

Autumn 2010

CHRISTIAN LIBRARIAN



The Journal of the
Librarians' Christian Fellowship

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A chance to see the Library in its new home in the Bounds Green area of London, from 2.30.p.m. Details: p.11

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●SATURDAY 2 APRIL 2011: ANNUAL CONFERENCE: 2011: THE YEAR OF THE BIBLE

Carrs Lane Church Centre, Birmingham. Speakers: Rev. **Bob Cotton**, *Bible Society* and *Evangelical Alliance*, and Rev. Dr. **Pete Wilcox**, Canon Chancellor, *Lichfield Cathedral*. Details: p.11

●SATURDAY 1 OCTOBER 2011: ANNUAL PUBLIC LECTURE

RISC Centre, Reading. Speaker: **Dave Roberts**, author of *The Twilight Gospel*. Details: p. 11-12

PRAYER NOTES FOR AUTUMN 2010

PLEASE PRAY FOR

●The *Librarians' Christian Fellowship* and its activities including the *Public Lecture* in Bath.

●Next year's Conference 2011: *The Year of the Bible*. Pray, also, for the work of the *2011 Trust* and the *Biblefresh* team as they prepare to celebrate the four hundredth anniversary of the *King James Bible*.

●The members of LCF's executive committee as they plan the work of the Fellowship and consider possible future directions.

●**Bob McKee**, as he retires from the *Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals* and **Annie Mauer** as she takes up her new duties as Chief Executive.

●The work of our recent Conference speakers, **Tony Jasper** and **Eddie Olliffe**. Pray that there will be a good public response to Tony's next book *Jesus Centre Stage* and good audiences for future performances of his *Jasperian Theatre Company*.

●*CLC*, *Koorang* and the *Nationwide Christian Trust* as they take over some of the former *Wesley Owen* bookshops from *IBS-STL*. Pray for employees as they adjust to the new staffing arrangements.



LIBRARIANS' CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP

CHRISTIANS IN LIBRARY, INFORMATION AND ARCHIVE WORK

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

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THE FIRST WORD

GORDON HARRIS bids farewell to a leader of the library and information profession and considers some issues that will face the new head of our major professional association

LEADERSHIP ISSUES FOR CILIP'S NEW CHIEF EXECUTIVE

The logo for CILIP, featuring the word "cilip" in a lowercase, serif font. A thick, black, wavy line is positioned below the letters, resembling a stylized wave or a flourish.

**Chartered Institute of
Library and Information
Professionals**

This autumn we say farewell to **Bob McKee** as Chief Executive of CILIP. We thank him for many years of service to the profession, and for the support he has shown to LCF, especially at the Services of Thanksgiving which LCF has facilitated at the *Umbrella* Conferences over the last few years.

As he leaves, we welcome **Annie Mauger** as his successor. Annie's achievement has been that of champion of library and information services throughout the UK. As Chief Executive of Yorkshire MLA, Head of Libraries and Heritage in York, and as a consultant across various sectors (as well as voluntary posts within CILIP), she has considerable experience of change management and organisational development.

Those who enter senior positions usually encounter goodwill from their new colleagues during the first few honeymoon months. But honeymoons end, and leaders then have to continually inspire their followers. It is worth considering Bill Gates' words: "*As we look ahead into the next century, leaders will be those who empower others.*" This view is reflected in the leader's need to influence both those in her/his organisation and also those outside it, as explained by John C. Maxwell. Maxwell adds that "*without maintaining integrity and trustworthiness, the capability to influence will disappear.*"¹

Well led organisations exhibit the following characteristics (among others): employees know the leader; communication is transparent, responsibility is exercised through delegation, corporate vision is embraced by all, employees are given opportunities to grow, everyone is set new challenges.

Behind all this however we hear Jesus turning the whole concept of leadership on its head: "*If anyone wants to be first, he must be the very last, and the servant of all.*"²

Members of LCF warmly welcome Annie to her new role in November. We remember Paul's admonition to support and pray for leaders.³

Gordon A. Harris, *BSocSc MPhil FCLIP DipKM* is President of the *Librarians' Christian Fellowship* and until recently was Senior Corporate Information Officer for *Tearfund*.

¹ Maxwell, John C. *The Twenty-One Irrefutable Laws of Leadership*. Nelson, 2007

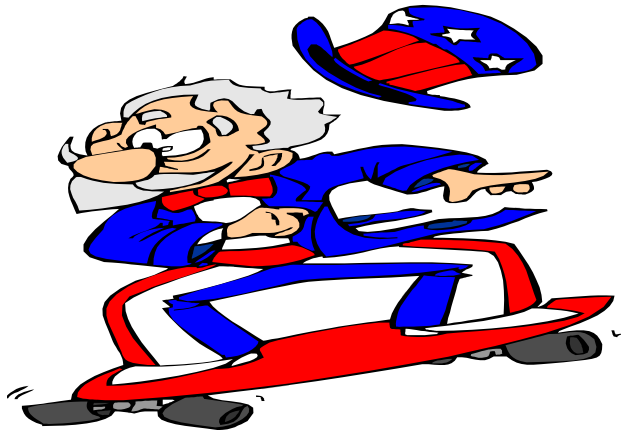
² Mark 9:35

³ Romans 13: 1-7; 1 Timothy 2: 1-2

THE SECOND WORD

LOUISE MANNERS reports on a recent visit to the United States where places of interest included a building that has, at different times, been a Catholic church, a public library and a Methodist church

AMERICAN DIARY



Visiting Boston, Massachusetts, USA, around 4th July, I was surprised to find how entwined the older churches are in the history of Boston and of the USA, with links into current Boston and Cambridge civic pride. The two-hour morning service at the Methodist Old West Church, Boston, (no air conditioning), made no concessions to the 103F heat. Twin baby boys were baptised, supported by a simply enormous family, and the monthly communion service took place. The preacher, after giving a twenty-minute sermon, mopped his brow!

After the service a member of the congregation was delighted to show me the organ. The original Catholic Old West Church had its steeple removed by the British forces to prevent signals being

made. The future President Kennedy worshipped at the church. When the church was converted into a public library, parts of the organ were retained. The library moved to new premises down the hill and the Methodists moved in. The organ was restored.

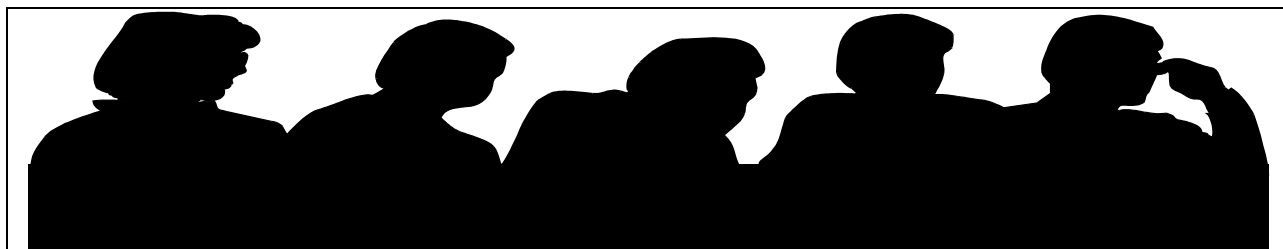
The Old North Church, Boston, is on the tourism-friendly Freedom Trail. At the Old North Church, a pair of lanterns was hung on 18 April 1775 in the steeple, reportedly by the church sexton, “*one by land, two by sea*”, signalling the movement of the British forces from Boston Common. When the lanterns were put up Paul Revere was already riding a borrowed horse towards Lexington to alert the colonial militia. If he did not get through the lights in the steeple would alert Charlestown. There were two other riders, riding with the news. Paul Revere and another rider were stopped from getting through. The last rider, Dr. Samuel Prescott, reached Concord. A small exhibition, on temporary display, at Massachusetts State House remembering Paul Revere includes Longfellow’s poem, “*The midnight ride of Paul Revere*”.

The Old Burying Ground, Cambridge, 4th July flags marking the graves of veterans of the Revolutionary War, was being used as introduction into the social and family history of the early pioneers. A woman in period dress explained in archaic phrases that after a child died, the next child of the same gender born in the family would receive his or her name. In one family there were three girls named Martha. Gravestone carvers would initial gravestones they made during their apprenticeship in order for the apprenticeship to be judged. This happened when the carvers were about sixteen years old. Gravestones carved by the same men are in other graveyards some distance away. They were ordered and then transported by water.

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

**PLEASE JOIN US IN BATH FOR LCF'S
ANNUAL PUBLIC LECTURE**



**SATURDAY 23 OCTOBER
2010**

from 2.30.p.m.

**MANVERS STREET BAPTIST CHURCH,
MANVERS STREET, BATH, BA1 1JW**

GUEST SPEAKER

Rev. Dr. ALAN GARROW

Vicar Theologian, Bath Abbey

“THE FIVE LORD'S PRAYERS”

THE FIVE LORD'S PRAYERS

This is the theme of the Annual Public Lecture of the **Librarians' Christian Fellowship** which is to be held on **Saturday 23 October 2010** at the **Manvers Street Baptist Church, Manvers Street, Bath, BA1 1JW**, from 2.30. - 4.45.p.m.

Most Christians are familiar with the existence of two different versions of the Lord's Prayer, one in Matthew's Gospel and one in Luke's Gospel. What might be less well known is the existence of a third form, discovered in 1873, and two possible additional versions identified in 2004. What do these additional forms tell us about the origins and development of the Lord's Prayer, and how might that story influence the way we understand and pray the prayer today?

Our guest speaker is to be the Rev. Dr. **Alan Garrow**, Vicar Theologian of *Bath Abbey*. His publications include *Revelation* (Routledge, 1997) and *Matthew's Dependence on the Didache* (T. & T. Clark, 2004). His research interests include the liturgical context of the New Testament, the Synoptic Problem and the Apostolic Decree. A BBC Radio Four documentary about his research was broadcast in 2004.

This lecture should be of interest not only to librarians but to others interested in the life of Jesus, Christian history and the development of the New Testament text. Attendance is *not* restricted to

librarians and the organisers are looking forward to welcoming a wider audience. Admission is free and there is no need to book in advance.

VISIT TO BATH ABBEY

For those who can get to Bath in time, we have arranged a morning visit to the nearby *Bath Abbey*, from 11.00.a.m. This will be followed by lunch in a local restaurant, from about 12.15.p.m. Although there is no need to book for the afternoon lecture, please let the Secretary know if you would like to join the LCF group for the morning visit and/or lunch. Full details will be sent to everyone who books a little nearer the time.

