

Spring 2010

CHRISTIAN LIBRARIAN



The Journal of the
Librarians' Christian Fellowship

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EVENTS AT A GLANCE

●SATURDAY 24 APRIL 2010: ANNUAL CONFERENCE

Hughes Parry Hall, Cartwright Gardens, London, WC1, from 10.30.a.m. Speakers: **Tony Jasper**, Actor, Author and Broadcaster, and **Eddie Olliffe**, CWR. Details: pp. 7-10

●TUESDAY AFTERNOON 18 MAY 2010: VISIT TO WESLEY'S CHAPEL, CITY ROAD, LONDON

Also includes tour of John Wesley's house and the *Museum of Methodism*. Details: pp, 10-11

●TUESDAY AFTERNOON 21 SEPTEMBER 2010: VISIT TO EVANGELICAL LIBRARY

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

●SATURDAY 23 OCTOBER 2010: ANNUAL PUBLIC LECTURE

Manvers Street Baptist Church, Bath, from 2.30.p.m. Speaker: Rev. Dr. **Alan Garrow**, Vicar Theologian, *Bath Abbey*, and an authority on the Synoptic Gospels. Details: p. 11

PRAYER NOTES FOR SPRING 2010

PLEASE PRAY FOR

●The *Librarians' Christian Fellowship* and its various activities in 2010 including the April *Conference* and October *Public Lecture*. Pray that these meetings will be well attended.

●The future work of *Christian Resources Together*, a new partnership recently announced by the various sections of the Christian book trade.

●Our friends in the Christian book trade as they face a difficult future following the recent collapse of IBS-STL. Pray for bookshop staff whose future employment is uncertain.

●The committee members and staff of the *Evangelical Library* as they adjust to life in their new home away from a central London location.

●The work of *Transform Work UK* and the various Christian professional and workplace groups represented at the recent *Does God Work Here?* Conference. Pray for TWUK as they plan for the 2010 event.

●**Alan Howell** and the work of *KITAB Bookshop* and others involved in literature ministry to the Asian and Muslim communities.



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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Secretary and Publications Editor: Graham Hedges, *Hon. FCLIP, MCLIP*. Celebrating
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THE FIRST WORD

GORDON HARRIS looks at some biblical verses on prayer and suggests a way in which members can help the ministry of the Librarians' Christian Fellowship to be effective in the years ahead

TALKING TO GOD

One of the great themes of the Bible is that of talking to God. Moses spoke to God as if they were buddies,¹ and the Gospels are packed with references to Jesus talking to His Father.²

But we are told that God does not listen if we are continually disobeying Him.³ Accordingly we need to examine ourselves – and our motives – before we pray. If we accept the forgiveness offered through Christ's death⁴ and receive the empowering Holy Spirit which he offers⁵ God will listen and answer.

Would you like to pray for the impact of the *Librarians' Christian Fellowship* on the profession? A new set of prayer topics for 2010 has been prepared. I can send it to you if you e-mail me.⁶

This ministry of prayer is essential if LCF is to be effective in the years ahead. Without sustained and ambitious prayer, LCF will not make headway.

God is looking forward to hearing from you.

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

¹ Exodus 13:11

² Mark 1:35; Luke 16:12; John 17

³ Isaiah 1:15; Matthew 23:14; James 4:3

⁴ 1 John 1:8-9

⁵ John 20:22

⁶ galexharris@hotmail.com

THE SECOND WORD

LOUISE MANNERS examines the political prospects for 2010, looks at the important issue of free speech and suggests some ways in which members can support the work of the Librarians' Christian Fellowship

THE YEAR AHEAD



The year ahead will bring the General Election before the end of June and a new Government. Many electors are still angry over the parliamentary expenses scandal. The impact of extremist politicians is also a cause for concern. In the year ahead there may well be greater scrutiny of the enthusiasms of college and university students, including their attendance at religious services and meetings. A new Government may use its veto on the appointment of Church of England bishops, including suffragan bishops. On the positive side the teams of street pastors are making an impact. Street pastors were in place in Jamaica and Boston, Massachusetts, before being introduced to the United Kingdom in April 2003 in Brixton. Now there are about one hundred and fifty teams at work in the United Kingdom.

