sound too ironic.

A service to mark the first communion service of a newly ordained priest included tradition and the new. Following a tradition, the new priest donated to the Lady Chapel an arrangement of red roses, one rose for every year of her life. At the beginning of the service the priest lay prostrate in front of the altar, something new to me. At my church the new vicar, who has a mandate to make changes, is making sweeping changes by the interesting policy of not having any meetings about the changes, in the expectation that the congregation will get used to the changes and accept them.

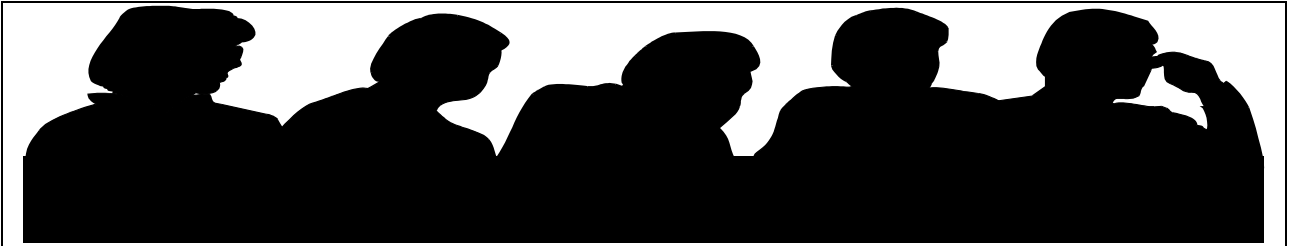
At the time of writing, I am preparing to go to *Umbrella 2009*, looking forward to thought-provoking presentations and hoping that the fire alarm does not go off early in the morning, as it did last time.

You have probably noticed that, once appointed to the LCF committee, LCF committee members express the desire to move abroad. Likewise I am contemplating a long-term move to the USA. It makes the church seasons much more poignant than usual, knowing I may move to the USA and experience something completely different.

Louise Manners, *DipLib, MA, MCLIP*, was elected as Chair of the Executive committee of the *Librarians' Christian Fellowship* at the Annual General Meeting held on Saturday 19 April 2008.

NEWS

**JOIN US AT THE CORNERSTONE FOR
LCF'S ANNUAL PUBLIC LECTURE**



SATURDAY 17 OCTOBER 2009
from 2.30.p.m.

**CHURCH OF CHRIST THE CORNERSTONE,
300 SAXON GATE WEST, MILTON KEYNES**

GUEST SPEAKER

ALAN HOWELL

KITAB BOOKSHOP

**“CHANGES AND CHALLENGES IN
LITERATURE OUTREACH”**

SPEAKER AND SUBJECT

- **Changes and Challenges in Literature Work** is the theme of the Annual Public Lecture of the Librarians' Christian Fellowship which is to be held on **Saturday 17 October 2009** at the **Church of Christ the Cornerstone, 300 Saxon Gate West, Milton Keynes**, from 2.30. - 4.45.p.m.

Our guest speaker is to be **Alan Howell**, Manager of the *KITAB Bookshop* which distributes Christian literature for the Asian communities. Alan will be giving us the benefit of his experience in literature work both in the United Kingdom and in Turkey.

- Themes to be included in the lecture include: The early days of literature outreach to Asians; the formation of literature projects by such agencies as the *Christian Literature Crusade* and *Send the Light*; the roots and formation of *KITAB* and how it operates; the vision to serve and share the gospel with those of other faiths; distributing literature both here and in Turkey; and how the Internet has caused change and introduced further challenges in reaching Asians.

- Alan Howell was raised in Chester of Scottish ancestry and attended *Newcastle University* where he read metallurgical science before spending four years as a professional scientist in an auxiliary

clay-ware ceramics industry. He spent a year at Bible College and started in Christian literature work in 1989. His involvement in *KITAB* started shortly after that and continues to this day with some time in-between spent in Turkey producing Christian literature and latterly distributing it.

To relax these days Alan spends time cooking, reading and enjoying the great outdoors. This makes taking camping holidays in remote parts of the UK where the background noise is limited to cows and sheep such a wonderful treat!

LUNCH ARRANGEMENTS

We have not arranged a "morning activity" to precede the afternoon lecture this year. However it is hoped that those who are able to arrive in Milton Keynes in time will be able to have lunch together in a local restaurant from about 12.00. noon. There is *no need* to book a place for the afternoon lecture but if you would like to join us for lunch, please let the Secretary know.

WELCOME TO MILTON KEYNES

- We hope that Milton Keynes will prove to be a convenient location for members and friends of the

Fellowship from various parts of the country.

- Milton Keynes is ideally located fifty miles from London, Oxford and Cambridge and eighty miles from Birmingham.

There are excellent transport links to the main London Euston to Birmingham rail line and junctions 13 and 14 of the M1 motorway. The rail journey from Euston to Milton Keynes Central takes about half an hour while the journey from Birmingham takes fifty-one minutes. The unique grid road system enables cars to travel across the city with ease at any time of the day.

- Milton Keynes was designated as a new town on 23 January 1967. It is a green city with twenty two million trees and four hundred acres of lakes, giving it more shoreline than Jersey!

The Shopping Centre is one of Europe's largest, attracting thirty-one million visitors each year. The original Milton Keynes concrete cows, created by the Canadian-born artist Liz Leyh, are currently displayed in the shopping centre (though the replicas in Bancroft, sited next to the A422, are probably better known).

CHURCH OF CHRIST THE CORNERSTONE

Our lecture venue, the *Church of Christ the Cornerstone*, was the first

inter-denominational city centre church in the United Kingdom. There are covenants which bring together the Church of England, the Baptist Union, the Methodist Church, the Roman Catholic Church, and the United Reformed Church in a partnership which was seen as an important step forward for the inter-church movement in the United Kingdom.

LECTURE PUBLICITY

This year's Annual Public Lecture should be of interest not only to librarians but to others interested in Christian communication through the written word and Christian life and witness in a multi-faith and multi-ethnic society. Attendance is *not* restricted to librarians and we look forward to welcoming a wider audience.

Please help us to make the lecture arrangements known – for example, by displaying copies of our poster on library and church notice boards. If you can make use of leaflets, please let us know.

Please support us by attending the lecture if this is at all possible.

Further details of the lecture, and the wider work of the Librarians' Christian Fellowship, can be obtained from The Secretary, Graham Hedges, 34 Thurlestone Avenue, Ilford, Essex, IG3 9DU. Home tel. 020 8599 1310, Work tel. 020 8871 7467. E mail secretary@librarianscf.org.uk Web site www.librarianscf.org.uk

LIBRARIANS' CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP NEWSLETTER



From The Secretary: Graham Hedges, Hon. FCLIP, MCLIP, 34 Thurlestone Avenue, Ilford, Essex, IG3 9DU. Home tel. 020 8599 1310; Work tel. 020 8871 7467. E mail secretary@librarianscf.org.uk; Web site www.librarianscf.org.uk

TUESDAY 22 SEPTEMBER 2009: VISIT TO ST. PAUL'S CATHEDRAL LIBRARY

This issue may arrive in time to remind readers that we have arranged a visit to the Library of St. Paul's Cathedral, London, from 2.30. pm on this date. Places will be limited to fifteen, so if you would like to reserve a place, please let me know as soon as possible. Please also let me know if you would like to join members of the LCF party for lunch in a nearby restaurant from 12.30.p.m.

The library of the original St. Paul's Cathedral was almost completely destroyed in the Great Fire of London. Sir Christopher

Wren's library chamber was restocked by the Commissioners for rebuilding St. Paul's who purchased valuable Bibles and liturgical texts. Later the library acquired several thousand books from the private collections of Henry Compton, Bishop of London, and John Mangey, Vicar of Dunmow and Prebendary of St. Paul's. In the nineteenth century, large collections of ecclesiastical tracts and pamphlets were acquired and improvements made in the library's holdings of sermons preached at the Cathedral.

The subject strength of the historical collections lies in theology, church history and patristics. Current acquisitions include major works on the history of the Church in England, on Wren, the building of the Cathedral, and the Church in the City.

EVENTS FOR 2010

- Next year's *Annual Conference* is to be held on **Saturday 24 April 2010** in the **Bell Room, Connaught Hall, Tavistock Square, London**, from 10.30. am – 4.45.p.m. Our speakers will be actor, broadcaster and writer **Tony Jasper** and our own associate member **Eddie Olliffe**, who works as Business Manager for the Christian publisher CWR.
- Next year's *Annual Public Lecture* will be held on **Saturday 23**

October 2010 at Manvers Street Baptist Church, Bath, from 2.30.p.m. Our guest speaker will be the Rev. Dr. **Alan Garrow**, who is Vicar Theologian at *Bath Abbey*, and an authority on the Synoptic Gospels. Book these dates now, and plan to attend!

DOES GOD WORK HERE?

Our friends in *Transform Work UK* are planning a national conference “*to equip, empower and mobilise Christians to have a greater impact on the people and places where they work*”. This event is to be held on **Saturday 14 November 2009** at the **Birmingham Christian Centre, The Parade, Birmingham, B1 3QQ.**

The Conference is entitled *Does God Work Here?* Speakers include **David L. Herroux**, Executive Director of *United Christian Broadcasters* and **Caroline Spelman**, Shadow Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government.