It has not been possible to arrange a formal guided tour of Bath Abbey, as there will be a choir rehearsal taking place there during the morning. However, we have been told that members and friends of LCF will be very welcome to look round the Abbey, its museum and shop, collect a *Welcome to Bath Abbey* leaflet from a welcomer in the entrance, and listen to the rehearsal. Those who are feeling fit can even take part in a tower tour, normally run on the hour with tickets available from the shop.

Bath Abbey is an active Christian church situated at the heart of the city. During the past twelve and a half centuries, three different churches have occupied the site: an Anglo-Saxon Abbey church dating

from 757 and pulled down by the Norman invaders shortly after 1066; a massive Norman cathedral begun about 1098 but which was larger than the monastery could afford to maintain and in ruins by the end of the fifteenth century; the present Abbey church, founded in 1499. This was left in ruins after the dissolution of the monasteries by order of Henry VIII, but rebuilt as a parish church and completed by 1611.

Those who do not have to rush away immediately after the afternoon lecture are also invited to attend a service of *Choral Evensong* at the Abbey, beginning 5.15.p.m., which is due to be sung by the *Oriana Singers*.

CHRISTIAN LIBRARIANS INVADE BATH

We trust that Bath will be a convenient venue for many members and friends, especially those living in our London, Southern, Welsh, Western and Midlands regions.

Bath is a ninety minute train ride from London Paddington and can also be easily reached from such regional centres as Bristol, Gloucester, Cardiff, Swindon, and Oxford. For those who prefer to travel by road, Bath is easily accessible from the M4 (Junction 18 then take the A46 to Bath). *Bath*

Abbey and Manvers Street Baptist Church are both a few minutes walk from the main railway station in Bath, and the latter is probably the most conveniently located lecture venue in the history of LCF for those travelling by rail.

Bath has been a spa town since Roman times when the Roman Baths and Temple were built around natural hot springs. Visitors to the town can still visit the remains of the Baths, and take the waters in the eighteenth century *Pump Room*. Other local attractions include the *Jane Austen Centre*.

SEE YOU IN BATH?

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 and by encouraging interested friends and colleagues to join you.

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 21 SEPTEMBER 2010: EVANGELICAL LIBRARY VISIT

This issue may arrive in time to remind you that we are arranging a visit to the *Evangelical Library* in its new premises at **Units 5 and 6, Gateway Mews, Ring Way, Bounds Green, London, N11 2UT** on **Tuesday 21 September 2010**, beginning 2.30.p.m.

This major theological subscription library is home to more than 80,000 evangelical books as well as an archive for many Christian periodicals. The Library offers “*the very best in written evangelical spirituality*” and includes sections on

church history, doctrine and devotional reading, to name but a few subject areas. You can find more information on the Library's web site at <http://www.evangelical-library.org.uk>

If you would like to join us on this visit please let me know as soon as possible.

LCF DATES FOR 2011

- **2011: The Year of the Bible** is the theme of next year's Annual Conference which is to be held at the **Carrs Lane Church Centre, Carrs Lane, Birmingham** on **Saturday 2 April 2011**, from 10.30.a.m.

Our speakers will be the Rev. Dr. **Rob Cotton**, who works for the *Bible Society* as their Campaigns Manager and also co-ordinates the *Biblefresh* project for the *Evangelical Alliance*, and the Rev. Dr. **Pete Wilcox**, Canon Chancellor of *Lichfield Cathedral*. Rob Cotton will be speaking about the *Biblefresh* programme and the contemporary application of the Bible, possibly including the application of the Bible in the contemporary workplace. Pete Wilcox will be speaking about Lichfield Cathedral Library, with special reference to the history of the Bible in English.

- **Dave Roberts**, author of *The Twilight Gospel*, will be giving our Annual Public Lecture on **Saturday**

1 October 2011, from 2.30.p.m.
The venue will be the **RISC Centre, 35-39 London Street, Reading.**

Please put these dates in your 2011 diary and plan to attend!

SITUATIONS VACANT AND WANTED

- **Monica Boyce** is a qualified business researcher who is planning to start up independently. She is looking for a Christian researcher, with a library and information qualification, who is interested in joining her or providing research support. If you are interested please contact Monica for further information at 1 Wiltshire Court, Marquis Road, London, N4 3AX. E mail info@beinformedresearch.com

- **Daniel Olorunkosebi** is a graduate of *Babcock University* in Nigeria where he received a Bachelor's degree in Information Resources Management. He is also a Graduate Member of the *Nigerian Library Association* and has participated in several events, attended conferences, and presented a paper on *The Reading Culture in Nigeria*.

Daniel is currently studying for a Master's degree in Corporate Communication and Public Affairs at the *Robert Gordon University*. He is looking to start work as a library assistant from October 2010. He would be particularly interested in

working for a charity or public library but is willing to consider other possibilities. Part-time and full-time work will both be considered.

Is there a suitable opening in *your* organisation? If so, please contact Daniel at 23B Pittodrie Street, Aberdeen, AB24 5QU. E mail ariseeagle@yahoo.com

CURRENT AWARENESS

- The present writer's thirtieth anniversary as Secretary of the *Librarians' Christian Fellowship* was recently reported in the Christian press. The report also noted that I had recently celebrated (in November 2009) thirty years of working for the public library service in the *London Borough of Wandsworth*.

The report quoted me as saying: "*It has been an immense privilege to have been involved in the work of the Fellowship during the past thirty years and to meet many interesting people, especially in the church, library and information work, publishing and the book trade*".

Still Going Strong After Thirty Years in Libraries appeared in the ***Baptist Times*** for 11 June 2010, p. 12.

- Twelve years after returning to the faith of her childhood, author **Anne Rice** has '*quit being a Christian*' because of the religion's attitude to birth control,

homosexuality and science.

Rice, however, has said, “*I remain committed to Christ as always but not to being 'Christian' or to being part of Christianity. It's simply impossible for me to 'belong' to this quarrelsome, hostile, disputatious and deservedly infamous group*”.

Commenting on this story, Douglas Brown writes, “*what is oddest about the story ... is that all the stories describe her as a woman who had returned to the Roman Catholicism of her childhood. So why should she need to feel horrified and embarrassed by the actions of a few Evangelical crazies?*”

See Alison Flood's *In the name of Christ, I quit being a Christian. Amen*, in **The Guardian**, 31 July 2010, p. 17, and Douglas Brown's *Why are Evangelicals so off-putting?*, in the **Church Times**, 6 August 2010, p. 24.

- The Church of England's wedding planning web site at <http://www.yourchurchwedding.org> has received about a third of a million visitors a year and has helped to plan more than 28,000 church weddings since its launch two years ago. The site gives lists of hymns, readings and vows for wedding services, information on costs, and pastoral advice for the clergy. The top five wedding hymns are listed, based on recent research.

Source: **Church Times**, 16 July 2010, p. 6.

BRITISH RELIGION IN NUMBERS

British Religion in Numbers (BRIN) at <http://www.brin.ac.uk> is an on-line religious data source which collects statistics about religious life in Britain from a variety of sources. These include government data, opinion polls, and faith community resources, such as accounts or yearbooks.

BRIN is hosted by the *University of Manchester*, at the *Institute for Social Change*, which examines the causes and consequences of social change, both within Britain and internationally. The introduction to the web site points out that religious data sources can be difficult to find, or need a good deal of interpretation. For example, is Britain 72% Christian, as the 2001 **Census** reported, or 50% Christian, as found by the 2008 **British Social Attitudes Survey**?

BRIN attracted press attention recently when it published evidence which seemed to show that, on average, Methodists live longer than other people. This followed the recent death of Stanley Lucas, aged 110, Europe's oldest man and a member of a Methodist congregation in Cornwall. Other recent topics highlighted on BRIN's news pages include *Faith in Oxford*, *Islamist Terrorism*, *Caring for Places of Worship* and *American Religiosity, Viewed from Britain*.

BIBLEFRESH PARTNER

The *Librarians' Christian Fellowship* is now an official Partner of *Biblefresh*, “a movement of churches, agencies, colleges and festivals seeking to encourage and inspire churches across the UK to a greater confidence and appetite for the Word of God”. This has been arranged to coincide with next year's high profile four hundredth anniversary of the **King James** or **Authorised Version** of the Bible.

Biblefresh is an initiative of the *Evangelical Alliance* and other Partners include *Alpha International*, the *Bible Reading Fellowship*, the *Bible Society*, the *International Christian Resources Exhibition* and the *London Institute for Contemporary Christianity*.

LCF's Chair, Louise Manners, is quoted on the Biblefresh web site as saying, “*LCF is delighted to be a partner of Biblefresh, to promote both Bible reading and a greater understanding of the Scriptures, and to encourage libraries to stage exhibitions and book displays marking the 400th anniversary of the King James Bible*”.

What will you be doing – in your church, or perhaps in your library – to highlight the “*Year of the Bible*” during 2011? Let us know your plans and we will mention them in these pages.

You can find more details of the Biblefresh campaign, on the web site <http://www.biblefresh.com>

AT HOME WITH JOHN WESLEY

LOUISE MANNERS reports on a recent visit to the former London base of the famous eighteenth century evangelist and Methodist leader

On 17 May 2010 a convivial lunch for eight LCF members took place before the visit of the LCF to *Wesley's Chapel* on London's City Road. The LCF group viewed graves in Bunhill Fields, including the those of John Bunyan, William Blake and Daniel Defoe. The group was split into two and tours given of Wesley's house and chapel.

The house is a typical middle class 18th century London home. It had no running water and no drains. Opening off John Wesley's bedroom is a small prayer room. John Wesley began at 5.00 am and ended each day when he was in London in prayer in the prayer room. Preachers of the London circuit with their families also lived in the house. Wesley's furniture remaining includes a tallboy, a bureau, a library chair and a long-case clock. Some of his books, with his annotations in the margins, remain. A number of books appeared to be in need of restoration. The destruction by John Pawson of Wesley's Shakespeare, including Wesley's annotations, was

a great loss. John Pawson did not believe in theatre going. On 2 March 1791 John Wesley died in his bedroom. His last words were from Isaac Watts' paraphrase of Psalm 146. His funeral was at 5.00 am a week later and he was buried in a small graveyard at the rear of the chapel.