The English Pen November 2009 newsletter reports that on 10 November 2009, English PEN and *Index on Censorship* launched a report into the impact of English libel law on freedom of expression, [Free Speech is Not for Sale](#). The report is the result of our year-long enquiry, during which we talked to publishers, editors, bloggers, scientists, lawyers and many of our own members. English Pen recommendations to reform the law found widespread support, not only from the media but also from politicians and the law firm Carter-Ruck.

With Britain coming out of the longest recession to date, we must be concerned at the hardships of students on librarianship courses and of those who have finished their courses and are job-hunting and attending interviews.

At work I am in the throes of preparing for the closing of the office, which involves multiple communications with different representatives of *British Telecom* to the effect that the telephone lines will no longer be needed. In spite of all my efforts the outcome always is that someone in India or Belfast has not been informed!

Finally, some resolutions for LCF membership for the New Year. Firstly to attend LCF meetings, particularly the London gathering, and to promote LCF membership to other Christian librarians. It is always great to see our members who attend meetings regularly but it would be wonderful to see more people. Secondly, to pray more for LCF activities.



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

**BOOK NOW FOR THE ANNUAL CONFERENCE OF THE
LIBRARIANS' CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP**

***“OF MAKING OF BOOKS THERE
IS NO END”***



***SATURDAY 24 APRIL 2010:
CHANCELLOR'S ROOM, HUGHES PARRY
HALL, 19-26 CARTWRIGHT GARDENS,
LONDON, WC1, from 10.30.a.m.***

SPEAKERS:

TONY JASPER

***Author Minefield: Publisher Wants, People Wants,
Librarian Wants***

EDDIE OLLIFFE

UK Christian Retailing: Albatross, Dodo or Jewel?

CONFERENCE DETAILS

“Of making of books there is no end, and much study is weariness to the flesh”.

This quotation from the Old Testament book of Ecclesiastes will provide the title and theme of the Librarians' Christian Fellowship annual conference to be held on **Saturday 24 April 2010**, from 10.30. a.m. - 4.45.p.m. The venue will be the **Chancellor's Room, Hughes Parry Hall, 19-26 Cartwright Gardens, London, WC1H 9EF**. Please note the change of venue since announcements in earlier issues of ***Christian Librarian***.

The booking fee for the conference is £23.00 (including lunch and refreshments), with a reduced rate of £18.00 for unwaged delegates. Please make cheques payable to *Librarians' Christian Fellowship*.

CONFERENCE THEMES

Actor, author and broadcaster **Tony Jasper** will be speaking on the subject *Author Minefield: Publisher Wants, People Wants, Librarian Wants*.

Tony Jasper will explain that he has many ideas for books, but he has to get past the threesome of publisher, people, and librarian. His first book was published in 1968 and

between then and 1992 seventy of his titles hit the bookshops including many religious titles, music books and school text books.

Since then Tony has been writing and acting in plays with book authorship on the back burner apart from a couple of titles for Oxford University Press in 2006 and Highland Books in 2008. However, the book writing bug has returned. He will be telling of successes and failures over the years and how life in 2010 is so different as he seeks to do what he wants, notwithstanding the wants of publisher, people and librarian.

Our second speaker **Eddie Olliffe** will be speaking on the subject *UK Christian Retailing: Albatross, Dodo or Jewel?* His talk will provide a brief recent history of the Christian book trade and cameos of the main participants, past and present. He will offer thoughts regarding the recent SPCK and IBS-STL failures and look at what is happening in the wider book trade. He will consider the effects of the Internet, especially Amazon, downloads and ePublishing, and consider where all this may be heading. In conclusion he will suggest a new 'old' model of innovative/collaborative local community initiatives.

CONFERENCE SPEAKERS

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.

Eddie Olliffe has worked within Christian literature for over thirty years and has served as a Past Chair of the *Christian Booksellers' Group* of the *Booksellers' Association*. He also served, for a time, as Director, of the *Christian Book Promotion Trust* library scheme, then known as *Faith in Print* but now known as *Speaking Volumes*.