The registration fee is £25.00 and it would be good if members of LCF could be represented at this conference. If you would like to attend, or require more details, please contact TWUK at Brook House, Ouse Walk, Huntingdon, Cambs., PE29 3QW, or e-mail conference@transformworkuk.org

CHRISTIAN ACADEMIC NETWORK

There may still be time to book for the one day workshop *Practical Steps in Shaping Our Disciplines* which is being arranged by the *Christian Academic Network* at the *York St. John University* on **Saturday 19 September 2009.**

The organisers state that the aim of the event is to “*provide space for us to step back, take a look at our disciplines and reflect on how we can shape them in relation to the Christian Gospel.*”

You can get more information from conferences@c-a-n.org.uk

CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENTS

Our recent Annual General Meeting agreed a number of amendments to the Fellowship's Constitution. We will shortly be placing the revised Constitution on our web site at www.librarianscf.org.uk However, if anyone would like to receive a printed copy, kindly let me know and I will be pleased to send one.

Most of the changes proved to be non-controversial but there was some difference of opinion on the Clause relating to any future changes to the sections of the Constitution dealing with the doctrinal basis, membership

declaration, speakers, and relations with other religious bodies.

The committee's original amendment proposed that, in future, the relevant clauses could only be changed by a postal ballot of members in which 75% of the votes cast were in favour of the suggested changes. However our member Janet Danels, concerned that important changes could be made by a small number of voters, proposed an amendment which read as follows: "*The Clauses in this Constitution relating to the Doctrinal Basis, the Membership Declaration, Relations with Other Religious Bodies and with Speakers may only be amended by a referendum of the whole fellowship, in which more than 40% of the total number of members vote expressing agreement with the changes*".

After discussion, this amendment was carried by the meeting.

However, subsequent discussions, and e-mail correspondence with those who were present at the AGM, has revealed some uncertainty about what exactly was agreed at the meeting. Some members were under the impression that the final version agreed had been that 40% of the membership would have to vote but of that number 75% would have to be in favour of the changes. However, it has been objected that this arrangement would allow important changes to be made by less than 40% of the current membership.

The executive committee

discussed this matter at a recent meeting and agreed that, in view of the uncertainty over the final wording of the amendment, only the version formally presented to the meeting by Janet Danels should be incorporated into the Constitution. However, a later committee meeting will take another look at this matter and decide whether any further changes should be proposed at next year's AGM. Comments from other members of the Fellowship will be gratefully received.

EPWORTH COLLECTION

We have been asked to help with the *Epworth Collection*, a collection of some three thousand books - the back list of the *Methodist Publishing House* - likely to be housed in the *Methodist Central Hall*, Westminster. At present the books are in boxes and negotiations are in train to find and shelve a room to house them as they are to be kept together as an archive collection. The trustees seem willing to buy some library software and we have put out enquiries to some suppliers. Any suggestions are welcome. Only a small database is required and the collection is to all intents and purposes closed and will only be available for reference. There could be cosy afternoon (or morning or evening) working parties cataloguing away in the grandeur of Central Hall so brush off your AACR and watch this space ready to

volunteer.

If you are interested in being involved in the Epworth Collection cataloguing project, please contact our new Library Assistance Manager, Mary Barker, School Librarian, Cardinal Vaughan Memorial School, 89 Addison Road, London, W14 8BZ. Tel. 0207 8478 x. 219. E mail cvmslibrary@yahoo.com

PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL NEWS

- Professor **Ken Bakewell** has been presented with an *Outstanding Service Award* in the *Literati Network 2009 Awards for Excellence*. This is in recognition of his contribution to the Editorial Advisory Board of **New Library World** on which Ken has served since 1998.

Ken's citation in the awards brochure mentions his work as Professor of Information and Library Management at the *Liverpool John Moores University*, his former role as the Editor of **Library Management**, and his past service as President of the *Society of Indexers* and the *Librarians' Christian Fellowship*.

- Following his retirement as Director of the *Christian Research Association*, past LCF speaker **Peter Brierley** continues to be busy as a consultant and researcher. His recently launched newsletter

FutureFirst is intended to provide information to help churches and Christian organisations in their forward planning. It is intended that each issue will provide a digest of statistics and short articles drawn from some eighty Christian and secular sources.

If you would like to subscribe to **FutureFirst**, it is currently available at a reduced rate of £15.00 for a year's issues. Please make your cheque payable to Peter Brierley and send it to *Brierley Consultancy*, The Old Post Office, 1 Thorpe Avenue, Tonbridge, Kent, TN10 4PW.

- Past Conference speaker **Peter Brophy** was awarded the OBE in the recent Honours List in recognition of his services to visually impaired people while working as Professor of Information Management at *Manchester Metropolitan University*.

Peter, who is also the outgoing Chair of the Board of the *Methodist Publishing House*, spoke at LCF's April 1988 Conference on the subject *The Confirmed Manager, or, If I hadn't been a Christian would I have managed just as well?*

- Past LCF speaker the Rev. Professor **Richard A. Burrige**, Dean of *King's College, London*, was shortlisted for the 2009 *Michael Ramsey Prize*. Richard's book **Imitating Jesus** (Eerdmans, £23.99, ISBN 978-0802844583) is a study of New Testament ethics based on the

author's belief that the four gospels are biographies of Jesus rather than statements of abstract theology.

- Next year's Conference speaker **Tony Jasper** is planning a second tour of his Easter play ***It Happened One Friday*** in the Spring of 2010.

If you would like to invite Tony and his *Jasperian Theatre Company* to perform the play in your church or community, you can get more details (including costs) from Tony at 29 Harvard Court, Honeybourne Road, London, NW6. Tel. 0207 813 4362.

- Past LCF speaker the Rev. **G.P. Taylor** has broken new ground with ***The Doppelganger Chronicles: The First Escape*** (SaltRiver/Tyndale House, £9.99, ISBN 978-1414319479), the first in a new adventure series for teenage readers told partly in conventional text and partly in graphic novel format.

- Our member **Malcolm Walker** will be leaving these shores during August for Tianjin, China, where he will be spending a year teaching English to students at the *Tianjin University of Commerce*.

THE ULTIMATE CHRISTIAN LIBRARY BOOK

Speaking Volumes has recently invited nominations for the UK

Christian Book Award 2010.

A shortlist panel – whose members will include Carolyn Armitage, a former Director of Religious Publishing at *Hodder and Stoughton* – will be selecting just five books for one category – '*The Ultimate Christian Library Book*'

Paula Renouf, Director of *Speaking Volumes*, explains "We want to encourage Christian publishers and writers to really think about what Christian literature could go on public library shelves and be a great help to a wider audience. '*The Ultimate Christian Library Book*' is an attempt to do this."

The shortlist will be available for the public to vote on on-line between January and March 2010, culminating in a presentation at the *National Christian Resources Exhibition* in May 2010.

Speaking Volumes is a project of the *Christian Book Promotion Trust* and is best known for its scheme in which churches are encouraged to donate Christian paperbacks to their local school and public libraries. You can get more information from Paula Renouf, P.O. Box 1070, Whittlesford, Cambs., CB22 4WX. E mail info@speakingvolumes.org.uk Web site www.speakingvolumes.org.uk

BIBLEFRESH

Biblefresh is a consortium of over forty-five agencies brought together by the *Evangelical Alliance* to help

the UK church re-engage with the Bible. The aim is to help Christians take a fresh look at the Bible, to gain confidence in its trustworthiness and to meet God through its messages.

The focus of the project is a *Year of the Bible* in 2011 which will include initiatives to help the whole church engage with the whole Bible.

Are there ways in which LCF – the Fellowship as a whole and its individual members – might be able to get involved in the *Year of the Bible*? Please send me your suggestions now, in good time for 2011.

CURRENT AWARENESS

- Should public libraries display posters that might be said to “*Promote religion*”?

This question has reared its head again in Brighton where staff at the town's *Jubilee Library* are reported to have declined to display a poster publicising the Sunday School at the nearby *St. Mary's Church*.

Mrs. Jacalyn Oghan, who runs the Sunday School at St. Mary's, has been quoted as saying, “*Anyone in the community, of whatever faith, should be able to put up a poster in their local library so that people know what is going on. But I was told my poster could not be displayed because it had religious content*”.

Newspaper reports of this

controversy have included Stephen Adams' *No Religion At This Library* in the ***Daily Telegraph*** for Tuesday 28 July 2009, p. 7.

Ken Bakewell's discussion paper *Religious Notices in Public Libraries* appeared in the Spring 2007 issue of ***Christian Librarian***. We have sent copies of this paper to representatives of both St. Mary's Church and the Brighton and Hove library service. Additional copies are available on request from the present writer.

- A recent article in the Christian press notes the recent decline in trade union membership and the rise in the unemployment figures. Membership of a professional association is especially important in a period of recession and economic uncertainty. Many Christians, feeling isolated in their workplaces, find it helpful to belong to a Christian professional group. The *Librarians' Christian Fellowship* is mentioned as an example of such groups and the Fellowship's conferences, lectures and library assistance programme are mentioned. Belonging to a Christian professional group has many spiritual advantages, although members should take care not to become isolated from their wider professions and communities. *Spiritual Support at Work* appears in the ***Methodist Recorder*** for 14 May 2009, p. 19.

- Despite the challenging economic climate, there has been an

unusually high level of demand for collections of Christian books for donation to school and public libraries as part of the Christian Book Promotion Trust's *Speaking Volumes* scheme. At a time when library book budgets are especially vulnerable to local authority spending cuts, the donation of good quality Christian books is more important than ever. The organisers of the scheme have recently produced a new edition of their catalogue of popular books suitable for libraries. More information can be obtained from the web site www.speakingvolumes.org.uk The news item *Donations Speak Volumes in Recession* appears in the **Methodist Recorder** for 19 March 2009, p. 5.

- Recent press articles helped to arouse interest in public performances of an opera based on *Perelandra*, the second novel in C.S. Lewis's space trilogy in which Satan's temptation of Eve is repeated on the planet Venus where intelligent life has recently been created.