When opened the Chapel was reputed to have the largest suspended ceiling in Europe. The current ceiling is a replica. The communion rails were donated by Baroness Thatcher. Our guide insisted that we view the mens' lavatories, which are quite splendid! In 1989 the Chapel's work was merged with the work carried out by the *Leysian Mission*, making the financing of the Chapel more secure. The Leysian Centre opened in 1992. Nowadays the Chapel congregation is ethnically and culturally mixed, including many asylum seekers. Lunch-time events include discussions with individuals prominent in public life, (the Thursday conversations and services), and musical recitals on Tuesdays.

It may be that the guides are so busy showing visitors the artefacts, that they are forgetting to tell the story. The visit proved an interesting visit nonetheless.

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.

THE RYLANDS LEGACY



PHILIP HAYWORTH reports on a recent visit to a distinguished library collection in the heart of Manchester

On Wednesday afternoon 23 June 2010 six members and friends of LCF visited the **John Rylands Library** in Manchester. We were escorted round the library by Anne Young and one of her staff who gave us a very informative talk as we went along about the Library's origins and of the various collections.

John Ryland was a cotton manufacturing millionaire, but for all this was a rather private individual. He was a Baptist/Congregationalist and was married three times. All his children died before him. When he died his widow wanted to open up in his memory his vast collection of books to be used by theological scholars of all types. She employed an architect to design the building in a neo-gothic style and this was opened on 1 January 1900.

John Ryland's collection is rich in Non-conformist theology and a certain amount of Protestant theology in general. Mrs. Ryland also acquired the library of the Spencer family of Althorp (the family of the late Princess Diana) for a quarter of a million pounds. Since this was rich in early printed books and manuscripts, she wanted it to be used by those people wishing to study the development of printing (something we used to have to study in library education, but now sadly omitted from the curricula of modern library schools).

Later on the Library acquired some of the books of the Crawford collection from Haigh Hall, Wigan, which contains a considerable amount of oriental theology.

There are various interesting exhibits which are frequently changed. We saw the earliest fragment of St. John's Gospel, chapter 18, dealing with Christ's trial before Pilate. The Library also has a Torah scroll.

The Library is still an important working academic library where researchers can consult its books and manuscripts. Information about how to register as a reader can be found on the Library's web-site at www.manchester.ac.uk/ They require proof of identity and address. Catalogues of printed books, archives and manuscripts can be accessed through the web-site.

The Library does not lend through inter-lending schemes and all the books are on closed access and each has an accession number.

The Library was financed

through the money left by the Rylands, but this gradually diminished. I well remember a past annual general meeting of the *Library Association* at Harrogate at which the late Philip Whiteman, of the *Leeds School of Librarianship*, made a passionate plea for efforts to be mounted to save the Library. It was good that *Manchester University* took it over in 1972. It is ironic that members of the university can use the Rylands Library but Rylands readers cannot automatically use the university library.

Anne Young showed us some interesting items I especially asked her to get out for us. These included the first edition of Martin Luther's translation of the Bible into German with its woodcut illustrations by Lucas Cranach, including a picture of the Harlot in Revelation 17 with a papal crown on her head. In a later edition the triple papal crown was replaced by a simple crown to avoid offending the Catholic Duke George of Saxony!

All in all, this was a very interesting afternoon.

Philip Hayworth serves the *Librarians' Christian Fellowship* as our regional representative for the North of England. He worked, until his retirement, as Chief Cataloguer for the public library service in Bolton

MEMBERSHIP MATTERS

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

Listed below are those who have renewed their membership since early June. 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.

LATE RENEWALS

EDMONDS, Mrs Diana J., 8 Melton Road, Burton on the Wolds, Leics LE12 5AG - Asst. Director, Culture, Libraries and Learning, LB Haringey. Tel: 01509 881369 – E-mail: dianaedmonds1@btconnect.com

FLEMING, Mr Edwin, 18 Strandview Drive, Portstewart, County Londonderry N.I. BT55 7LN - Tel: 028 7083 2396 – E-mail: edwinfleming@btinternet.com

HAYWOOD, Mr C. Martin, 8 Barnfield Crescent, Sale, Cheshire M33 6NL - Senior Info.Scientist, Alderley Park, Astra Zeneca. Tel: 0161 969 3289 – E-mail: mhaywood@sec.u-net.com

MCDONAGH, Mr Maurice J.M., 8 Manderley Park, Portadown, Craigavon, Co.Armagh BT63 5ER - Tel: 02838 337348 – E-mail: maurice.mcdonagh@gmail.com

PENN, Mr Steve, 26 Ledwych Gardens, Droitwich, Worcs WR9 9LL - QA & Release Manager, Axiell UK. Tel: 01905 775075 – E-mail: steve.penn@axiell.co.uk

REED, Mr David M., 39 Main Street, Wolston Coventry, CV8 3HH - Divisional Library Manager, Nuneaton & Bedworth, Warks C.C. Tel: 02476 542516 – E-mail: dandlreed@hotmail.co.uk

URQUHART, Mr John C.C., 27 Liberton Gardens, Edinburgh, EH16 6JU - Graduate Candidate, Church of Scotland. Tel: 0131 516 6528 – E-mail: jccurquhart@gmail.com

MAIN ARTICLES

How will our recent change of government and the harsh economic climate affect public and university libraries? How will librarians cope with reductions in their budgets? Is the increased use of volunteers the way forward in providing library services? ANNE MACRITCHIE reflects on current professional dilemmas

EYE ON THE PROFESSION CUTS IN LIBRARY SERVICES

With the recent change in government and the harsh economic climate now prevailing I felt this was the most relevant topic I could try and cover.

There is no doubt that reduced council budgets will mean that libraries will be facing cuts in opening hours, possible closure of branches, increased charges for those services which are charged for and reduced budgets both for staff and books and other materials, all at a time that demand for library services is likely to increase with increased unemployment and consequent increased leisure time.

In Aberdeen it was proposed that several libraries would close – some have now been reopened.

It is not just public libraries that will be affected but University ones too.⁴ There is a growing concern that their services may be seen as an easy target for savings and increased efficiency, while they struggle to meet an increasingly high level of service demands from both students and academic staff. The recession may affect libraries in the following ways:

- Small cuts across the range of services, or the loss of entire services perceived to be of less value to users which will lead to a decline of overall service quality.
- Having to achieve savings by cutting opening hours, in a world where

⁴ JISC 5 October 2009. *Impact of the economic recession on university library and IT services*, by Lisa Valade-DeMelo (web-site jisc.ac.uk/publications)

users are only going to demand more access to resources, and increased access to library space.

- Hard-copy books and journals will be more difficult and expensive to get hold of, which will be exacerbated by budget cuts which weaken libraries' purchasing power; this may negatively impact on user experience.
- Pressure to increase self-service – seen as a positive in terms of efficiency savings after an initial investment.
- Difficulties retaining and recruiting staff with the necessary skills to reflect the changing library service and evolving needs of its users, in the face of potential recruitment freezes or cuts to training budgets.

How are institutions responding to this? – most have plans to renegotiate existing journal subscriptions and software licences as one way of reducing their costs. Most feel they would be in a better position to do this as part of a larger consortium of universities in order to pressure publishers and benefit every institution equally. Most university libraries are looking to cut journal subscriptions and book purchases rather than staff.

Perhaps I may be permitted to mention something that is affecting me personally but is not an unusual situation at the moment. *NHS Grampian* managers were planning to axe the whole of the library service, four branches and a Clinical Librarian. Fortunately my boss was able to argue for our retention as Aberdeen has a teaching hospital. I suspect that at least one branch will have to close and the staff there will have to go – hopefully voluntarily. We are having to look at every way of being more cost-effective.

Public Libraries will have to work hard to make the best of a difficult situation as their funding will almost certainly be cut. History teaches us that recession, while opening up opportunities for new services and perhaps attracting new users, can also impact negatively on public services⁵ with book funds being particularly vulnerable as they are relatively easy to cut whereas most authorities are reluctant to make staff redundant. This may force libraries to focus on the exploitation of existing resources and services rather than developing new, innovative ones. I think it is important to guard against this and look at ways of

⁵ *Journal of Librarianship and Information Science*. 41 (1), March 2009, p. 3-5. *Credit Crunch: The Impact on Libraries*, by Anne Goulding.

developing new services, especially IT services and consider working together with other local services such as visitor and community information and host classes run by a local college. Middlesbrough Council has urged hard pressed consumers to save their pennies by using (or joining) the library. One credit crunch website explains that up-to-date DVDs and CDs can be rented cheaply from local libraries, *'plus they are a great place to borrow books for free!'* (CreditCrunch, 2008). It also promotes events organised by and within the library, recommending these as a good way to *'get involved with your local community, meet people and have some fun for minimal cost'*.

Libraries from the USA to Scotland are reporting anecdotal evidence supporting the link between economic decline and increased public library use, based on more people visiting the library to access information to help with job seeking. The rise in fuel costs may make going to the library an increasingly attractive option for those on low incomes, particularly the elderly or unemployed who may otherwise spend quite a lot of time at home. Libraries should use the present difficult situation to show what they are best at. Funding will always be an issue for libraries but to seize the opportunity they need the tools and resources to do so.

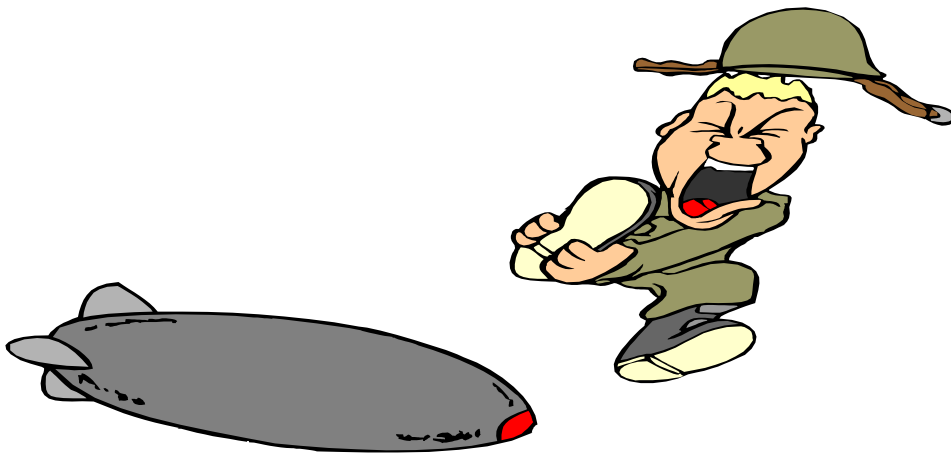
So what will the effect of our new government be? Nick Clegg has told CILIP ⁶ that *'an updated remit for the public library service is a priority'*. One promise is to create a new 'right to data' so that government-held data can be requested and used by the public and then published on a regular basis. There is no mention of public libraries but the signs are clear: plans for *'a climate that empowers local people and communities'*; much on volunteering. In Southampton the council wants to replace six full-time staff with volunteers in 2010-11, at least one branch would be fully volunteer-run. There will be *'new powers to help communities save local facilities and services threatened with closure, and give the communities the right to bid to take over local state-run services'* and even giving public sector workers a new right to form employee-owned co-operatives and bid to take over the services they deliver. I'm not sure that this is the way forward at a time when libraries are such an important resource.