Eddie was involved in independent Christian bookselling for ten years, worked for the wholesalers and booksellers STL/Wesley Owen for fifteen years, and has been a staff member of the Christian publisher CWR for the past five years where his current role is as Charity Manager.

TRAVEL

The *Hughes Parry Hall* is one of the Garden Halls of the *University of London* and is conveniently located in Cartwright Gardens just a few minutes walk from King's Cross, St. Pancras, Euston, and Russell Square rail and underground stations in the heart of London's Bloomsbury district. Further travel directions, plus a full conference programme, will be sent to all registered delegates nearer the time.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The *Annual General Meeting* of the Librarians' Christian Fellowship will be held on **Saturday 24 April 2010**, from 11.20. am as part of the Annual Conference at the Hughes Parry Hall, Cartwright Gardens, London, WC1.

Nominations for office, and notice of any motions to be put to the meeting should be in the Secretary's hands not later than *Saturday 27 March 2010*.

Nominations for the following executive committee posts are invited: Chair, Membership Secretary, Overseas Secretary, Irish Regional Rep., Northern Regional Rep., Western Regional Rep., Welsh Regional Rep., Southern Regional Rep., Students/New Graduates Officer, Members Without Portfolio (two positions).

Each nomination will require a proposer and seconder, and each candidate should indicate their willingness to serve in writing.

Some existing committee members may be willing to stand for re-election but we are always keen to attract newcomers onto the committee. If you would like more information about what might be involved, please let the Secretary know.

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

Please see also the announcement *Constitutional Revision* included in our *Librarians' Christian Fellowship Newsletter* feature elsewhere in this issue.

BOOK EARLY

Early bookings for the Conference have been encouraging, but there is still room for more delegates. Please let me have your booking as soon as possible.

Attendance at the Conference is **not** restricted to librarians or members of the Librarians' Christian Fellowship. Bookings, and enquiries should be sent to 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 18 MAY 2010: VISIT TO WESLEY'S CHAPEL

We have arranged a visit to *Wesley's Chapel*, at 49 City Road, London, EC1Y 1AU, for **Tuesday afternoon 18 May 2010**.

The Chapel was built in 1778 by John Wesley, the founder of the Methodist movement, and served as his London base. Designed by the architect George Dance the Younger, surveyor to the City of London, it is a fine example of Georgian architecture and a Grade 1 listed building. Nowadays, the Chapel houses a thriving Methodist congregation with a full programme of services and events throughout the week.

In addition to touring the

Chapel we will be able to visit the adjoining *Museum of Methodism* which tells the History of Methodism from John Wesley to the present day and its contribution to shaping Britain's political and social history.

John Wesley's House also stands next to the Chapel. This was Wesley's home for over a decade and it is one of the finest surviving Georgian town houses in London.

Wesley's Chapel is easily reached by public transport. The nearest underground stations are Old Street and Moorgate and it is also close to Moorgate and Liverpool Street railway stations. It stands opposite the famous Bunhill Row burial ground where John Bunyan, Daniel Defoe, William Blake, Isaac Watts and other notable non-conformists and literary figures are buried.

You can find more information about Wesley's Chapel at <http://www.wesleyschapel.org.uk>

The official visit will begin at 2.00.p.m., but it is hoped that those who can get to London in time will be able to have lunch together in a local restaurant. If you would like to book a place or places on the visit, please let me know, indicating whether you would like to join the lunch party.

OTHER EVENTS FOR 2010

- We are arranging a visit to the *Evangelical Library* at its new premises in the Bounds Green area of London on **Tuesday afternoon 21 September 2010** (please see

news report *Evangelical Library on the Move* below). Other details will follow: please book the date now.

- This year's Annual Public Lecture will be held on **Saturday 23 October 2010** at **Manvers Street Baptist Church, Bath**, from 2.30.p.m. Our guest speaker will be the **Rev. Dr. Alan Garrow**, who is Vicar Theologian at *Bath Abbey*, and an authority on the Synoptic Gospels, Matthew, Mark and Luke.