Written by Donald Swann (of Flanders and Swann fame) copyright problems had prevented the opera from being performed since a couple of early performances in the 1960s. However, dramatic rights in Lewis's novel have now reverted to the Lewis estate, and two concert performances of *Perelandra* were mounted in Oxford this June under the auspices of the *Oxford University C.S. Lewis Society*.

For more information see Jennifer Swift's *Donald Swann's Green Eve*, in the **Church Times** for 19 June 2009, pp. 19-20, and Christopher Howse's *When the Naked Green Lady Sings* in the **Daily Telegraph** for 27 June 2009, p. 27.

CONTEMPORARY CHRISTIAN MUSIC

"In the home, it is deplorable; meriting tears. In the Church, it is a scandal; a stumbling block; a pollution: an intolerable blasphemy".

That was how church musician Charles Cleall dismissed current pop music back in the Beatles era of the early 1960s. Readers of past issues of **Christian Librarian** will know that such views are not unknown, even in the early years of the twenty-first century.

However, Stephen Wright's ***The Sounds of the Sixties and the Church*** (Grosvenor House Publishing, £9.99, ISBN 978-1906645274, available from amazon.co.uk) shows that hostility to contemporary musical styles was by no means universal among Christians in the 1960s and 1970s. Wright tells the story of contemporary Christian music beginning with early attempts to include beat and folk styles in worship as a means of attracting young people into the Church. He goes on to tell the story of early beat groups, such as the Joy Strings, the

Crossbeats and the Envoys who used popular styles as a means of evangelism. The early beat groups gave way to more sophisticated rock musicians such as Out of Darkness, Larry Norman and After the Fire who often played their music in secular venues outside the Church.

Wright's later chapters recognise that contemporary Christian music went into decline in Britain in the late 1970s, though it remains a multi-million dollar industry in the United States. In recent years, performance music by Christian artists has been overshadowed by praise and worship music for congregational singing. Although this music has been influenced by popular music styles, Wright argues that it has made little impact outside evangelical and charismatic circles, and in the wider church more traditional forms of church music continue to be the norm.

Finding Faith: stories of music and life by Nick Baines, Bishop of Croydon (Saint Andrew Press, £11.99, ISBN 978-0715208687), is part spiritual autobiography and part exploration of basic Christian themes. The Bishop has based each chapter on a popular song that has played an important part in his own life. Songs featured include Bob Dylan's *The Times They Are A-Changin'*, Paul Simon's *Graceland* and U2's *I Still Haven't Found What I'm Looking For*.

The Blood and the Blues by Danny Smith and Bill Hampson

(Authentic Media, £7.99, ISBN 978-1860247095) is partly an account of slavery in North America but also highlights the spirituals of the African slaves which ultimately gave rise to many of the popular musical styles of the twentieth century including blues, gospel, soul, rock 'n' roll and jazz.

Greg Garret's ***We Get to Carry Each Other: The Gospel According to U2*** (Westminster John Knox Press, £11.99, ISBN 978-0664232177) turns the spotlight on U2, and shows how spiritual themes have always been implicit in the band's music, even though the members have rarely spoken openly about the Christian faith.

EBSCO PUBLISHING

The Librarians' Christian Fellowship has recently extended its existing electronic licensing relationship with *EBSCO Publishing*, a company which describes itself as "*the world's most prolific aggregator of full text journals, magazines and other sources*". In future the text of the ***Librarians' Christian Fellowship E-Newsletter*** will be available on EBSCO Publishing's databases alongside the full contents of ***Christian Librarian***. Subscribers will be able to retrieve articles from our publications and the Fellowship will receive a small commission for each article retrieved.

ONE AFTERNOON IN WESTMINSTER

JEAN WOODS joins other Christian librarians on a tour of the Westminster Central Hall and learns something of the past history and present work of this major Methodist centre situated at the heart of our capital city

On Tuesday, 19 May 2009, fourteen members and friends of the Librarians' Christian Fellowship met for lunch at the Methodist Central Hall, Westminster, and were later joined by another member and two Canadian visitors for a guided tour of the building. We were welcomed by Richard Ratcliffe, the recently retired archivist at Methodist Central Hall, who addressed the LCF Annual Conference on 19 April 2008,⁹ and Mervyn Appleby, the Visitor Services Manager. We were given an introductory talk in the new Visitor Centre (formerly the Chapel) which is still in the process of planning and completion.

In 1898 the Wesleyan Methodist Church launched the '*Wesleyan Methodist Twentieth Century Fund*' to mark the centenary of the death of John

Wesley (1703-1791). This became known as the '*Million Guinea Fund*' and aimed to raise one million guineas (one guinea = one pound, one shilling) from one million Methodists at a time when the average weekly wage was about fifteen shillings. In 1904, the fund closed having raised £1,073,682. Of this, £250,000 was allocated to purchase a suitable site in London and erect '*a monumental Connexional building*' – the Methodist Central Hall, Westminster. The building in London followed a pattern of building city centre missions to engage in evangelistic and social outreach. These missions were often called Central Halls and were designed to be welcoming to those not used to churches.

The remaining £750,000 was invested in new chapels, foreign and home missions, temperance work, children's homes and education, which was to include Wesleyan Methodist day schools, so that children need not go to Church of England schools, run by bigoted clergy!

The driving force behind the fund and the building of the Methodist Central Hall was Mr. (later Sir) Robert Perks, Liberal MP for Louth, a solicitor and Methodist layman. He masterminded both the purchase of the Royal Aquarium (primarily a music hall) as a suitable site, for £4.00 per square foot, and the

⁹ *Christian Librarian*, No. 42, Autumn 2008, pp. 20-33

competition among architects to design the building. Out of 132 entries that of the London firm of Lanchester and Rickards was chosen. The rules given out for the building stated that '*This hall will not only be required for religious services, but also for conferences, public meetings, receptions, etc.*' and the building was thus required not to look like a church. There is no cross outside, but throughout the building, outside and inside, the scallop shell is a recurrent theme. This was part of the Wesley Family Crest and also the badge of a pilgrim. The design of the building, especially the Grand Staircase, was influenced by the Opera House in Paris.

There were water-logging problems with the site during the building work and the total cost was £200,000 for the site and £155,000 for the building. The deficit of over £100,000 was covered by a loan from the Midland Bank, which took sixty years to repay. Methodist Central Hall, Westminster, opened in 1912.

After our introduction, we began the tour by seeing the fifty volumes of the Historic Roll. These record the names of all who donated or collected a guinea or more for the Million Guinea Fund. Prior to binding, the pages were sent to the appropriate districts or chapels so that donors

could add their signatures or marks against their names, or the names of family members in whose memory the guineas had been given. When the fund closed in 1904, all the pages were returned to London and bound in geographical order. Volume 50 contains pages from overseas churches, of which we were shown the entries for China. There is an index and since 2002 the Historic Roll has been available on microfiche. In 2005 a grant for conservation was received from the Epworth Fund of the Methodist Church. The volumes are housed in a specially made handsome bookcase in the Entrance Hall. Each donor of a guinea received a certificate and children who had contributed a shilling a medallion.

We then proceeded up the Grand Staircase and took the lift to the fourth floor, which houses offices that are rented out. From there we were able to glance through windows down into the Great Hall, where the main Sunday service is held. We were not able to go in as it was in use, but we got an impression of its size (2300 seats divided between the body of the hall and the balcony) and glimpsed the impressive organ. A notable Director of Music was Dr. William Lloyd Webber (1958-82), father of Andrew and Julian. The first public performance of **Joseph**

and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat was staged in the Great Hall.

Next we went to the Observation Balcony, which has superb views over Westminster, especially of the west front of the Abbey and the ten statues of twentieth century martyrs over the west door. It also provided an excellent setting for our group photograph, kindly taken by one of the Canadian visitors.

Our final visit was to the new Chapel, opened in 2002. When Methodist Central Hall, Westminster, opened in 1912 the Wesleyan Methodist Church's bank – the London and Midland, later the Midland and finally HSBC – leased a ground floor front corner room from the Trustees for a branch of the bank which remained there until 1999. After the bank had vacated the premises, the Trustees decided to convert the room into a chapel, retaining much of the original panelling. The chapel seats a hundred and eighty and is open for prayer and meditation throughout the week. Sunday evening and lunchtime services are held here, and weddings and funerals.

As we returned to our starting point in the Entrance Hall, we heard the story of the fine, life-size statue of John Wesley which stands there. It was sculpted by Samuel Manning for erection in

Westminster Abbey. However, the authorities there refused to accept it due to '*the factious character of Mr. Wesley*' and it found a home in a Methodist training college. When that closed in 1972 it came to the Methodist Central Hall. A bronze replica was erected in St. Paul's Cathedral churchyard in 1988.

As we heard the Methodist Central Hall, Westminster, fulfils the vision the founders had for a building that would be used by the community for conferences and public meetings of every sort. Over the years it has played host to many major conferences, guest speakers and events, in addition to its own outreach work into the community. It has featured in films (sometimes controversially) and the observation balcony is popular with camera crews filming the arrivals and departures on great occasions at Westminster Abbey.

The Rev. W.E. Sangster (1939-55) was the Superintendent Minister during some of the most challenging years for the Methodist Central Hall. He conducted his first service on 3 September 1939 as war was declared. During the blitz the basement (now the cafe area) was turned into an air-raid shelter and over two thousand people took refuge there for more than a thousand nights. Dr. Sangster and his wife ministered to the

people and slept on the premises. Having survived the war intact, another challenge came. During the war years the government had requisitioned any building it needed, and this continued in the immediate post-war years. When a home was needed in January 1946 for the inaugural meeting of the *United Nations*, Methodist Central Hall was requisitioned for three months for this purpose. Having been a place of refuge during the war, there was some indignation that the members were now to become refugees themselves, but this was outweighed by the hope and prayer that their hospitality would mean the establishment of a body that would work for peace in a world so shattered by war. And so for the three months 'occupation' the congregation met for Sunday services in a London theatre, the Coliseum, a name not unfamiliar in early Christian history.