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⁶ *Library and Information Update*, June 2010, p. 4 (News). *What is the Coalition planning?*

TONY JASPER recalls his successes and failures as a writer since his first book was published in 1968. After several years in which he has concentrated on his work as a playwright and actor he still has many ideas for books but finds that the publishing scene is very different in 2010. He describes his experiences as a writer making his way through the

AUTHOR MINEFIELD



PUBLISHER WANTS, PEOPLE WANTS, LIBRARIAN WANTS

An Address to the Librarians' Christian Fellowship Conference "Of Making of Books There Is No End" held on Saturday 24 April 2010 in the Chancellor's Room, Hughes Parry Hall, 19-26 Cartwright Gardens, London, WC1.

Recently, I received a letter that said, "As we have not heard from you since 22 July 2009 we thought we'd send you a reminder of how sweet life is. Savour some free Whitaker's milk chocolates! Normally, we only give them away with orders over £100. But for you they're absolutely free on any order at all"

Unfortunately, I like bitter chocolate, rather than milk chocolate. However, I thought it might be something to goad you into future action, so that you could contact readers accordingly: *"As you have not borrowed a*

book since 8 February 2002, and not returned one taken out on 23 January 2001, and now attracting a fine of £176, we'd like to send you some free chocolates if you would come and borrow a book and return the one that you took away in 2001. We still have a waiting list of twenty-three for that said book".

Actually, my placing such an event in 2001 is pretty mundane. You may have seen this past week a note in various newspapers that the New York Society's Library, the only lender of books at the time of Washington's presidency, has discovered that the President did not return two volumes. They were an essay on international affairs called **Law of Nations** and the twelfth volume of a fourteen volume collection of debates from the English House of Commons. They have launched an appeal for the return of the said texts and it is reckoned that at today's prices, adjusted for inflation, Washington would face a fine of \$200,000. So be not afraid to chase large debts.

Of course, you might wish to add, *"You will find our library so different from the one you once knew. We now encourage lots of talk and fun. Silence is not longer golden. You can make use for very little money of one of our computers, watch a DVD, rock on to current music, splash paint, take your photograph, admire some art, sift through some ancient CDs, read community notices, and smile at the staff. And coming soon, for all faiths, a prayer machine. You need to state how you feel and within seconds a voice will say a prayer for you. You can even adjust the voice if you wish, make it sound happy or tired, loving or annoying. Should you want a choir to embellish things that is also possible but you will have to wear a noise abatement costume, and if Christian then you must hand your cross to the receptionist. And we can direct you to where you will find some books after a short recognition course."*

Well, yes, I have gone from the actual to the imagined, not that the 'imagined' might not happen at some time. It probably already exists, in America, somewhere.

To another exciting moment in the Jasper life. Well, 'exciting' is a little over the top. Just the Monday ritual. On Monday, 12 April, I turned to the Media section in **The Guardian**. There on page eight was an advert: *"Wanted. Publishing Co-ordinator. Excellent Benefits. Knowledge of the book printing process, print buying and book publishing necessary".* So, there is life out there. All is not lost.

Over at the *Arts Council* it seems they need inspirational people. They are appointing Relationship Managers – one of those startling new descriptions for the obvious. They are looking for those who are: *Motivators, Organisers, Experts, Problem Solvers, Pragmatists, Creative Thinkers, Visionaries, Geniuses, Strategists, Innovators, Arts Fanatics, Dreamers, Perfectionists.* Missing - Humans Need Not Apply!

Hopefully, these Relationship Managers will be able to get on with

people, can speak clearly, assemble thoughts well, know when to listen, can cope with silences, can withstand rejection – however.

Hopefully, they will like authors, books, publishers, editors, and indeed librarians. Hopefully, too, they will handle a book with awe for surely there is in the shape of a book in its spine, binding, quality of paper, cover design, typography, illustration, something to draw in the breath. The Wonder of the Book! None of this is mentioned. Perhaps it is too much to ask, but it would be pleasant to think that a Relationship Manager could sit and chat with you about a new book.

More from *The Guardian*. Same issue, same section. There was copy focussing on uncertainty, division of purpose. For if the Church seems frequently in flux, there's plenty of upheaval all over the place, especially in communication of one sort or another. There was talk of the *Digital Economy Act*, and of *Trials and Tribulations at The Independent*, which has recently been re-launched with a new layout. One article in this issue noted that “*being a successful actor was about starring in an award winning film or a hit TV show – but not any more. These days it's all about the brand ...*”

To digress a little, and I do that a lot as you must already realise or soon will, I offer a personal recollection. I sent a synopsis to a major publisher. My idea was turned down, but the rejection letter did not come from an editor. It came from Marketing.

When I first began my journey into now some seventy or so books published, I was conscious that an editor or editorial team would go with an idea – or not, as the case might be. If they said 'yes' to the concept they would work out how to make it successful. I suppose it does happen even now, but ...

Back to *The Guardian*. This time to page three. And there, congratulations to *Holby City* people as the programme reached its five hundredth edition. Not all happy words – *Continuing Drama Faces the Noose*. We are now into value for money scrutiny time. Over at the ITV, *The Bill* gets its death warrant and will end its long life in August.

When it comes to drama, increasingly the word is 'co-production', but then its also used in the world of publishing. And I know that too well. And added to that is the second demand that a book must be palatable to an American audience. It is not easy to find favour for a book idea that is very British. How one longs to be sent a batch of letters that reveal how John Lennon, shortly before his demise at the hands of a mad young person, was intending to become a Baptist – that he had seen the light! That would make a co-edition and fly off your library shelves.

Few things do not have side effects and if in the powerful world of television there is cutting and cutting then with it goes writers, and books that follow. Also with it go areas that enabled people to learn and improve their scripting. I suggest that continuing drama is the nearest we have to the book – meaning that like the book there is an unfolding story. It cannot, though,

replace the book that can be picked up, entered into, put aside, returned to, although, yes, there are increasingly other ways to read that via the book as we know it with a cover, binding, pages and so forth.

We are entering into another big communication explosion. And I have the rather queasy feeling that if I were, say, twenty-five, I would be coming to all of this from a different perspective, or at least I would be coming to things with a different range of ways of getting people to read, let alone buy a book or take a book away from the local library, or even church bookshelf. If I belonged to this new generation, would I still wish to see publishing houses exist? For to slightly repeat myself, I am a book addict, even if I use other means to communicate and tell some kind of story. I am starting from a love of books and I have a huge list of published works. ***Survivor*** reached number two in the best selling national chart listings while ***Cliff***, my book with Pat Doncaster, settled in for a spell at number eight and from all accounts should have been higher, at least on sales, and Sidgwick were disappointed.

Some people express worry that the idea of discovering and finding will diminish – the sense of being on a journey, of building something, of finding the new and unexpected, all part of human development. All so vital. Still, taking the book as it is, well, they said television would remove film, radio would be replaced, the CD would replace the old vinyl, and so on.

But I realise at this point that I am defending the book to the death, and maybe have been a little careless not to be more concerned with the process and the importance of learning. And so rejoicing in whatever form that happens. However, there are voices saying that the new ways of reading and relating threaten the book, and that we have new generations for whom everything has to be packaged quickly and of meagre duration. Lots of pics and little writing!

Actually, it's hardly new for what are the tabloids but that? Whether you read or like them, papers such as ***The Mirror*** or ***The Sun*** display skill in order to pare down thoughts, to write headlines with a limited number of letter spaces, all of course with the risk of simplicity and reducing the complex to some ill-founded quickies. Did we not see this in the tabloid front pages before the second television confrontation between the leaders of the three main parties?

Fortunately, to my way of thinking, some broadsheets remain, but one reason for the tabloid size gaining popularity, a la the ***Times*** and ***Independent*** rested in how you can open and comfortably read without, say, getting the pages in the face of the person opposite you in a train or bus or tube. It meant – supposedly – that you could turn pages much more easily. Unfortunately, too often interior sections are not wedded to the rest and they fall out. You collect them amidst the feet of the many standing travellers!

Some of these factors eat into everything, even into Christian worship, although we should be careful in thinking all this is totally new. I mean simply that the process, and the eventual employed method, of trying to make

something palatable, can replace the reason why these communicatory forms were established.

The striving for relevance or understanding dominates many an agenda. When we think about the 'quickie' or the 'watered down' in church terms I feel that although some of this may have a point, and conceivably does bring a few in, it also shows the door to a good many other people who resent the dumbing down process.

Not so long ago there were, no, there still are in some places, shopper services. The picture: There is the church surrounded in its enviable geographical position by supermarkets and indies. The cry or underlying propulsion for reaching the people means a quick and snappy service, a few hymns, ones which everyone knows and so week after week the horror of *All Things Bright and Beautiful* and the smooth riding of *The Lord's my Shepherd*, a prayer or two, and a little word of usually comfort before those attending get down to the real business of the day looking out for those three for two offers, reduced prices, bulk reductions and a few out of date items on that day reduced in price. Some of this has ate into mainstream Sunday worship. I'm sure it ensures some come but I also have the feeling that others will not bother with something that is as disposable as anything else yet boasts of being about eternal and everlasting matters.

I inserted this in the text and one of the dangers of inserting is to realise that the same or similar point is already on its way, so a little repetition in a moment. And oh, what are the chances that soon we shall hear in church, "*Good morning and welcome to today's service. sponsored by Tesco*", allied to a news flash that Tesco has not only opened during 2011 eight hundred new stores, it has purchased seven thousand church sites for a further seven thousand stores by 2012. Or, "*I'm pleased to say that several parishioners have come into millions by copying down the hymn numbers of two week's ago and entered them in the Lottery. To aid church funds we are asking for any of you to lay claim to the copyright of the weekly numbers.*"

So, at this point, I think that it would be true to say, that an underlying theme in all that I have said, somewhere along the line anyway, is summed up by the word **CHANGE**.