For those who are able to get to Bath in time we hope to arrange a morning visit to Bath Abbey and lunch in a local restaurant.

Further details will follow but please note the date now and plan to join us in Bath.

CONSTITUTIONAL REVISION

The April 2009 AGM agreed a number of amendments to the Fellowship's Constitution. Some of these were necessitated by the demise of the *Universities' and Colleges' Christian Fellowship* Professional Groups Co-ordinating Committee, to which we had been required to refer certain matters.

Most of the changes proved non-controversial but there was some difference of opinion over the proposed change to Clause 15(d) covering *Revisions to the Constitution*. The original clause stated that we were required to seek approval from UCCF if we wished to

change those clauses of the Constitution that covered the doctrinal basis, membership declaration, relations with other religious bodies and speakers.

The amendment originally proposed by the executive committee read as follows: "*The Clauses in this Constitution relating to the Doctrinal Basis, Membership Declaration, Relations with Other Religious Bodies and with Speakers may only be amended by a postal ballot of the entire membership in which 75% of the votes cast must be in favour of the proposed changes*".

However, from the floor of the meeting, Janet Danels proposed a further amendment to re-word the Clause as follows: "*The Clauses in this Constitution relating to the Doctrinal Basis, the Membership Declaration, Relations With Other Religious Bodies and with Speakers may only be amended by a referendum of the whole fellowship in which more than 40% of the total number of members vote expressing agreement with the changes*".

Janet explained that she was suggesting this wording as she was concerned that, if the committee's original amendment was adopted, far reaching changes to the relevant parts of the Constitution could be brought about by a small number of voters if only a few members bothered to vote.

Janet's amendment was eventually carried by the meeting though discussion revealed that some members were in favour of a further amendment which would have re-worded the Clause along the

following lines: "*The clauses in this constitution relating to the Doctrinal Basis, the Membership Declaration, Relations with other religious bodies and with Speakers may only be amended by a referendum of the whole fellowship in which more than 40% of the total number of members vote and 75% of the votes cast express agreement with the proposed changes*".

Subsequent correspondence by e-mail revealed that many of the members present at the AGM would have been in favour of this wording. However, the executive committee ruled at its meeting in June 2009 that, since this version was not formally presented to the AGM, it could not be regarded as having been adopted. We would, however, need to look at this matter again at a future meeting to decide if a further amendment needed to be considered at the 2010 AGM.

The committee discussed this matter again at some length in November 2009 and, in the end, concluded that Janet's wording of Clause 15(d) was the best option. We will, therefore, be recommending to the 2010 AGM that this version of the Clause should be retained.

However, we recognise that other members of the Fellowship may have different views/preferences. There has, for example, been a suggestion from Barbara Gilman that the revision of Clause 15(d) should itself be subject to a postal ballot. We will be happy to receive any further amendments that members of LCF would like to put forward. If you would like to

propose an alternative motion, please let me have this not later than *Saturday 27th March 2010* so that it can be considered by the annual general meeting and a decision made.

A 40% vote in favour of changes to the relevant parts of the Constitution would, of course, still be a minority of the total membership of the Fellowship.

The current Constitution can be consulted on the LCF web site at <http://www.librarianscf.org.uk> and printed copies can be supplied on request.

PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL NEWS

- Our member the Rev. **John Waddington-Feather** has recently retired after forty years as an honorary chaplain to *Shrewsbury Prison*.

Retired Prison Chaplain Praised for Long Service appeared in the ***Shrewsbury Chronicle*** for 24 September 2009. This paid tribute to John's work in the prison and recalled his career as an English teacher and librarian at the *Wakeman School* in Shrewsbury.

John's play ***Garlic Lane*** (Feather Books, £3.00, ISBN 978-0947718640) was performed at the *Rosemary Branch Theatre*, Islington, London, on 17 January 2010, some thirty six years after it was launched at the *Civic Theatre* in Leeds. The play is a verse drama set in Keighley and based on a rugby league game

and subsequent events.

John is hoping that his later play ***Limbo*** (Feather Books, £5.99, ISBN 978-1841753089) will be staged by the *Jasperian Theatre Company*.