Today this great building exemplified its name plates: **Methodist Central Hall Westminster, Church and Conference Centre**

Our thanks go to Richard Ratcliffe and Mervyn Appleby for a most interesting afternoon.

Jean Woods, MA, worked until her retirement as Librarian of the *Church Missionary Society*.

ACAPPELLA SINGING UNDER THE UMBRELLA

GRAHAM HEDGES reports on a Service of Thanksgiving that was well received despite reduced numbers and technical problems with an electric piano!

The *Umbrella 2009* Conference, arranged by the *Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals*, attracted more than seven hundred librarians to the de Havilland Campus of the *University of Hertfordshire* between 14-15 July 2009. As an experiment this year, CILIP held the conference in the middle of week, rather than nearer the weekend, and reduced the usual three day programme to two days. This seems to have increased the numbers attending the event but also made the programme more crowded, leading to comments from some delegates that there was too much going on!

The Librarians' Christian Fellowship's contribution to *Umbrella* was to organise a *Service of Thanksgiving* on the first evening of the conference.

This was well publicised in the official conference programme and delegates' packs, but due to the compressed nature of the programme the Service took place at more or less the same time as the exhibitors' reception held elsewhere on the campus. This definitely had an adverse effect on our numbers.

We also had some technical problems with the electric piano that our member Robert Foster had brought along for the occasion, and had to sing our hymns unaccompanied. This worked out much better than I would have expected, and the singing on the tape recording of the service really sounds rather good!

The overlap with other events may be inevitable due to the current nature of the Umbrella programme, but the LCF committee will have to discuss what, if anything, we can do to alleviate the problem. Perhaps we should all start praying that CILIP will revert to the earlier three day format!

Despite these problems, the Service seems to have been well received by the fifteen or so librarians who were present, and I heard several delegates express appreciation to our guest speaker, the Rev. David Ronco.

LCF's President, Gordon Harris, who works as Knowledge and Information Team Leader for

Tearfund, led the Service and our Bible reading from Luke 8: 4-21 was read by CILIP's Chief Executive, Dr. Bob McKee.

Our three hymns were *Praise my Soul the King of Heaven, Hallelujah, my Father*, and Graham Kendrick's *Shine, Jesus, Shine*.

Our speaker, David Ronco, is a locally based Baptist minister now working as Transition Minister for the *Emmanuel Baptist Fellowship*. He argued that, in the key Parable of the Sower, Jesus makes a connection between the power of God's word to change and develop lives and the power of people to stifle or encourage such growth. The key question for all of us is – *do we have ears to hear?*

We are grateful to David Ronco, Gordon Harris, and Bob McKee for their contributions to the Service and to Heather Lewis, Kirsty Robinson and Arabella Wood who served as our stewards. Thanks are also due to presenters Lizzie Crow and Aled Jones who mentioned our Service during their programmes on *Premier Christian Radio* and *BBC Radio Two* respectively.

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

DRINKING CHAMPAGNE AND TINKERING WITH DEWEY

Readers may recall an appeal for assistance with the merging of two libraries maintained by the Wycliffe Bible Translators/Summer Institute of Linguistics. MARY BARKER reports on two visits to Aix-en-Provence and describes how the project was completed

The request for help with a collection of theological books in the South of France appeared in the LCF magazine over a year ago. After some negotiations, I (with carrier bag husband) went over in August 2008 to assess the work involved. The situation could be described as a residential library (like St. Deiniol's but smaller) with IKEA furniture, and the sound of crickets rather than North Wales rain outside the windows. We stayed in a flat housing the two book collections which were to be merged. They were already on a database but only half had Dewey class marks and the rest were classified (striking horror in a librarian's

heart) according to an in-house scheme!

Only four thousand books were involved (still an appreciable amount of work) so, with low use and few accessions each year, the expense of commercial library management software did not seem justified (although I had reservations). I asked around at the LCF autumn meeting for help but we were beaten to the touchline by two American volunteers who agreed to go to France for the three month project (rather a guesstimate by me) in the New Year. If only I'd been retired ...

However, it was arranged that someone would go for a week to train them in that they were not professional librarians and that someone ended up being me. I scrounged a set of Dewey (20th ed.) from *Exeter University Library* and sent them on ahead but decided AACR would be a volume too far for my hand luggage and *Library of Congress* subject headings are, of course, available on-line. So equipped only with a borrowed (*Harvey Grammar School*, Folkestone) bar-code scanner and an extra day's leave from *Cardinal Vaughan Memorial School*, I set off on mission * to France. Readers will be glad to know that I was not able to join other ex-pats on the 'Promenade des Anglais' (no time for much apart from the supermarket round

the corner!) and the weather was really rather cold and somewhat overcast with only occasional bursts of sunshine.

The American volunteers, a delightful mother and daughter from Montana were raring to go having arrived and got over jet lag so we set to the first evening. They blanched a bit at Dewey but soon got the idea of cribbing from Library of Congress and other libraries and I screamed consistency and accuracy at them all the time. The end result (Surprise! Surprise!) is not perfect but at least it should be consistent within itself. I have to admit that I did tinker a tiny bit with Dewey to cater for some rather esoteric titles and also put social life and customs along with Geography of a country, but there was nothing to cause Melvil to twitch unduly in his grave!

I have to own to several rather enjoyable leisure interludes too. I played card games and had champagne and REAL foie gras on fruited bread before going out to watch the fireworks on New Year's Eve. I went to a house church fellowship meeting in a traditional farmhouse with the sun setting behind Cezanne's Mont Saint Victoire. The owners had a wonderful collection of the traditional 'petits santons' with figures from Napoleon's soldiers to Breton fishermen going to worship the Christ Child in the

nativity scene. I was also very impressed by the outreach of a French speaking church in a converted supermarket. They had assembled a display of Christmas themed contemporary art, paintings, sculpture and installations which people wandered in to view while they listened to Christmas music and were offered refreshment. So it was not all sacrifice on my part!

Finally, I was delighted and astonished to hear from the Americans in mid-March that, admittedly by working twelve hours per day in the last week, they had managed to complete the project, a fine achievement for which the *Librarians' Christian Fellowship* can take a small part of the credit.

* Mission is here used as in EU jargon meaning going abroad to work, expenses paid, not in the Christian sense of propagating the gospel!

IN PRAISE OF LIBRARY ASSISTANCE VOLUNTEERING

I have now taken on the role of managing the LCF's UK Library Assistance Programme. I am an enthusiastic advocate of this system of getting some tasks done. I benefited from volunteers when I was Librarian at *Bristol Baptist College* and we had to get

sixteen thousand books onto a database. In that instance we had American Baptist Volunteers who came two by two for a month over eighteen months. At the time it was rather mind numbing training a new cohort every five/six weeks but they were all such delightful people and several came back more than once. The end result is not perfection but we have all used the old **British Museum Catalogue** and I reckon that Bristol Baptist College Catalogue is 'good enough'.

I was impressed by this American tradition of volunteering, or as they see and call it going 'on mission', and heard fascinating stories of working in the Amazonian Rain Forest (building), teaching English in Kazakstan and going to the ballet in Ulan Bator. Not content with Bristol and Kazakstan, one couple from Illinois came to give *South Wales Baptist College* a hand and as we had got friendly my husband and I went down to Cardiff to see them. Hearing that the project would not be completed and sitting over a meal in what was formerly the Principal's flat, I said to my husband '*we could do that!*' To my astonishment he agreed and we have been going to Cardiff to help out this past four years. We get to stay in a spacious and empty college with loads of reading material and we find it

very relaxing!

After serving my time in Cardiff, I landed the Aix project which was advertised in **Christian Librarian** about a year ago. My husband insisted on coming too and paid his own expenses when we went to reconnoitre but it was very hot and no air con or space to play music so I was allowed to go it alone to train the (yes) American Volunteers at Christmas time (reported above).

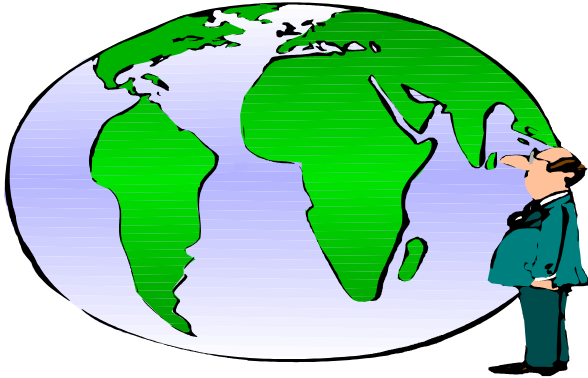
Volunteering can give you such interesting opportunities. Accommodation is usually provided (not at *Westminster Central Hall!*) and I had help with travel expenses to Aix. It offers an away from home experience with a difference and is very useful to the recipient. Don't miss your opportunity when you see an appeal for Library assistance – details are often negotiable!

Looking forward to hearing from you.

Mary Barker, BA, MCLIP, is School Librarian of the *Cardinal Vaughan Memorial School* and serves on the executive committee of the *Librarians' Christian Fellowship* as our Library Assistance Manager.

Contact Mary at Cardinal Vaughan Memorial School, 89 Addison Road, London, W14 8BZ. Tel. 0207 603 8478, ext. 219. E mail cvmslibrary@yahoo.com

NEWS OF OVERSEAS WORK



MALCOLM WALKER reports on two current Christian library projects which deserve the support of LCF members

In addition to the help which Mary Barker has given in Aix-en-Provence, described elsewhere in this issue, the LCF has received interesting reports about library projects in India and in Paraguay.