Now for 'personal' time. I was brought up to read. I could read fluently well before double figures in age. Thanks to my beloved mum I can read extremely fast and journalistic training has enabled me to see the essential and go beyond the padding. I may not be a good editor of myself – that I will leave to your evaluation, but then in a speech that can last up to an hour some padding is surely respectable and expected. To come at you with sparse sentences, with endless points, would I think be a little too much.

As a child I visited the Penzance library. It's still there but, as in my slightly tongue in cheek early description, quite different in 2010. Well, yes, in times past there was a degree of foreboding. The silence. Just the sound of shoes walking on the wooden floor, and books removed and replaced from

shelves, or of books date-stamped. Yet at the same time you knew it was the place of learning, secrets for the revealing, and there was a push toward good writing, the suggestion of material to stretch the imagination and mind, and in my case a little frown to make me uneasy when I enquired about an Enid Blyton book – the 'Mystery' series or the 'Fives'. I did read Just William, Teddy Lester, Biggles and so on. Later, I fell in love with the **Alexandrian Quartet**, Dickens ...

And so I could continue. I should say that I have built up a considerable library of my own on both religious and music subjects, including a large collection of magazines going way back in time. Am I being romantic in saying that I would like to think that as an individual hits the library confines, it is to walk into the magic of the book and print – something so special. I might as well enter a moan here. I have offered, at times, some of my own books to the library back home and been turned down politely – not for their substance, be they Christian or general, simply because of the computerised and ordering system. Perhaps they are too pedantic, maybe not. They were friendly.

Change is always a plus factor, but not if change comes for ill-thought and ultimately harmful reasons. So, if you like, you can make a library exciting but it ceases to be of real value and of only short-term life if it is nothing more than a kind-of Macdonald's. There is always the temptation to take the easy way into interesting people in whatever it is you are offering and in the process of forgetting what it was you had in mind anyway. Contemporary Christian expression is full of this. There is panic in some religious quarters as statistics are brought forward to talk of the impending death of, say, the Methodist church. So people think of schemes and ideas to redress the situation, but often these are little more than knee-jerk responses, and so people can report back, or whatever, and say that matters are being addressed.

And when it comes to religious books I have the feeling that, in some cases and in some publishers, the design team and the illustrations people are having a ball, but the actual material and ideas have not been rigorously examined and that the sub-standard is getting by, or at the very least the writer, the editor, and the designer are not working together. Something doesn't seem right anyway. My theatre Company goes to many churches and often there is a bookstall of sorts, but it would seem the turnover is small, sometimes because the person responsible is on a mission to only stock what they think is right and proper. I observe my cast and I note that they take little interest, just a cursory look, other than in some cards and bits of jewellery with Christian symbols.

One comment on publishing. These days, in many quarters, right across the publishing world, copy editors have sadly become expendable. It's criminal really. So you have books with bad spelling and bad grammar, not that I would wish to push myself too strongly on the latter. A good copy

editor might have spotted two classic errors in two books of mine. In *Jesus in a Pop Culture* I referred to Rookmaaker's famous *Modern Art and the Death of a Culture*. It came out in my text as *Modern Art and the Death of a Vulture*. Actually it was a useful error since it picked up notice in a number of publications including *The Observer*.

It was myself who noticed in the proofs of the book *Cliff* that a chapter was titled *Jesus in Japan* rather than *Cliff in Japan*. Now how did that get in? That same book in the proofs had a repeated chapter. Talking about mistakes, errors, whatever, it does irritate. I'm sure most authors would hate to see a review where the writer says something like, "*The author suffers from bad editing. It is a pity to see the word 'ghettoize' spelt with an 's' rather than a 'z'. Although 234,567 words were spelt correctly this error quite took my attention away from the doubtless serious subject being raised by the author*".

It's always good to see an approving review. That said I did once gain a very critical piece of copy. I was upset. My editor laughed. "Look", said the editor, "*you have half a page in The Times. No one will remember the review, but they might recognise the book title if they see it in a shop!*" I don't know how much you are affected by a review when thinking what shall be bought for the library. To think that years ago well stocked libraries would aid many a hardback publishing run but now – not really.

If it doesn't seem too arrogant as a writer – but then I do buy books – and as a Christian seeking greater understanding of faith and the Scriptures, I do feel there is a lot of dross being published.

I feel that much of religious publishing, certainly of a more evangelical nature, has the feel of a basic insecurity – the frenetic desire to get something across. Yes, indeed, religious publishing has its own marketing and selling problems, as for instance in the collapse of IBS-STL, the closing of the *Wesley Owen* shops, affecting places of possible sale. Fortunately, some of the stores have found new owners.

It is not good to see the decline of religious publishing outlets, and as a Methodist, I am more conscious of this than many. Once a mighty force, the publishing and selling aspects of printed material from Methodism is now not much more than a small squeaking mouse. It is one of a number of retreats by that Church and which will hasten its demise unless it drastically changes its present foolhardy programme.

But the overall religious world with product to sell is no different in essence than any other, although it maybe likes to think it is, and so can shroud things with a religious layer. In the end when all the religious verbiage is removed it is about keeping a business going, it is providing employment, but its often low payment to writers and production free-lancers does not speak well for the eventual ability to attract the best people.

A read of the readable and well put together magazine *Christian Marketplace*, with its sub-title of *Resourcing Retailers and Suppliers*, in the

end comes across in no different fashion than, say, *The Bookseller*. OK, I generalise, people do set up bookshops and outlets with more than money as paramount in their motive. They do want to feed the flock. They do want to see converts. Too many, though, have a narrow take of title.

It is also disquieting to see American material absorbing more of the market, not that I am criticising as such religious product from across the Atlantic. Obviously many very good books on religious topics emanate from there. It is simply that every country needs its own writers, its adventurous publishing lists, its encouragement from publishing houses. Words need to be addressing our situation that is often markedly different from across the waters. There are important elements in the overall religious mix of sustaining in faith the religious community and at the same time producing material for those who seek faith and wish to see its relevance on personal and community levels.

Closure of shops and retail outlets could drive people back to the libraries. Good news! But then how much money do you have? Your library has to purchase new books, and how many of these can be religious? That does not obviate the simple fact that if you are to stock religious material from your limited purchasing power you have to assure yourself that there is good material 'out there' to fill a religious shelf, and I am sure that there is pressure these days to spend resources on other faiths than the one to which we all subscribe.

I'm not sure how, but in a way the religious world like any other has its moments and of needs it looks for the different, something to revive and change the existing scene. Am I being vague? Well, my example would be the enthusiasm and far seeing of David and Pat Alexander, who brought us *Lion* and something new and appealing. They proclaimed in their publishing list that religious books could be visually excellent, texts could be stirring. And how *Lion* shifted books! I must be careful not to give a total impression that all elsewhere was drab and boring.

I had some excellent publishers in the late 1960s and into the seventies and these were essentially secular houses: Collins, Muller, Robert Royce, Macdonald and Jane, Octopus, Blandford, W.H. Allen, Virgin, Marshall Pickering, Word, Hutchinson, Sidgwick, SCM, Lion, Holmes McDougall – ah, those of you of any age must have tears in your eyes at hearing some of these names, for many of these houses have gone to the wall – perhaps I was instrumental? What does seem to have gone is the editor's lunch which was the editor's perk and which you the author were told, in no uncertain terms, was a mandatory happening if you wanted a contract. Editors seem to have been much more quirky years back, maybe they could be more relaxed. Sometimes you had to go through a form of torture to gain the contract. I loved Priscilla Collins, a formidable far-seeing and exciting person at a time when Collins were in St. James' Street in a lovely falling apart building that seemed to go with publishing houses. She had a

pekinese dog. It would attack your ankles. You had a difficult but at least clear choice – kick the dog and be asked to leave or suffer and gain a contract. There were quirks in other fields. I came into contact with a redoubtable BBC lady, Peggy Bacon, the first producer of ***Children's Hour***. When I met her it was for ***Fourth Dimension***, an up-to-date version. To gain entry into her small team of writers and broadcasters you met and talked things over. The sign of your acceptance was known as Peg's Bag. Should she produce this, you knew you were 'in' Peg's broadcasting family. The battered bag would contain a wee dram, if I recall though it may have been wine, and the only negative, some rather wilting smelly cheese.

One of my books, ***The Illustrated Family Hymn Book***, is still borrowed greatly from libraries, although I cannot but believe that the covers must be hanging off. I have attempted to see a similar one published but in spite of hefty PLR payments on the original book, and to a degree on two others of a similar kind, ***The Illustrated Family Prayer Book*** and ***Rejoice***, have met with disinterest. I do confess that at times I have not the slightest idea what publishers want and when. I peruse through what is being published, and I am sometimes even more mystified. Logic doesn't always come into it, as I recall, with one title of mine that sold really well. I suggested an up-date but the publishers thought that it wouldn't sell more than eight thousand hardbacks, whereas another book by someone else would sell, say, two thousand copies full stop. The latter was a safe bet, the publishing programme could be put into effect but mine brooked uncertainty. I'm still trying to work that one out!

Of course, you can sell a complete print run, as with the last and other editions of my ***British Record Charts*** which sank because W.H. Smith decided they didn't want a future edition because maybe their sales figure was not what they wanted, but it was enough to say goodbye to a series of books. The sell-out run was 10,000 – of which Smith's had taken a significant quantity.

I suppose that in recent religious book retail terms the pace has been set by ***Faith Mission***. And then there is Ken Monroe, who is at the head of the expanding ***John Ritchie Ltd.*** However, I must not run too much into what may be said by Eddie Olliffe later today, other than to say that the small shop needs to build relationships with customers, exercise tight management and know how to display. I hope the shops that arise from the demise of ***Wesley Owen*** will not be so morgue-like, where the music output and wattage is like that of a crematorium, just hearable and irritating for being that way, and no one speaks much, customers tip-toeing around, the staff almost whispering, and you want to yell, cause a disturbance, knock over a pile of books, and you leave feeling bad that you did not do any of those things.

Wesley Owen, when in London, had two shops in Wigmore Street, both well stocked. One was much more trendy, and had the music section, with some interesting magazines and other product. Even there, though, it was

still so reserved, so unlike Greenbelt-ish. There seemed to be trendy shoppers, and maybe that was seen with some fear. It's another inexplicable item on my list of inexplicables.

This talk is, of course, titled *Author Minefield: Publisher Wants, People Wants, Librarian Wants*. I had to give a title, and it was how I felt at the time. I'm not sure if I feel any different now. Certainly I have continual ideas on what I wish to write. Short of having the money to self-publish I am at the mercy of the publisher and naturally I do hope you will say Tony Jasper – ah, yes, stock him. Very nice of you. Thank you. I will be visiting to see that this is so.