You can order copies of John's publications from Feather Books, P.O. Box 438, Shrewsbury, SY3 OBW.

- When attending the CILIP Members' Day during October, I was pleased to discover that LCF member **John Wickenden** was one of the librarians being awarded the Fellowship (FCLIP) of the Institute. John works as Biomedical Information Scientist for *Eli Lilly and Co. Ltd* and is a founder member of LCF.

- The November 2009 issue of the ***Bulletin of the Association of British Theological and Philosophical Libraries*** is dedicated to **John V. Howard**, who died on 28 July 2009, aged seventy-one.

John served as Librarian of *New College*, Edinburgh, from 1965 – 1987 and then worked as Head of Special Collections at *Edinburgh University Library* until his retirement in 1995. He is credited with having re-vitalised the work of ABTAPL in the 1970s and served successively as the Association's Chairman and ***Bulletin*** Editor. He initiated an exchange of publications between ABTAPL and LCF and contributed articles to our own national and Scottish newsletters.

STILL TIME TO VOTE

Which recent Christian publication would you most like to see on the shelves of your local public library? The **Christian Book Promotion Trust** (sponsors of the well known *Speaking Volumes* library scheme) have announced a short list of five titles which they believe are worthy of the title **The Ultimate Christian Library Book**.

The five short listed titles are Michael Green's *Lies, Lies, Lies!* (Inter-Varsity Press), Gram Seed and Andrea Robinson's *One Step Beyond* (CWR), David and Pat Alexander's *The Lion Handbook to the Bible* (Lion, revised edition), Michael Reeves' *The Unquenchable Flame* (Inter-Varsity Press) and Michael Ots' *What Kind of God?* (Inter-Varsity Press).

Members of the public have until 31 March 2010 to vote for the book of their choice. LCF readers in the United Kingdom will be receiving a *Speaking Volumes* newsletter/voting form with this issue. Alternatively, you can vote via the web site mentioned below.

The winning author will receive a cash prize of £1000, plus £500 worth of books to donate to a library of his or her choice.

You can find more details of the award, as well as the *Speaking Volumes* scheme in which churches are encouraged to donate books to public and school libraries, at www.speakingvolumes.org.uk

INTERNATIONAL CHRISTIAN RESOURCES EXHIBITION

This year's Exhibition is to be held from **Tuesday 11 – Friday 14 May 2010** at the **Sandown Park Exhibition Centre, Esher, Surrey**.

This year's Exhibition promises to be bigger and more diverse than ever, with a wide range of displays from Christian organisations of all kinds. As always this event is likely to be a 'must' for Christian librarians wanting to familiarise themselves with currently available books, periodicals and audio-visual materials and church members wishing to gain an overview of the many resources available to the Christian Church today.

One of the highlights of this year's Exhibition will be the *Christian Ministry Awards* gala evening to be held on **Tuesday 11 May 2010**.

This event will include the presentation of a number of awards to individuals who have achieved excellence in various fields of Christian service. These will include the **Ultimate Christian Library Book** award, sponsored by the *Christian Book Promotion Trust* and mentioned above.

Our friends in the *Association of Christian Writers* are sponsoring two awards. One of the awards is for church and community newsletters while the other is for the creative use of the Bible in any writing format.

For the newsletter award, ACW is looking for excellence in writing, good choice of content and

attractive layout. The second award will go to the writer or writers of the print or on-line publication or resource that best conveys the truths of the Bible in creative ways.

For more information about the Association of Christian Writers, and their awards, please contact Simon Baynes, 23 Moorend Lane, Thame, OX9 3BQ. E mail admin@christianwriters.org.uk Web site www.christianwriters.org.uk

If you would like to attend the awards gala evening at International CRE (tickets £35.00 per head, to include a buffet meal) please contact the Exhibition organisers.

You can get more information about the International Christian Resources Exhibition from the organisers at Trinity Business Centre, Stonehill Green, Westlea, Swindon, SN5 7DG. Tel. 01793 418 218. E mail steve@creonline.co.uk

STRONGER TOGETHER, WEAKER APART

The present writer was pleased to attend a meeting at *St. Paul's Church*, Robert Adam Street, London, on Tuesday 12 January 2010.