India

Although an appeal to LCF members for volunteers to help set up a library in a school for orphans in South India was unsuccessful it is gratifying to report that the project itself got off to a fine start.

Mrs. Eve Kirby first contacted the Overseas Secretary in September 2008 about the plans. Eve lives in Edgbaston, Birmingham,

and is in her mid-fifties. For six years, she and her family have been supporting an orphanage and school for six hundred pupils at Kasam, near Vellore in Tamil Nadu, South India. About two years ago, she visited there for the second time, taking with her some friends who were specially interested in the orphanage. They received a request for help with teaching, and so a group of four including Eve agreed to go out again in January 2009. The head teacher also asked for help with the school library.

The orphanage and school are referred to locally as *Mudhiyor Balar Kudumba Grama Pannai* (MBKGP), which translates as “*Grandparents Children Family Village Farm*”. MBKG Pannai was founded forty years ago, in 1969, by Dr. Pauline King, a community health nurse from the *Christian Medical Centre* in Vellore.

Here are some extracts from Eve's e-mails about her experiences:

20 January: “Work is progressing in a very exciting way in the library. Hattie, the friend who came with me from England has been a marvellous help. We have arranged the books according to Dewey on the shelves and started glueing in the envelopes. I hoped to spend my days peacefully glueing, however, there are so many arrangements to be made that tomorrow evening, we are asking a group of ten children to come in and glue with us.”

3 February: “Dear Everyone, WE

HAVE A LIBRARIAN! She is everything that I hoped for in a librarian, and I'm so pleased that she's come. She's working hard this week. Her name is Nishanti. She's with us straight from teacher training college and is very, very enthusiastic. I knew she was the right person for the job when she walked into the library and explored all the book shelves. Her interview was conducted partly in English and partly in Tamil. She will earn a salary as a full time teacher (2500 r. or £35 per week)."

20 February: "For the last week that I walked through the dusty orphanage compound, in which the junior school and library are situated, I was constantly met by people smiling at me -- children waving colourful books, grandmothers saying "library ... nice!" cottage mothers and office staff thanking me. I only wish that you all could have been with me to realise the immense gratitude of the people of Pannai, and how much the library means to everyone. I'm safely home, and very pleased to be here, but finding it rather quiet! The dog snores, the clock ticks, and I'm almost wondering whether the events of the last five weeks really happened."

From the **MBGKP Newsletter**
January-March 2009:

"The highlight of the last few months was the visit of Eve Kirby and Hattie

who arrived on 17 January and set up a fantastic King's community Library in the junior section of the school. They raised a substantial amount of money from their friends and sponsors from the UK to set up the library with a complete range of exciting and appropriate books, CDs and even a Home Theatre. This wonderful facility was dedicated to the glory of God by the correspondent of the Scudder school, Mr. Susanne Abraham in the presence of Mrs. Manju Christopher of Bala Vihar at CMC Hospital. We were also fortunate to have their friends Tracy and Cecilia with us for two weeks. Both worked very hard with Eve in cataloguing the entire library and putting in place a very child friendly and scientific 'Library system.' "

Anyone interested in knowing more about this project can contact Eve by e-mail: sn-ea@kirby.uk.net

Paraguay

Gill White, an LCF member in Abergavenny, contacted the Overseas Secretary in January 2009 to say that her friend Caroline Gilmour-White, who works for SAMS (*South American Missionary Society*), was involved with theological libraries in Paraguay.

Caroline spent seven years training teachers in Paraguay. As librarian and fundraiser at the Anglican training college for Early Years teachers, she helped realise

the vision to create quality education in a country which has lagged behind in this area.

She is now a co-ordinator of *Mission Paraguay*, which works through the Anglican Church to provide funds and a workforce to assist with practical projects that the diocesan churches would find difficult to do themselves. Liaising with pastors and congregations, *Mission Paraguay* organises activities with children and young people and a range of community-based work to relieve hardship and need.

The Paraguayan government has taken new initiatives in the area of housing for Indian peoples, providing water cisterns to alleviate drought, TB treatment and creative educational programmes but bureaucracy and corruption are still a major problem. 19.5% of the population live on less than £1.00 a day and a little over 50% have access to clean water or toilet facilities. In the arid Chaco region where most indigenous communities live this reduces to 2.5%.

Every year the *Mission Paraguay* short-term programme brings teams of volunteers of all ages, mainly from the UK, for three weeks service alongside local Christians. The projects work in poor urban neighbourhoods of Asuncion and Concepcion and the Indian villages of the Chaco which are the most deprived in Paraguay.

For Caroline, *“there's a mass of communication and organisation to do creating projects and timetables to suit everyone's talents.*

We help kick-start or support ministries the local church is launching.”

Caroline maintains her passion for books by co-ordinating the diocesan library collection. *“Besides the preaching needs of clergy and lay leaders, the youth are keen to evangelise and several students plan to enter the ministry. The old book stock no longer meets the needs, so the plan is for a computer database of the books held by existing pastors which all clergy and students can access. Lending will be mobile, supervised by the pastors themselves and thus empowering for everybody. The benefits will be widespread and the potential for growth is enormous.”*

Through SAMS the Anglican Diocese of Paraguay is appealing for financial support for computer software for the library catalogue and library stationery, cupboards and shelving for the book stock and study texts and reference works in Spanish. Anyone able to help with prayer, cataloguing advice or finance can contact Caroline at the following email address: cgwparaguay@gmail.com

The LCF Committee meeting in June 2009 agreed to give £50 each to these two projects in India and Paraguay. These donations have since been acknowledged by the relevant organisations.

Malcolm Walker, BA, PGDipLib, serves on the executive committee of the *Librarians' Christian Fellowship* as our Overseas Secretary.

MEMBERSHIP MATTERS

News from the Membership Secretary:

Janice Paine, MCLIP, 22 Queensgate Gardens, 396 Upper Richmond Road, Putney, London, SW15 6JN.

Tel. 020 8785 2174

A warm welcome to one new member. Also listed below are those who have renewed their membership since early June. We would greatly appreciate it if payment could be sent before the end of April each year.

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

NEW MEMBER

GREENSTREET, Mr Martin P., 'Arcady', 14 Heath Rise, Cadbury Heath, Bristol, BS30 8DD, Tel. 0117 9604943

LATE RENEWALS

CLARKE, Mrs Gloria J., BA, 94 Salisbury Road, Reading, Berks, RG30 1BN – Open Learning Centre Manager, Gillotts School. Tel. 0118 9613069, email gloria.clarke@talk21.com

JACKSON, Mrs Pamela M., MCLIP 17 Uffington Drive Bracknell Berks RG12 9HP - Home Tel: 01344 420341 Home email: pam@jacksonhome.plus.com

OKORU, Mrs Harriet C., MSc, HND, P.O.Box 953, Enugu, Enugu State, Nigeria – MLS student, University of Nigeria, Nsukka. Tel. 234 8036777172, email harietilo@yahoo.com

CHANGES TO ADDRESS, JOB ETC.

HAYCRAFT, Miss Annabel, BA(Hons), MA, 107 Ebbisham Road, Epsom, Surrey, KT18 7NS – Tel. 07740071525, email annabelhaycraft@yahoo.co.uk

MAIN ARTICLES

ANNE MACRITCHIE surveys recent issues of the professional press and considers some of the implications for librarians if books are made more widely available in electronic format

EYE ON THE PROFESSION

ARE E-BOOKS THE FUTURE?

E-books are now with us and have certainly taken off in the world of education, especially higher education where they are of great value to many parts of the academic community. E-books are particularly useful to students, who often have difficulty accessing the textbooks they need, and to scholars working in the Arts and Humanities where research tends to appear in books rather than journals. However their use by the general public has so far been limited despite various easy ways of accessing them. Publicity is very important in persuading people to try the medium as was shown by a survey carried out by Essex County Libraries (1). Only nine out of fifty-eight respondents had found out about the e-book collections after browsing the library service's website. Another problem may be age as the majority of respondents who claimed awareness of e-books were aged between twenty-one and thirty. This is where good user communication skills are vital for a librarian if more mature people are to be persuaded to use e-books. There are various devices now available such as Amazon's "The Kindle" – a hand-held e-book reader, and Borders UK's iRex.

The potential of e-books is vast with lesser known authors able to make their works publicly available easily and cheaply. (2) There is, of course, a danger that this will lead to mediocrity in book publishing but there is enormous potential for works of very local or specialised interest but of great merit being published where previously production costs would have been prohibitive. Should there be a publishing free-for all or a kind of 'natural selection' by readers? There is another factor at this time of great concern about our environment. Trees would be saved as

less paper would be needed and unnecessary journeys eliminated. Researchers and their institutions, even public libraries, can save time and money.

The NHS in Scotland has an excellent “E-Library” website (soon to be renamed “*Knowledge for Care*”) which gives easy access to e-books and e-journals and various other sources of information on health matters and it is well used by health practitioners of all levels and specialities though it is journal articles that are accessed most. This is a challenge for those of us working in NHS libraries.

To return to the academic environment (3), the popularity of e-books will mean fewer visits to the library and if Internet access is provided to the relatively small number of books students need it's a fair bet that there will be a huge drop in library visits and this will lead to questions about whether the library needs all the space it occupies and the staff employed. The University of Aberdeen must be unique and fortunate at the moment to be building a brand new multi-million pound library.