I more or less ceased writing books in 1992. I began writing plays and putting my acting experience into tangible focus. From then until 2009, I produced just two books, one with Pauline Webb, published by OUP, entitled ***Worship in Every Event***. It didn't sell in the way they expected. The book contained a series of talks and prayers, litanies and memories, and scripture references, and filed under subjects. It was intended to provide material for youth workers, worship leaders, the clergy – but material to meet the special – so, for instance, in your church a young person dies from a drug overdose. You are the pastor, what do you do? Ah, here comes ***Worship in Every Event*** that will give you some words to say, prayers to pray, scripture to be read, some reflection and material for meditation.

My second is ***Next We Shall Sing*** that was published by Highland and which fetched amazing reviews across the religious press, though sales have been nothing special. That is always driven home by the royalty statement. The book was the Jasper rampage through different elements of hymnody and praise songs, gospel, folk and even jazz.

One to come this year, in November, is presently titled ***Jesus Centre Stage***, and co-written with Ken Pickering whose work on drama in general, and religious drama in particular, is second to none. This text traces the person of Jesus as seen in religious and secular works, from the mystery plays to Withenshaw, to the big street showcases, ***Superstar*** and ***Godspell***, ***Come Together*** and ***Hair***, and, yes, put the book on your list. Ken does the classic and traditional and I enter with the Dorothy Sayers epic ***The Man Born to be King*** but suggest strongly that Andrew Lloyd Webber and Tim Rice were to change many things with ***Superstar***, and which for them helped to bring ***Joseph*** into major prominence.

Getting lost is my gathering together of spirituals, blues, folk and gospel, songs of faith in one volume, rather than spread across umpteen books, but there has been no interest in publisher land. This has reached six hundred pages so far, as I have chronicled the alternative Christian happenings since the 1950s, from the Billy Graham campaign of 1954, the first to use media and modern selling methods to *Greenbelt* 2009. Along the way I have taken in ***Buzz***, ***A Man Dies***, the Jesus People, ***His Paper***. Johnny Cash, early Jesus music, ***Reflection***, Judy MacKenzie, pop hits and religious

songs, and lots and lots more. Is there a publisher in the house? There are books out there about mainstream churches, their politics, relationship to the State, the church in Parliament. These and other subjects are doubtless important but in many senses – so what? Isn't all that I have mentioned, among many other events and happenings, worth recording?

As I reached this point I felt I was tiring, a sign that I ought to stop, and giving this talk now, I have the same feeling. I am grateful for your time, for your attention. I hope I have said something that is useful, even if most might be discarded. I believe this talk will be published in your bulky journal and then you can either say 'yes, it was interesting' or when you read it utter the always memorable phrase, 'nothing much there!'. Ah, well, whatever.

But a P.S. We are allowed by His good grace to live in an exciting time, even if in some ways I would yearn for several decades or so back when religious publishing had a vim and energy, but all the time new ways keep crowding in upon us. The spirit blows where it wills. His word will be heard, will be celebrated, will change lives, threaten materialism, atheism, despot rulers and our own little world. So shout Hallelujah!



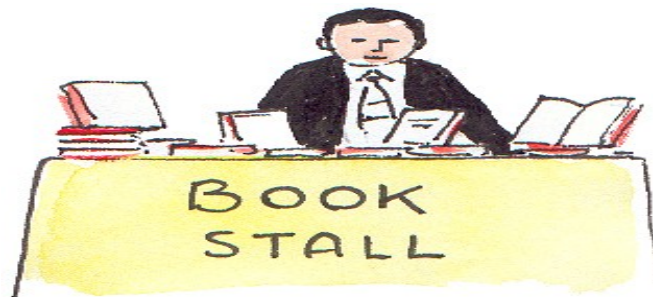
Tony Jasper is an author, broadcaster, actor, playwright and journalist, with several degrees in Theology and a diploma in Education. He co-wrote a best-selling biography of Cliff Richard, and his other books on religious and musical themes include *Understanding Pop* (SCM Press), *Jesus in a Pop Culture* (Fontana), and *Next We Shall Sing* (Highland Books). At one time he wrote weekly for major newspapers and magazines in Britain and he still contributes the monthly *Jesus Music* feature to the *Methodist Recorder*. He is a Methodist local preacher.

Tony Jasper formed the *Jasperian Theatre Company* in 1992 and the company has since toured churches and theatres performing musical plays based on the lives of famous Christian leaders including Moody and Sankey, John and Charles Wesley and William and Catherine Booth.

How has the Christian book trade developed over the past two hundred years and how is it likely to develop in the future? What factors led to the recent failures of the SPCK Bookshops and IBS-STL? Will on-line shopping replace the High Street bookshop? Is there still a role for specialist chains of religious booksellers, or should we look to independent bookshops and local community initiatives for the future of the trade? EDDIE OLLIFFE ponders the question

UK CHRISTIAN RETAILING

ALBATROSS, DODO OR JEWEL?



An Address to the Librarians' Christian Fellowship Conference "Of Making of Books There Is No End" held on Saturday 24 April 2010 in the Chancellor's Room, Hughes Parry Hall, 19-26 Cartwright Gardens, London, WC1.

Introduction

I'd like to express my appreciation for your kind invitation to speak at today's conference. I have enjoyed being in LCF Associate Membership because, unlike all of you, I am only a 'would-be' librarian! I brushed briefly with the idea of studying librarianship at Aberystwyth many years ago, but instead ended up in bookselling. I especially enjoy reading the fine quarterly LCF publications. I want to pay tribute to Graham Hedges, your secretary. I have known Graham for a good number of years and applaud the enormous contribution that Graham makes to LCF.

Why choose this title?

Here are *three images* that could either describe or sum up the Christian book trade;

Albatross; large seabird, majestic in flight or, as in Coleridge, a '*burden or encumbrance*'

Dodo; flightless bird known only in history; extinct, long gone, utterly dead and finished

Jewel; beautiful to look at, highly valued. precious to its owner, '*the jewel in the crown*'

A brief trade history

The very first UK Christian Bookshop opened in Derby in 1810 – exactly 200 years ago! *The Derby and Derbyshire Auxiliary of the Religious Tract Society* opened this shop in the Cock Pit area of Derby. It then moved to The Strand around 1900 (where it was renamed *The Bible and Book Shop*) and on to Irongate before finishing up in its present location in Queens Street. Subsequent owners have included; *Scripture Union*, *Wesley Owen* and now it is owned and operated by *Koorong* of Australia.

The next Christian bookshop was opened in Bristol in 1813 by the *Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge*. SPCK as a society had been established much earlier in 1698 by Dr Thomas Bray, a clergyman. SPCK went on to open their second shop in London in 1836.

Quite a number of now well known Christian bookshops opened during the mid to late 19th century including, in 1852, George Muller's *ECL Bookshop* in Park Street, Bristol. The *Wesleyan Reform Union* (1849) and the *Faith Mission* (1889) also started their bookshops during this period as did the *Protestant Truth Society* (London) and the *Catholic Truth Society* (Manchester), also in 1889.

Pickering and Inglis opened their Glasgow shop (1893), the first of a number of shops around the country. Nicholas Gray of *R.L. Allan & Son Publishers (Chapter House Ltd)*, based in Glasgow, e-mailed me recently with more details of the P&I background:

*"The story of P & I is told in a book on the **History of the Scottish Brethren** by Neil Dixon. P & I started as a Brethren publisher and bookseller in the mid 1890s by preacher Henry (HYP) Pickering and his friend William Inglis who died in 1906, when John Gray (my grandfather) became HYP's partner and Managing Director. The firm expanded by printing in Glasgow and later Cardiff and opening shops in Glasgow, London, Edinburgh, Newcastle, Dublin, Bournemouth (Keith Jones is ex-P&I), Manchester and maybe some*

others. They were a chain before such were known but tended to operate independently. That was their inherent weakness.

By the 1930s they, along with Marshall Morgan & Scott, were the two leading UK independent publishing businesses, both with strong links to Keswick and their speakers. The bookshops were a good outlet for P & I books and their printing output gave them an advantage over MM&S.

When the new centrally-run, charity-based SU and CLC shops came along, P & I found it difficult to compete and the shops closed one by one.

The last to close were Manchester in 1966 and London in 1985. However the large Glasgow shop continued to flourish and survived a company merger with competitors MM&S in 1981.

My wife and I bought and refitted the P&I Glasgow shop in 1985 and opened a coffee shop which became a hit immediately. The shop was regularly voted 'Christian Bookshop of the Year' and in 1995 appeared in upmarket **Harpers & Queen** magazine's A-list of UK bookshops. It had an award-winning Chapter House coffee shop long before Borders latched onto the idea. The Glasgow shop was bought by STL in 1999 and became Wesley Owen's flagship store for ten years before being bought by Koorong in 2009.

P&I characters include George Gray (no relation) who managed the London shop in Ludgate Hill during the 1950s and 60s. He gave the unpublished manuscript of 'How Great Thou Art' to George Beverly Shea, now regarded as the most popular modern hymn.

In the early part of the 20th century, there was a long roll-call of bookshop openings; *B McCall Barbour* (Edinburgh 1900), *Mowbrays* (London 1903), *The Salvation Army* (London 1911), *The Church of Scotland* (Edinburgh 1918, Glasgow 1922), *Scripture Union* (Wigmore Street, London 1925), *The Evangelical Bookshop* in Belfast (1926) along with the London based *Quaker Bookshop* in the same year.

In the 1930s, *Challenge Literature Fellowship* commenced trading (Guildford 1930). SPCK grew very strongly in this period with branches springing up all over the country. The *Church of Scotland* opened their third shop in Aberdeen in 1939 just as the Second World War started.

The most significant event of the 1940s was the establishment of the *Christian Literature Crusade* with their first shop opening in London in 1941. They are now in the enviable position of being the foremost UK Christian bookselling chain following the recent demise of SPCK and *Wesley Owen* (IBS-STL). The *Methodist Book Centre* in Stoke on Trent opened just as the war ended in 1945.

The Roman Catholic chain, *St Paul's Multimedia* (now *Pauline Books and Media*) started in 1955. Then, in 1957, *St Andrew's Bookshops* opened their doors in Great Missenden and in 1963, George Verwer of OM opened a shop in Bolton. Both these shops went on to have a hugely influential effect

on the UK Christian bookselling scene giving birth. in the case of OM, to the *Send the Light* operation with its second shop opening in Bromley in 1966.