This well attended meeting was called to announce the formation of *Christian Resources Together*, a new partnership of organisations involved in the Christian book trade. The sponsoring organisations are *Christian Resources Exhibitions*, the

Bible Society, the *Christian Booksellers' Group* of the *Booksellers' Association*, the *Christian Suppliers' Group* and ***Christian Marketplace*** magazine.

This initiative has been created following the demise of the traditional *Christian Booksellers' Convention*, which is no longer considered to be financially viable. Plans for the future include an annual retreat for booksellers and publishers at the *High Leigh Conference Centre*, Hertfordshire, retailers' days at the various Christian Resources exhibitions, training opportunities for retailers and suppliers, and annual trade awards, for example to the Retailer of the Year.

The first of the High Leigh retreats is to be held from **Tuesday 4 – Wednesday 5 May 2010** and the first of the Retailers' days will be held at the *International Christian Resources Exhibition* on **Tuesday 11 May 2010**.

The Christian book trade is facing major difficulties at the moment, especially in the aftermath of the demise of IBS-STL. Any initiative that seeks to unite and represent the various sections of the trade is to be applauded. We wish our friends in the Christian trade well as they launch this new venture.

You can obtain more information about *Christian Resources Together* from Steve Briars at the International CRE address above.

LINDISFARNE GOSPELS

The **Lindisfarne Gospels**, one of the world's great treasures, could be heading for Durham's World Heritage Site in 2013.

Durham is bidding to become the UK's 2013 City of Culture and wishes to display the Gospels during that year. The *British Library* has agreed to work with *Durham University*, *Durham Cathedral*, *Durham City Vision* and *Durham County Council* towards a three month loan of the Gospels, subject to the satisfactory completion of a six month feasibility study.

The beautifully illustrated Gospels were written in the North East around the year 700 A.D. And were carried for two hundred years around the region together with the body of St. Cuthbert before reaching Durham in 995 A.D. Durham Cathedral was founded as the final resting place for one of England's most important and well loved saints. The Gospel book remained in Durham for a further five hundred years until the Reformation.

Earlier this year, the British Library board accepted the recommendations of an independent group of experts in the care of historic manuscripts that the Gospels could be loaned to appropriate institutions for periods of not more than three months at a time every seven years.

EVANGELICAL LIBRARY ON THE MOVE

After several decades in central London, the **Evangelical Library** has moved into new premises in the Bounds Green area of London. Since the beginning of December 2009, the Library's address has been **Units 5 and 6, Gateway Mews, Ring Way, Bounds Green, London, N11 2UT**. Telephone 0208 362 0868.

The Evangelical 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. The Library was originally the vision of the late **Geoffrey Williams** who, back in the 1930s, created a private collection of Reformed and Puritan evangelical classics, which eventually formed the basis of the present Library. You can find more information on the Library's web site at <http://www.evangelical-library.org.uk>

I am sure that the staff and committee members of the Library will appreciate the prayers of LCF readers as they settle into their new home and prepare to continue their work from their new location.

Please make a note to join us on our visit to the Library on **Tuesday 21 September 2010**.

CURRENT AWARENESS

- A recent article by Philip Jones provides an introduction to the forthcoming controversial novel by Philip Pullman, ***The Good Man Jesus and the Scoundrel Christ*** (Canongate, £14.99, 1 April 2010, ISBN 978-1847678256.)

Pullman is best known as the writer of the fantasy trilogy ***His Dark Materials*** which contained a thinly veiled attack on organised religion. His new novel re-interprets the story of Jesus and has been written as part of the publisher's "Myths" series.

Pullman recognises that some readers will be offended by the book but claims that he did not set out to "annoy, irritate or enrage the faithful". He says that the book is about "how stories become stories, and how they become fixed and settled and differ from the events they are based on. There is no story that comes to us unmediated".

The article *Philip Pullman* appears in ***The Bookseller***, 4 December 2009, p. 18.