The advent of e-books in numbers will mean that libraries will become more remote from their users and publishers ever closer and they will have the knowledge of how the user behaves as the user's footfalls will now take place in their virtual space. Publishers will also be able to offer products directly to the user, indeed it might be the publisher who will be providing the e-library experience. A research study (3) has been undertaken at the University College London called “*The SuperBook project*” which involved ‘dropping’ more than 3,000 carefully selected e-books from OUP, Wiley and Taylor & Francis into the UCL environment and assessing by deep log analysis what happened. There was a relatively high level of usage with a good proportion of users taking advantage of the rich choice of titles available, with one quarter of sessions involving more than three books. Forty per cent of books on economics, philosophy and politics were used at least once. Overall use was concentrated with two titles accounting for more than twelve per cent of the page views and the top twenty titles accounting for forty-three per cent of usage. One finding was that catalogued books were twice as likely to be used indicating that the catalogue is still where people look for books.

The market for e-books has certainly taken off, particularly in the education world and aggregators are now providing easy access to large collections of titles from many publishers through a single interface (4). Some aggregator platforms are offering very sophisticated means of access to e-book content with annotating features such as multiple

highlights and notes per page. Aggregators now represent a major source for e-books in libraries and while English collections dominate, there is a move towards developing multilingual access and content. Markets are focused in academic and public libraries but schools and special libraries are increasingly represented.

Another potential use of e-book format is the transition from a paper-based book such as the **Good University Guide** to a fully customisable e-book (5). This is particularly useful for such a work with large comparison tables.

To conclude there are several advantages that e-books give readers including increased portability, easy storage, availability of downloads and provision for searching text. In addition several e-books can be stored on one device. For libraries there are also several advantages: mainly lower costs, substantially quicker delivery of books, a saving on shelf space and no lost or damaged texts. There need be no overdue notices since e-books can be made to expire. Staff can be freed from routine tasks but there are also challenges not least educating users and making e-books more widely accessible.

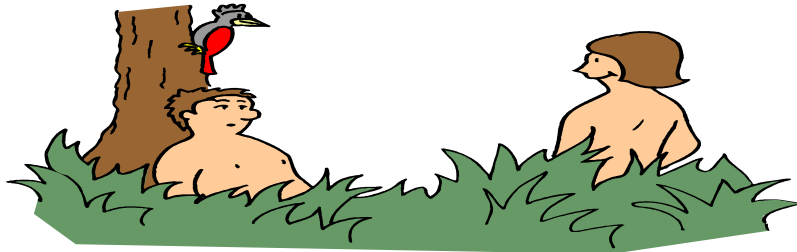
References

- (1)McKnight, Cliff, Dearney, James and Morris, Anne '*Making e-books accessible through public libraries: some user reactions*'. **Journal of Librarianship and Information Science**, 40(1), March 2008 pp. 31-43.
- (2)Menzies, Kathleen and Fallis, Richard '*E-books: a new chapter begins? Will e-books bring a revolution or more of the same?*' **Information Scotland**, 6(5), October 2008, article 2.
- (3)Nichols, David et. al. '*E-books: how are users responding?*' **Library and Information Update**, 6(11), November 2007, pp. 29-33.
- (4)Lonsdale, Ray and Armstrong, Chris '*Aggre-culture: what do e-book aggregators offer?*' **Library and Information Update**, 7(4), April 2008 pp. 28-33
- (5)Polding, Robert, Nunes, Jose, Miguel Baptista and Kingston, Bernard '*Assessing e-book model sustainability*'. **Journal of Librarianship and Information Science**, 40(4), December 2008 p.255-268.

Anne MacRitchie, MSC, works for NHS Grampian as an Information Assistant and serves the *Librarians' Christian Fellowship* as our Regional Representative for Scotland.

ANDII BOWSHER begins to construct a theology of culture from the early chapters of Genesis and asks: Was Adam the first librarian?

ADAM AND DEWEY



An Address to the Librarians' Christian Fellowship's Nottingham 2009 Conference held on Saturday 25 April 2009 at St. Nicholas' Church, Maid Marian Way, Nottingham.

There is a book called *The name of the wind* by Patrick Rothfuss, and as I was preparing the lecture, scenes kept coming to mind. At the heart of this book lies a university, and at the heart of that university is a library. The library is huge and has existed for centuries, the collection growing all the time. It's also subterranean, going down many levels and some people never get to the bottom, including the chief librarians, who come and go over time. What sticks in the memory, though, is the wars of classification which have occurred with each chief librarian having their particular scheme, and each re-classification taking years to the extent that they are never completed. So you have books in different classifications, from past tenures, and there are people working down in a subterranean level who do not know there has been a regime change. Rothfuss' book, apart from being about the library of a university, is about another kind of classification: the naming power of words.

In Genesis chapter 2, verses 19 and 20 it says "*From out of the ground, the Lord God formed every animal of the field, every bird of the air, and brought them to the man to see what he would call them. And whatever the man called every living creature that was its name. The man gave names to all the cattle, and to the birds of the air and to every*

animal of the field. But for the man there was no helper as his partner." The last sentence is there to remind us that this text has a context, but I would like to concentrate on this idea that Adam gives names.

Naming is something which interests me as a linguist and as a theologian, and as a practical theologian in particular. Naming seems to me to imply, in one sense, contemplation. If you want to name something which hasn't got a name, you have to look at it and become familiar with it as a whole entity; you have to see it in relationship to other things and decide what those relationships are. If you are doing that, you are in a sense, contemplating. In this Genesis story we see Adam as the one who contemplates what God brings before him. It's a spiritual activity, and it has this sense of seeing things for what they are, to the best of our ability anyway.

This story about Adam is also to do with taxonomy. Taxonomy involves seeing the relationships with other things (seeing being a generic term –there are other ways of discerning) but it is also about understanding. Furthermore it is about picking out significant features, or what appear to us significant. That in essence is what classification is: deciding what is significant. Naming then isn't just about giving something a label, but rather how we see things, how the labels we choose relate to the other things we have named and how it all hangs together. In an article entitled '*The analytical language of John Wilkins*', Jorge Luis Borges describes a mythical Chinese encyclopaedia called ***The Celestial Emporium of Benevolent Knowledge***, and he says that animals are divided into several classifications. They are : 1. Those that belong to the emperor. 2. Embalmed ones. 3. Those that are trained. 4. Suckling pigs. 5. Mermaids. 6. Fabulous animals. 7. Stray dogs. 8. Those included in the present classification. 9. Those that tremble as if they were mad. 10. Innumerable ones. 11. Those drawn with very fine camel hair brush. 12. Others. 13. Those that have just broken a flower vase. 14. Those that from a long way off look like flies. I suspect that Borges is being tongue-in-cheek in making his point that producing a universal language (the dream of some Enlightenment philosophers) may actually be doomed to failure.

The issue is one of cultural perspective. As already touched upon with regard to the libraries I've used, where you are coming from and the purpose for which you use the information will change and affect how something is classified, and therefore how you name things. As I was looking at classification, I came across an article which contrasted Dewey with an Islamic or a Judaic classification scheme, and of course these schemes pay more attention to the starting points of their faith and

world view. It's the same in other situations. If you take the starting point of my institution, that of Christian Ministry, the library will reflect that particular approach. With groups of students I've put a variety of unrelated images in front of them and asked them to pick out which ones belong together. It was interesting, especially with students of counselling, to see how differently they went about it. Some grouped them by colour, others by size, others by natural world versus artificial world, and so on. Classification is debatable. Even something as seemingly fixed as the Periodic Table has its grey areas: the noble gases are only gases at room temperature. So the Periodic Table has as its perspective the standpoint of 'room temperature'.

Consider for a moment the picture from the Sistine Chapel with God's hand reaching out to Adam's, and Adam's hand seems rather diffident in its response. It is a God-engineered moment.

Adam, in Genesis, has all the animals being brought before him. What is important to note is that it is also before the Fall. That happens in the next chapter, although there are a few aspects from chapter 2 which are highlighted in the story of the Fall. The naming, though, comes before that. So the business of classification, of organising how things relate to each other in one's head, is not a product of the Fall, but rather an initiative which God has taken and something he wants Adam to do. God is effectively saying "*Look at the varieties here. What do you make of it? How do you see it? How do you classify it?*" Was Adam the first librarian?

We can see in this an affirmation from the canon of Scripture for cultural and intellectual freedom. With this in mind, we can see that Adam could have classified his world in different ways and that would have been acceptable to God, something which is still going on. God is just as happy with an Indian classifying in their particular language with their intellectual resources, as he is with the Chinese or any other culture. They are permitted by God to make of it what they will. This contrasts with a similar passage from the Qur'an, which makes the Genesis picture become all the more striking. In Surah 2, verse 31 the Qur'an says "*Allah taught Adam all the names of everything*". This is a significantly different picture from the Genesis picture, I believe, and takes us in a rather different trajectory of thought. It seems to me that the Qur'anic one is taking us down the path of 'there is only one way to go when it comes to knowledge', the one Allah taught Adam. In Hebrew thought, in our canon, God allows Adam's names to stand. Adam names something '*and that was its name*'. It is not imposed by God on Adam, but instead God is happy for Adam to have his own ideas.

The Genesis story, then, is giving us in embryo the ‘namings’ that human culture brings to us through art and science. Art automatically gives us perspective. It gives us a ‘name’ in the sense that there is a way of looking at a particular incident from scripture in a piece of art such as we get in the Sistine Chapel, for example. Science, as we have seen with the Periodic Table, names elements in an attempt to relate them to each other. Classification in science has undergone a series of changes recently; at one time there was just the animal and plant kingdoms, now there are five parts to the ‘tree of life’. I believe human culture is given space to make different perspectives of the world, through that passage from Genesis, and we are encouraged by God to have diverse cultures. It is a source or starting point for a theology of culture.