There was a major spate of Christian Bookshop openings in the period 1976 – 1996 with the bulk of this activity taking place in the mid-1980's. Often, these shops had names like 'Good News' or 'Oasis' or simply 'The Christian Bookshop' and several of these owner-managers are now reaching retirement, resulting in probable bookshop closures.

In the 1990's, activity in the trade became something of a two-horse race between the STL owned *Wesley Owen* chain and the SPCK. Often, this was simply a difference of theology and stock-holding ethos. Independent booksellers looked on bemused and not a little alarmed! Both chains expanded rapidly in this period, in many cases by taking over other independent booksellers. In 1993, *Wesley Owen* acquired the twenty-two *Scripture Union Bookshops* and the eight *Church of Scotland Bookshops*, followed soon after by the English based bookshops of ECL in the West Country, *Crown Books* around the Hemel Hempstead area and the *Challenge Christian Fellowship*, predominately on the south coast.

Many commentators would argue that to be a truly national retail chain, you need at least six hundred outlets to be represented in the main towns and cities. No Christian operator has ever come close although at one point in the 1990's there were probably over six hundred Christian Bookshops of some shape or size across the UK, but operated independently.

Those numbers have dwindled and are dwindling still. There is some evidence of new players entering the market year-on-year but in my view, on the whole, numbers of Christian bookshops are consistently down.

Most Christian publishers work today on the basis that there are around 150 – 200 bookshops in the Christian niche capable of carrying out a viable trade. Interestingly, the membership of the *Christian Group of the Booksellers Association* is much higher:

Year	Group	No.
Aug-05	Christian	408
Aug-06	Christian	420
Aug-07	Christian	431
Aug-08	Christian	418
Sep-09	Christian	400

The total membership of the *Booksellers Association of Great Britain*

and Ireland is down from 1,350 bookshops in 2009 to 1,252 in January 2010. There were seventy-eight closures and fifty-eight new members or openings recorded in that same period according to the *Booksellers' Association*.

Due to its unique history, Northern Ireland remains the strongest market for Christian product when compared to its population size; this region continues to sell more Christian books per head than anywhere else in the UK. In the other regions, Scottish shops are mostly sited in the major central belt conurbations and there are virtually no Christian bookshops in Wales outside of the Cardiff area.

Coming right up to date, there remain signs of life in this niche with *Strongbraid Ltd*, trading as *Quench Christian Bookshops*, taking over several *St Andrew's Bookshops* sites in Southern England. However, the rising star of our industry is the Internet retailer, www.eden.co.uk (founded in 2004) which is giving even *Amazon* a run for its money!

So there are new entrants to the market even though some of the old players have fallen by the wayside. New life is good and new ideas necessary if growth is to continue.

Thoughts regarding the SPCK / Wesley Owen business failures

The growth of the two largest Christian chains was not to last. Sadly, *SPCK Bookshops* failed in 2008, having been taken over by the USA based entity *St Stephen the Great* (SSG) in 2006. That acquisition was mired in controversy almost from day one and the takeover foundered due to the single issue of mismanagement. The assets of SSG today remain under the interim management of the *Charity Commission*.

Melanie Carroll (ex-*SPCK Online* and *SPCK Brighton and Lincoln*) confirmed to me;

“SPCK Bookshops reached their peak in 2000 when there were thirty-three shops. In 2001, SPCK Brighton closed down so it was thirty-two but later that year SPCK Online opened. From 2002 onwards there was a slow decline and by the beginning of 2007 only twenty-three plus SPCK Online remained, and it was these twenty-three outlets which were acquired by SSG. The shops that have opened / re-opened (since the failure) are not all on the same site as before but were opened either by SPCK team members or by supporters/space owners of the old shops. As far as I know, these (eight shops) are; Lincoln, Leicester, Cardiff, Chichester, Norwich, Truro, Hereford and Birmingham”.

Wesley Owen failed as a result of the parent company *IBS-STL* running into serious financial difficulty brought about by a failed IT system installation and the effects of the worldwide recession. The *Wesley Owen*

chain of forty-one shops went into administration in December 2009 and was disposed of in various lots in January 2010. The fallout on the High Street from this undoubted disaster continues as we speak.

UK shop leases are the Achilles heel for all retailers. They are expensive, with 'upward only' increases and, if not carefully drawn up, are extremely inflexible. Many bookshops struggle with high establishment costs. The original *Wesley Owen* model operated on the basis of a hefty subsidy from the parent charity for the missional purpose of ensuring a Christian presence on the High Street.

CLC in the UK stepped in and acquired six of the *Wesley Owen* shops, *Koorong* (a respected Australian Christian retailer, founded in 1978, with eighteen stores and 60% of its home market) took over the eight largest (and most profitable) shops and *Living Oasis* (part of the *Nationwide Christian Trust*) have so far re-opened seventeen shops. Some shops will inevitably remain closed.

In my view, *Koorong* are likely to be the ultimate winners. They have the management capability and financial capacity to truly shake up the current UK marketplace. They are definitely the 'ones to watch'. *Koorong* have a reputation of not taking any prisoners! The out-turn for Christian bookselling over the next few years is likely to be very interesting indeed as a result of the entry of *Koorong* into the UK.

The 'Missional' nature of Christian bookselling

I believe I had a definite calling to what for me is the vocation of Christian bookselling. For the past thirty years I have engaged in this activity in various forms. I have been a bookseller, an author, a distributor and a publisher. I retain a fundamental belief in the importance of maintaining a Christian witness on the High Streets of our country.

I therefore cannot but help feel that the loss of any Christian shops on the High Street is a bad thing and I, for one, mourn the demise of those that have failed particularly so many of the SPCK shops which has thrown up fundamental questions as to how the collapse of so many shops was allowed to happen in the way that it so tragically did.

Controversially, I have long pondered whether the separation of Christian bookshops into a specific subset of the wider book trade will turn out in the longer term to have been a mistake? Would it have been better for these specialist outlets simply to have remained part of the wider general bookselling community as it is elsewhere in the world, especially in the USA?

To outsiders, our bookshop names must inevitably seem a little twee and out-of-touch. Does such a separation help or hinder our aspirations for engaging in Christian witness? On his weblog last year, Nick Page was particularly telling;

“I hear a lot about ‘bookshop ministries.’ There’s no doubt that, because of the type of books they sell, Christian bookshops can certainly be a ‘missional space’ as Simon Jones puts it so well. But I’d suggest that in order to be a successful missional space, it first has to be a successful bookshop. Sometimes, I can’t help feeling that the more we’ve called them ministries, the less they’ve acted like bookshops’.

Simon Jones wrote this on his blog, subsequently picked up widely by other media;

I wonder if this present trouble is an opportunity for fresh mission thinking and creative partnership between churches and the high street. After all, our neighbours are regularly on the high street and rarely in our buildings. The high street offers something they want. Analysts argue that shopping is a leisure activity and a source of 'spiritual' fulfilment in the absence of traditional organised religion. Missional thinkers have been rightly identifying consumerism as a rival god over recent years which makes the high street the place where we should be - as Paul was in amongst the idols of Athens - living and modelling a different form of spirituality to our neighbours. And where better to do this than in a retail space that offers coffee, conversation, Internet access, books for browsing and buying, people to pray, space for groups to gather on a regular basis’.

A quick look at the wider social environment

The UK is a largely secularised, post-Christian society with a significant multi-cultural population. There is an anti-Christian ethos in the media and politics and militant atheism is on the rise. Regular church attendance is in decline in most of the traditional denominations. However, there are bright spots; *the Black Majority* and *Hillsong* churches are growing. Cathedral attendance is increasing and the *Emerging Church* movement gaining ground. Christian TV and radio has very low penetration, making product mass marketing difficult.

What is happening in the wider book trade?

Chris Walley in his weblog suggests there is a general decline in book readership in society; not just amongst Christians. Competing media and digital attractions vie for our reading time and this affects all of us however much we enjoy buying books. Yet interestingly, the numbers would seem to support a very different story – both the volume and value of book sales in the UK have continued to grow year-on-year. This may, however, be just beginning to change.

Total UK Consumer Spending on Books (£m - retail value)

	Value	Volume
2003	£2,183	288m
2004	£2,219	300m
2005	£2,292	301m
2006	£2,356	322m
2007	£2,469	342m
2008	£2,313	330m

Source: *Book & the Consumer (BML/TNS)*

Market Share					
Volume	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
	%	%	%	%	%
Large Chains	38.6	37.4	34.0	31.9	34.0
Independents	10.1	9.2	9.0	8.6	8.9
Bargain Bookshops	5.7	6.1	7.0	7.1	6.8
Supermarkets	8.5	11.3	12.4	14.6	14.2
Other Shop	14.6	12.8	12.7	11.9	11.6
Direct Mail	16.0	14.4	14.3	13.4	11.1
Internet	6.6	8.8	10.6	12.5	13.4

Source: *Books & the Consumer (BML/TNS)* – www.bookmarketing.co.uk

Market Share					
Value	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
	%	%	%	%	%
Large Chains	43.3	41.9	39.6	39.7	36.1
Independents	10.6	10.1	10.2	9.7	10.3
Bargain Bookshops	2.8	2.9	3.5	3.7	3.4
Supermarkets	5.3	7.5	8.0	9.6	9.6
Other Shop	11.1	9.7	9.8	9.3	9.1
Direct Mail	18.2	16.3	15.6	15.0	12.6
Internet	8.8	11.5	13.2	16.0	16.0

Source: *Books & the Consumer (BML/TNS)* – www.bookmarketing.co.uk

In 2009, according to *Nielsen BookScan Total Consumer Market (TCM) data*, book sales suffered a marginal decline falling by just half a percent, confirming many earlier predictions that the cheap price of books would offer resistance to the recession.

A grand total of £1.75 billion was spent on 235.7 million books in 2009, down 1.2% year on year in value terms and down just 0.5% by volume. Average selling prices were down 0.7% year on year to £7.43.

However, *BookScan's General Retail Market (GRM)*, which is a good indicator of high street bookshop performance, suffered a 6.9% year on year decline, to £968m. The decline is in part due to the *Woolworths* collapse at the end of 2008 but, will come as further confirmation that high street bookshops face a difficult future in the face of increasing supermarket and internet competition.

Total book sales through BookScan's TCM (which includes the likes of *Amazon.co.uk* and many other online retailers), fell for the second year in a row. The £1.75bn figure is down 2.6% on 2007 sales—a year in which J K Rowling's *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows* (Bloomsbury) hit bookshop shelves. Stephenie Meyer and Dan Brown, who dominate the 'bestsellers of the year' chart were worth a combined £44.6m to the market in 2009. Just shy of seven million books penned by the two US authors were purchased at UK bookshops in 2009—3% of all book sales. Their success more than made up for decline suffered by "Richard and Judy" TV recommended titles.

The way we buy books is changing rapidly. According to market data, in 2009, supermarkets now sell one in every five books purchased. This is impacting the High Street (and not only for books; sales of DVD's are also suffering). We should note that *Woolworths*, the forty-five *Borders* stores and the Irish Bookseller, *Hughes & Hughes* have all left the High Street in the past couple of years.

We are most certainly not out of the woods yet. 2010 has not started well for book sales. *The Bookseller* again;

'The first quarter 2010 UK book sales are the lowest recorded since 2006. The inclement weather in January and early February had a catastrophic effect on sales. By the end of January, spending on books was down around 8% year on year, with booksellers in Scotland and the north of England the worst hit. Book sales have improved since the dire first two months of the year, but are still well down on 2009. The figures show that book spend in the first quarter was at its lowest ebb since 2006, with the year-on-year decline of 5.9% the highest since records began in 2001. The total figure is the lowest amount spent on books in any first quarter since 2006'.

Things are not much better in the USA. The AAP reported in April 2010

that USA book sales fell 1.8% in 2009 to \$23.9 billion after the 2.6% drop in 2008. We should note that religious books also fell 9% to \$659m but the sales of eBooks grew to \$313m.

A further headache for publishers is that printing and paper costs are rising inexorably. Even China (once the print haven for hard-pressed publishers) is now proving to be expensive for UK based publishers. Print-on-Demand technology is gaining momentum.

Some thoughts about distribution, digitalisation and rights

The issue here is primarily about the *explosion of differing routes to market*. Print no longer dominates in terms of the delivery of ideas.

There are parallels with the development of digital television. More channels = fewer viewers. In our field, more 'books' (however those are defined; print or digital) equals a dispersed customer base which is no longer dependent on the traditional bookseller.

Due to digital delivery, it is easier to self-publish now than at any other time. Blogs and social networks proliferate but some would argue that this only leads to the problem of quantity at the expense of quality.

Territorial Rights are clearly a problem in the context of a global marketplace. Old-style publishing rights are not always recognised in an Internet environment as single copy orders are taken and shipped – often across national boundaries - on a daily basis.

Paradoxically, more printed books are being published year-on-year in the UK. ***The Bookseller*** reported in 2010;

'The UK published more books than ever in 2009 with the largest number of titles published since records began fifteen years ago, Nielsen Book figures have shown. The UK publishing industry produced more than 133,000 titles during 2009 - an increase of 3.2% on the previous 12 months - hitting the highest output for a single year ever. When Nielsen first began collating the data, the UK produced fewer than 100,000 titles a year. Nielsen said: "The increases can be accounted for in part by growth in print-on-demand (POD) and digital product, which we expect to continue to increase in the future." The new book production figures have also increased the overall number of bibliographic records held on the Nielsen Book database to 10.4m globally and 5.8m for UK & Ireland'.

In April 2009, Peter Brierley estimated (based on the *British Library*

book deposit data) that 130,000 religious books had been published in the last fifty years with 60% of those in the last twenty years. This ever-increasing number of titles is one that gives retailers a huge problem in terms of stock control and supply lines. No wonder the Internet retailers' talk about the impressive impact on their sales of the much vaunted 'long tail'!

Impact of the Internet, downloads and e-Publishing

Purchasing via the internet is no longer an exception, it is the norm. Book Marketing Ltd stated that the market share of the Internet doubled from 7% in 2004 to 14% in 2009.

Digital downloading is beginning to affect the sale of print items. Newspapers are a case in point. *The Times Online* and *News International* titles will lead the way from June 2010 as it starts to charge for downloading its daily on-line editions. The rest of the industry waits with bated breath as charging for content is very difficult in the current environment!

e-Book Readers are beginning to compete for our attention and are gradually gaining traction in the market. Currently there is the *Sony e-Reader* (Waterstones), *Kindle* (Amazon) and now the *iPad* (Apple Stores). The *iPad* is widely expected to become the e-Book reader of choice just like the *iPod* has for listening to music. Waterstones revealed it has sold more than 350,000 e-books since its on-line store launched in September 2008. At the recent *Bookseller Digital Conference FutureBook*, an e-Book buyer said 'more than thirty e-Book titles have lifetime sales of more than 1,000 units'.

The Bookseller reported in April 2010; (The digital book industry is now 5% of total sales)

'UK publishers saw a 27% increase in digital sales over the two years to 2009, taking just over £150m in revenue last year. Those publishers contributing to the statistics—approximately 67% of the industry by turnover — saw digital sales grow by 20% from 2008, when they stood at £75-80m. The £150m figure represents almost 5% of the total physical and digital sales of UK publishers. Of the £150m, £5m came from general consumer titles, with nearly half of that from e-book downloads, while the majority - £130m - was generated by the academic and professional sector'.

Simon Juden, Chief Executive of the *Publishers Association*, was quoted in the same article;

'These statistics offer a unique snapshot of the burgeoning digital book industry. Whilst the market for digital products such as e-books and audio books is still in its infancy, the statistics show that there has been remarkable

growth in publishers' sales of these products since 2007, when we began collecting this data'.

Where might all this change be heading? What is the future for our trade?

Richard Greatrex comments on his weblog;

'I am left passionately believing that Christian centres at the heart of the secular high street are still a vital and much needed tool in our endeavour to live the Gospel and to promote the Gospel in our contemporary world. But, despite all that I have invested in books – as a bookseller, as a book-collector and as a priest with a house full of books – I am left no longer convinced that bookshops are actually necessary in today's culture. A bolder model than the combination of bookshop and coffee shop is required. We need a model which combines space for discussion, space for study, space for intelligent shopping (assisted by knowledgeable, caring staff), space for a variety of visual media, for prayer and perhaps – if bookshops are ever to become meaningful churches – space for ceremony. Now, that's a challenge'.

In my view, Internet retailers can win every time on the basis of price, range and convenience. If 'Bricks and Mortar' booksellers are to succeed in the future, they must provide that elusive and intangible 'sense of experience' to their customers. In some respects, that's all bookshops have to offer but maybe, done well, that's all they need?

As Phil Groom has pointed out elsewhere, why do we buy expensive coffee in the surroundings of our local *Starbucks* or *Costa Coffee* when we could make the same coffee at home far, far cheaper? The answer of course is that we are buying into the 'experience' and the 'sense of community'.

Therein lies the solution to the question-mark hanging over the local Christian bookshop. This new 'old' model using innovative and collaborative local community initiatives is definitely returning. Yes, of course you can buy books cheaper elsewhere but if the experience is delivered well, then people will continue to shop with you particularly if you are an integral part of their local community and their experience of your retail offering is consistently good.

Melanie Carroll, an experienced bookseller from Lincoln and, in my view, one of the most original and inspirational trade bloggers says (my edits) in response to a blog by the equally incisive Phil Groom;

'I totally agree with Phil that it is about more than just books, that it's about the experience – though I do think you can't say it's not the books because it has to be those as well or else it's not a bookshop and even with the best atmosphere if you don't have anything they want you won't make a sale. I agree too that it's about breadth of range and good service. However I don't think it's enough to just have the range of stock – though that's one very big element – and I do wonder if it's enough to just be a 'Christian bookshop', but even if it is I think it is about having more – and yes, not just coffee.

I think it's about having community and heart and a spirit of inclusion. I think it's about being a little mad, a little strange and a lot committed – not just white jacket committed but committed to doing what you do with passion, flair and inclusion. Sharing what you love but not in a 'shove it down your throat sort of way' but in a 'hey want to join me cause you can see it's fun' sort of way', and this is not just about core Christian outreach though that gets achieved, this is about core community outreach regardless of faith so that the faith barrier stops being a barrier and is instead just a door through which you can pass.

But for me it's about having more than just Christian books and gifts, but having the general things too that cross both and all boundaries so you are opened up to the wider community. You know it's a subtle but lasting message that one because I think it says, 'you know what, being Christian isn't special, it's certainly not exclusive, but it's integral to the being and fabric of me and my shop – so much so that it's not the first thing you notice about us, it might even be the last thing you notice but it's the one thing that makes all the difference, cause it's the thing that gives me the passion and makes me that little bit different!'

`The challenge we face today is to ask and answer the question, what should the Christian bookshop of the 21st century look like? Is it, as Phil Groom has suggested, best seen as a 'sacred space' or will it, as an entity, cease to exist at all, lost as an irrelevance in our increasingly secular world?

Nick Page is of the view that 'average' is no longer good enough. If there is to be a future, then the bookshops have to be '*really good*' and run by people who love books and love selling books. They have to be '*exciting, memorable, fascinating*' where events are held and reading encouraged. In short, to be successful, this bookshop has to have '*personality*'!

For me, one striking fact today is the high level of quality debate amongst bookshop practitioners which in itself should encourage us that a new kind of future could emerge. Nick Page again,

'This (past autumn's) crisis could be positive as well. It could be that we are forced into a rethink of what Christian books are for and what Christian bookselling is really all about' and 'There's room for both types of buying (Internet and shops), Bookshops can work in the marketplace, they just have to work harder'.

Final thoughts

Although I sincerely wish CLC and *Koorong* well in their endeavours, I am no longer convinced of the chain model when it comes to running Christian bookshops. For a variety of reasons, so many major book chains have simply failed over the years. It would appear that, in many cases, their high central costs have acted as the drag on the business and this, in a crisis, then hinders rather than helps.

In a centralised operation, flexibility can be very limited, hampering the ability to react quickly to any change in market conditions. It's one thing to read the winds of change; it's quite another to alter course in time to bring about the required changes. Once I would have argued strongly for the efficiencies of scale and the need for central buying that the chain model provides. Now I am no longer so sure. In my view, there is still a lot to be said for a very good independent shop operating solely at the local level. Perhaps we've just gone full circle? Regardless of the unique external pressures in retailing, I remain convinced of the need for good quality bookshops sited in the local community.

I find myself agreeing with Nick Page of the need for 'really good' local bookshops with knowledgeable staff who in turn are passionate about selling books. I am equally convinced that people still want the 'shopping experience'. In turn, to survive, bookshops have no option but to provide the very best of experience; to stand out from rest of the retail crowd and to remain totally focused on the customer. I think I'll let Melanie Carroll have the final word; *'Think Local, Buy Local, Be Local – Don't let our local businesses become a thing of the past'!*

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