We are not, though, just thinking about how things can be organised efficiently: we are concerned about how information serves human development. As an educator, I’ve come across some Christian teachers who perceive their task as one of giving information, and the person learning is simply there to receive it. I have found more value through what can be termed constructivism. This is a method whereby people construct their own understanding and knowledge of the world through experiencing things and reflecting on those experiences. Each child, in order to acquire a language, has to hear it, has to develop hypotheses about what they are hearing, and begin testing them out with other speakers of the language; and then to grow their own version of the language from the ground up. It seems to me that all knowledge works in this way. We all construct for our own purposes the knowledge that we are working with. In our Genesis passage, Adam is also learning and he is expressing his learning as he contemplates these animals. The learning and the classification are taking place together. So this passage, to my mind, affirms a constructivist approach which in so many ways makes sense.

Many of you when working with the Internet will have come across terms like tagging or folksonomy. They refer to ways of labelling things so that you can come back to them later on, but in a bottom-up way of labelling, instead of the more top-down classification we often experience. Some of you will have used sites like *Delicious*, for example. My feeling is that this bottom-up classification is more in tune with the way God invites us to understand the world and the things around and is excited by what we come up with.

If you’ve seen the film ***Chariots of fire*** you’ll know Eric Liddell says “*When I run I feel His pleasure*”, and it’s that same pleasure I feel when I

am classifying or naming. I feel God is looking on and even cheering us on as we do it. One of the liberating aspects of folksonomy is it allows for different viewpoints and purposes. When someone in history has made a scientific discovery it is often because they have stepped out of the perspective or classification they have inherited. They find a way of taking a path which makes even more sense of the world. This diversity allows us to make progress and do things we couldn't do before. We must acknowledge, of course, that such an approach can and has brought evil as well as good, but we should be wary of stopping doing good because somebody might do something bad with it.

I'd also like to draw out something about the image of God in this. In the previous chapter of Genesis, we see that as God is creating, God is also naming: the dark he called night and the light he called day. So we see that there are some given structures of the universe, long before humanity appeared, and God has already begun the task of classification. But at some point God has involved us in that. Some theologians have termed humankind as 'co-creators with God'. This seems to me to be partly what we have here, and we can develop that to say we are also 'co-namers' with God. This gives us considerable dignity, and freedom as well, and in doing so we exhibit the image of God.

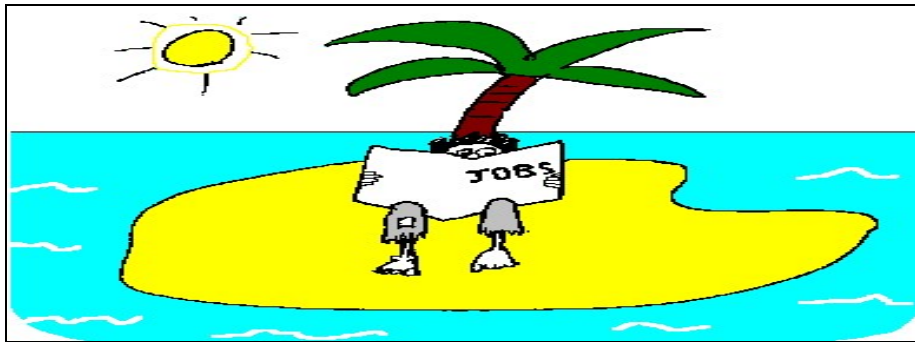
The Benedictines have within their tradition the doctrine of 'Opus Dei' or 'work of God'. I use this phrase because as librarians you take part in the work of God. In other words, what God wants to happen in the world is what you are doing. You are helping people to construct their knowledge, and that helps them to exercise their God-given and God-imaging ability to do that. So you are actually helping people to express something very God-given by providing resources for their activities and tasks. I teach mission as part of what I do, and I am aware that in the 'dark ages' monasteries kept knowledge alive through their libraries. I think what you do is very important, not just for individuals, but for the whole of civilisation.

The Rev. **Andii Bowsher**, *BA, PGCert, PGDip, MA*, is a tutor in practical theology and pathway leader for Mixed Mode training at *St. John's College*, Nottingham. Before moving into full time education he was in church-based ordained ministry, in mostly urban contexts, and then in chaplaincy in higher and further education institutions in West Yorkshire.

RHONA FLOATE recalls some of her own past struggles in combining her Christian faith with her everyday work and identifies some biblical narratives that proved helpful in thinking through issues in the contemporary workplace

DESERT ISLAND TEXTS

RESOURCES FOR INTEGRATING OCCUPATION AND VOCATION



An Address to the Librarians' Christian Fellowship's Nottingham 2009 Conference held on Saturday 25 April 2009 at St. Nicholas' Church, Maid Marian Way, Nottingham. This talk was structured as a workshop with opportunities for conference delegates to share experiences and learn from each other. A summary of some of the points made is included.

A question of vocation

How do we integrate occupation and vocation, faith and work?

I don't think this is just a question for those in work, or of working age. I believe it applies to us all, whether in paid employment or a volunteer, whether enjoying active retirement or largely confined to home, armchair or bed.

An understanding of vocation is at the heart of this question.

Asking people from a variety of occupations about this, the view often expressed is that vocation is something for those called into formal religious ministries or the caring professions, or teaching. Another common reaction is that the church has little to say to Christians working out their vocation in a secular setting.

At this point small groups explored two questions:

- What do you understand by vocation?
- How strong is your sense of calling in relation to your occupation?

Comments included:

- I think we can have multiple vocations
- Vocation changes over time
- It's an internal compulsion or a positive internal pressure.
- It needs to be tested by others.
- A sense of this is what life was made for.
- Yes, I do have a strong of vocation to be a librarian
- Sometimes it can be very specific, sometimes less so
- Not every job can be seen as a vocation. For many it is simply a way to pay the bills.

I was already exploring the subject of this talk when I heard Paul Valler speak at the LCF Annual Public Lecture in November 2008. Paul challenged the concept of a work-life balance, which seems to suggest that work and life are mutually exclusive. Yet work can occupy a significant proportion of our waking hours. It is part of life, not something that deprives us of life. So I offer the following verse as a starting point for exploring further what we mean by vocation and occupation:

For we are what He has made us, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand to be our way of life. (Ephesians 2.10 NRSV)

This verse says something both about us, made in God's image, and about our purpose, as those alive in Christ.

A personal perspective

I had a clear sense of God's guidance and providence in my life as I progressed from a music degree into librarianship. I was drawn, not into music libraries (my first thought) but into the scientific and technical area, first in the water industry and then in plant science research. At the same time there was always a sense that I was not going to be a librarian for the whole of my working life. The next stage turned out to be the ordained ministry.

Additionally, throughout this period of roughly twenty years I struggled with the issue of how my work related to my Christian faith. The musical training had given me skills which could be used in church worship. But my work seemed a very different matter.

My sense of vocation within the workplace was very vague. I worked for organisations that, generally speaking, benefitted society. I tried to do my work "*as to the Lord*" and was "*prepared in season and out of season*" to give an account of my faith. But it felt like a bolt-on extra rather an integrated whole.

It may be that librarianship was a means to an end as God prepared me to become what I now am: a parish priest in the Church of England. I personally find this an unsatisfying answer even now. Before going onto explore how I began to make sense of these apparently separate parts of my life, another question:

Group question:

- Can we separate out guidance from vocation?

Comments:

- Guidance is to do with particular decisions and situations
- Vocation is about a sense of continuity and purpose
- It is hard to make a clear distinction

The benefit of hindsight

My choice of title was very deliberate: *Desert Island Discs* will be familiar to many: a selection of eight pieces of music of significance to the life of someone. And for me an equivalent Biblical resource emerged as I began to discover texts that helped me make sense of my working life and how it reflected my faith.

My starting point was not a text but an object, like a Desert Island castaway who can take a luxury item. A holding cross carried to work gave me a sense of God's presence throughout the working day. It slowed me down whenever I left my office to go to a meeting, and I began to see people in a new way. It opened my eyes to see more of what was going on around me as much as being aware of God with me.

Beyond that there was little more until I began my theological training and engaged much more with a reflective approach to my work and calling. It seems to me that so often what our calling is in any particular set of circumstances is easier to see in retrospect. Hindsight is a wonderful thing! The castaway selects those eight discs by looking back rather than distilling the essence of the moment.

Thus I began to learn the discipline of identifying Biblical narratives or metaphors which throw light on a particular situation. This is not about finding proof texts that give simple answers but material that sheds new light on what we are doing or have done. Sometimes it consists of simple parallels, often it is more complex.

In effect I could begin to assemble my Desert Island Texts. Through this process I could begin to integrate occupation and vocation in a meaningful way. Here are some of my texts:

New wine and old wine skins (Mt. 9.17; Mk 2.22; Lk 5.37)

This was one of the earliest texts that encouraged me and made sense of what I was doing, and it pre-dated theological training. As Librarian of a plant science research station I inherited a collection, and collections policy, that seemed out a step with current research interests and the impact of current technologies and professional practice. For the sake of "The Collection" we were still subscribing to journals, indexing and abstracting tools no one ever used because research interests had moved on. Scientists in emerging disciplines were under-resourced, the

building was creaking at the seams. It felt like a bad case of new wine trying to be contained in old wine skins. Just the knowledge of Jesus' challenging the old religion of the scribes and Pharisees was an encouragement. It was not the source of guidance on how to change things but it certainly gave a new dimension, to what I was doing. My work was to be about fulfilling the purposes for which the collection had been created in this new age rather than destroying it, just as Jesus' purposes were to fulfil the law in its purpose of enabling people to relate to God, not destroy the law.

From garden to city (Genesis 2, Revelation 21)

Managing change was at the heart of a significant part of my work as a librarian. Further insights came from reflecting on the fact that the Bible begins in a garden in Genesis and ends in a city in Revelation. This suggests that God's plan is always for a progression. The Fall and everything that flowed from it, did not mean a new plan had to be devised. Instead, it was always God's plan that we should be creative. The garden was not a static state but the starting point for a creative process that would culminate in the city. To foster the growth of a dynamically changing environment, whether in librarianship or anything else, can reflect the creative purposes of God. We mirror God's activity in the world. Of course we do need to evaluate what we are creating. Remember God in Genesis 1. At the each of each day God looked at what he had made and saw that it was good. Therein lies the rub! When it is good then there is huge fulfilment in knowing how one's work has reflected God's purposes.

Old Testament Law and the new law of the two great commandments (Matt. 22: 34-40)

I trained at the College of Librarianship Wales at a time when it was pioneering a new way of teaching librarianship. It was shifting away from prescriptive methods, to focus on grasping the underlying

principles so they could be applied to any context in which we found ourselves. We were to create horses for courses rather than unquestioningly implement a detailed set of cataloguing and classification rules which could either be too elaborate or too broad for the context. I knew at the time this was a significant and exciting development and fortunately I found myself in situations where these skills could be applied although with the inevitable frustrations that you could not start with a clean sweep.

More recently as I have reflected on the nature of the Old Testament laws and the two great commandments of Jesus, I have seen a rich vein of parallels and paradoxes. The Old Testament Law and the Rabbinic traditions that flowed from it appear to be prescriptive. The new law of the two great commandments are more like principles that distill the spirit of the law rather than lay it out letter by letter. Jesus calls us into the applying of principles rather than following something too rigidly prescriptive.

Collaborative librarianship and the body of Christ.

I always felt the collective noun for librarians should be a “collaboration.” Yet there were times when it was counter-cultural to collaborate with other organisations and this made management very uneasy. There can be tensions between libraries, for example large libraries not understanding the limitations that apply in smaller ones and vice versa.

There are links here with the Body of Christ but also with the Trinity, and in particular an understanding of Trinity as an outwardly focussed dance of relationships. Paul Fiddes in his book ***Participating in God – A Pastoral Doctrine of the Trinity***, (London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 2000) suggests that dance, as an image of the Trinity, “*is not so much about dancers as about the patterns of the dance itself*”. The dancers “*draw us in to participate in the movements of mission and worship within the dance.*”

Fiddes’ words were, I think, true of much of what I was trying to do in the profession in various ways – whether in inter-lending, or integrating the library and information services of a multi-site research institute or the development of a purchasing consortium. It may still be true for this profession: That we draw one another into the work of sharing, collaborating. That in needing the other and finding fulfilment in and through relationship we reflect that God-given identity that enables

us to live and grow in his image. That to me is so exciting!

Genesis 2

The second chapter of Genesis is often the source for developing a theology of work. As I have read the chapter in the light of David Atkinson's *The Message of Genesis 1-11* (Leicester: Inter-Varsity Press, 1990) it has become a foundational Desert Island Text for my calling both as a librarian and as a priest. Adam's skills are part of God's plan. They are employed in the work of managing and making fruitful what God has entrusted to him. Then the naming of the animals is part of a process of analysis through which he *"is learning to think about himself as God thinks about him"* and comes to realise what God has known all along. Alexander Schmemmann from the Orthodox tradition says *"to give a name is to manifest the meaning and value God gave it, to know it as coming from God and know its place and function within the cosmos created by God."*

Both these views suggest God has endowed us with minds that he intends us to use to discover more about him and his purposes. The ability to think and to reason are fundamental to what it is to be human made in the image of God. For me it helps to integrate the times when we are perhaps more in rational mode, such as at work, with the spiritual and the emotional. They are all part of the seamless robe of life that encompasses all aspects of life: work, leisure, daily chores, prayer, worship.

Group questions:

- Do any of these stories or themes mentioned resonate for you?
- Are there other texts and stories which you have already found helpful?

Comments:

- Themes of collaboration resonate strongly but it's not always easy.

Applying this to the present.

Doing some work on making sense of the past is a good place for us to start before attempting to apply it in the present, because it is also possible and helpful. It deepens our present sense of vocation and service of God within our working life. It becomes more explicit and as a result I believe more focussed, more rewarding and more glorifying to God. I offer a recent example from my work.

The wisdom of Solomon (1 Kings 3: 16-28)

There is an ongoing review of schools in my part of Dorset. It recommended closure of one school in the village, a Church of England foundation, and the expansion of the corresponding Roman Catholic school. My own feeling was that a joint faith school would be good for the village, but the proposal did nothing to move in this direction. It simply created a great deal of anger and suspicion that clouded debate. I sensed from early on that my role was to do with listening and trying to some extent to diffuse emotions so we could engage in a more objective debate.

I began to use the story of Solomon and the two mothers as a point of reflection: One could conclude that we should simply hand over the baby of our school into another's hands. But that is not where the reflections ended, and not just because I knew that such a suggestion would be very unpopular. Stories like this can give deeper insights that go beyond the presenting problem. Instead it has affirmed my sense of vocation in relation to serving as a catalyst for the whole community. Solomon asked the question that would get to the truth, and in this situation we needed to discover the questions that would help us discern the truth?

I think there are further layers too. What happened next? We are not told. Could the two women have been reconciled as a result of this incident and ended up sharing the child together? An experience like this would bring into sharp relief for both mothers the pain of losing a child. Could it have led to a sharing of each grief and joy? That may be a touch fanciful but what an outcome! And one that I sense is consistent with the transformation of relationships, our attitudes to possessions and our loyalties that are part of God's great purposes. To explore that would

take me into other texts and it's time for you to do some work again.

Group question:

- Are there situations that challenge you at present that might yield to this treatment? (Delegates were invited to share issues within their groups and see what others could offer. They were asked to try to avoid giving direct advice but to choose stories that resonate and illuminate.)

Comments:

- There was little time for feedback on this discussion, but it may be something that readers may wish to reflect on for themselves.

Vocation – a work in progress

For me, what emerges is an understanding of vocation that is less about our particular choice of occupation and more about how our working life reflects something of the nature of God. The texts I have shared with you hopefully demonstrate how either wittingly or unwittingly I sense that I, and other librarians, make God more present in the world. That it is not confined to direct proclamation but working in ways that reflects his ways. But that in reflecting on our work and upon texts that help us make greater sense of it, we can find our occupation more fulfilling.

Our vocation, I suggest, is an evolving aspect of our Christian life that seeks to integrate every aspect of life with faith, so we can claim that in God we live and move and have our being. Luther was very much in tune with this thought: that all work and indeed all leisure that we find ourselves engaged in is our vocation. So the challenge is to make the connections that add meaning and transform the ordinary into the divine.

Before ordination in the Church of England, the Rev. **Rhona Floate**, BA, DipThSt, DipLib, MCLIP, managed libraries in the water industry and plant science research. She is now the Priest-in-Charge of Wool and East Stoke in the Diocese of Salisbury.

THE LAST WORD

RICHARD WALLER expresses a controversial viewpoint on biblical fiction but recommends two books that he says are quite unlike any other Christian books he has ever read

TWO FOR THE PRICE OF ONE

Trumper, Peter *On the eve of the atonement*. Evangelical Press, 1995, £7.95, Pbk, 978-0852343210

Trumper, Peter *Breakfast on the beach*. Evangelical Press, 1999, Pbk, £9.95, 978-0852344224

Today you're getting two for the price of one, not one, but two book reviews in one go! My wife Norma and I have recently enjoyed two rather unusual books and this is as good a time as any to tell you about them. One is about the last day of Jesus' life and the second about the resurrection. Both of them are from Evangelical Press and both of them are by a retired pastor, Peter Trumper, at one time well known for his work with the *Protestant Truth Society*. He is now elderly and infirm and turned his considerable talent to writing these two books, *On the eve of the atonement* and the delightfully entitled *Breakfast on the beach*.

They are both remarkable as they are a type of work rare in Christian writing, being what's known in the book trade as '*faction*'. They are non-fiction and serious treatments of their subjects, but written in the style of a fiction writer, and very well written too. By no means are they historical novels, and a novel that tried to tackle the subjects of the Last Supper, arrest, trial crucifixion and resurrection would be irreverent at worst and trite where it wasn't offensive. Nothing like that works, ever read *Ben Hur* or *The Robe*? No? Well don't!

The poor author got roundly abused for his efforts by some, as the preface to ***Breakfast on the beach*** makes clear, where he says that his critics '*register alarm at the use I make of my imagination*' - and certainly the more conservative type of earnest reformed Christian is going to blink in astonishment when they pick up the books! However, what Peter Trumper has sought to do is explore in detail the implications of the Biblical narratives in a devotional way so as to illuminate the reality they were portraying. The result is hard to describe, it is refreshing, thoroughly Biblical and very much likely to stimulate devotional thought and worship. The author states his purpose as being '*to enhance the reader's understanding.*' His intention is to bring the narrative to life and make us see the events as if we stood there and watched. It works. They are utterly unlike any Christian books I have read recently and not terribly like anything else I ever recall reading at all. It is more like what might have happened if C. S. Lewis had written a commentary on the crucifixion and resurrection stories. They are compelling reading once you get underway and settle into the style.

Peter Trumper always gives Bible references to show his authority for what he says, but they break up the narrative until you get used to ignoring them! It is possible to pick holes in them, there are a couple of things I don't think he got right, for instance, he interprets the unnatural darkness at Calvary as the result of a very severe storm, which I simply don't think is correct. But the holes are minor compared to the overall effect and the sheer Biblical scholarship and research that produced the books.

I read them in reverse order and I am glad I did. ***Breakfast on the beach*** is definitely the better of the two, Norma and I agree about that. ***On the eve of the atonement*** was in many ways an experiment and the full flower is the second volume. They would make a good Easter read next year. We commend them to you.

Richard M. Waller, *BD, MCLIP, ALBC*, is a Vice-President of the *Librarians' Christian Fellowship* and works for the public library service in the *Metropolitan Borough of Wigan*.