- Dave Roberts' article *Decoding Dan Brown* provides a Christian critique of the best-selling novel ***The Lost Symbol*** indicating a number of areas of concern for Christians. This latest blockbuster from the author of ***The Da Vinci Code*** "seeks to suggest that all of the major religions, including freemasonry, point to a god within and that Jesus was merely a prophet in this tradition". The author highlights some important differences between

Christianity and freemasonry (the theme of Dan Brown's book) and concludes with a discussion of biblical texts which are quoted out of context in support of Brown's unorthodox religious views. The article appears in ***Christianity***, December 2009, pp. 32 – 34, 37.

- Dave Walker's report *Adam and Eve comic-stripped* notes that Christian responses have generally been positive to Robert Crumb's ***Book of Genesis Illustrated: all fifty chapters*** (Jonathan Cape, £18.00, ISBN 978-0224078092).

The writer explains that Robert Crumb originally set out to satirise the book of Genesis in cartoon form, but ended up with a straight comic strip version in which almost all the text is "faithfully reproduced". Any complaints about sex and violence should be directed to the writers of Genesis rather than to the cartoonist!

The report appears in the ***Church Times*** for 13 November 2009, p. 2.

- J.K. Elliott's article *Bible United* notes the launching of a web-site containing all the remains of the fourth century ***Codex Sinaiticus***. The digitised version of the world's most famous Greek biblical codex reunites electronically the whole manuscript now scattered to four locations for the first time since Konstantin Tischendorf identified it in the mid-nineteenth century.

The originals are primarily at

the *British Library* in London but there are portions in Leipzig, at *St. Catherine's Monastery* on Mount Sinai, and in St. Petersburg.

The Codex contains a complete New Testament in Greek, including two early Christian writings not generally accepted into the canon: the *Epistle of Barnabas* and the *Shepherd of Hermas*. It also includes the complete text of the Old Testament translated into Greek.

Codex Sinaiticus can now be viewed in its entirety at www.codexsinaiticus.org

The article appears in the *Times Literary Supplement* for 29 January 2010, p. 13.

- ***New Library World***, 110 (7/8), 2009, pp. 393-394, includes a review of Chris Moore's report ***Sunday Opening; an investigation into accessible opening hours and Sunday opening in UK public libraries*** (LISU, 2008, £20.00, ISBN 978-1905499373). This report considers whether Sunday opening furthers the appeal and use of libraries and strengthens the place of libraries as centres for community engagement. It notes that, while Sunday opening is not widespread, in some authorities, especially in large cities, it is common for at least some branches to open. Prof. Ken Bakewell, who first drew this report to my attention, comments that the review does not mention possible religious objections to Sunday opening, but it is not clear whether this factor is mentioned in the report itself.

- Several press reports have highlighted the downfall of IBS-STL (formerly *Send the Light*) which has, for many years, been a major player in the Christian publishing and bookselling trades.

IBS-STL went into administration during late 2009 following financial difficulties and various parts of the business have now been bought from the administrators by other organisations. The Carlisle based wholesale operation has been bought by John Ritchie, a book distributor based in Kilmarnock.

Some of the *Wesley Owen* bookshops have been purchased by the *Christian Literature Crusade* and others by the Australian bookshop chain, *Koorang*. The future of the remaining shops remains uncertain at the time of writing.

Koorang have also bought the book publishing side of *Authentic Media* while the music side has been acquired by *Kingsway Communications*.

In some areas churches are taking steps to try and ensure the survival of their local Christian bookshops. In South Woodford, Essex, for example, church members have pledged £31,000 to help keep their Wesley Owen branch open.

Rebecca Paveley's article *The Call Goes Out to Keep Jesus on the High Street* appears in ***The Times*** for 16 January 2010, p. 100.

Other press coverage has included *Third of shops saved as STL goes under*, in the ***Church Times***, 1 January 2010, p. 3, and

Efforts to save book shops continue, in the **Baptist Times**, 24 December 2009, p. 3.

- Past **Christian Librarian** contributor Dr. Michael Ward gave the annual *St. Paul's Theological Centre* lecture at *Holy Trinity Brompton* in November 2009. Extracts from his lecture appear in *Why I believe there is a secret code at the heart of C.S. Lewis's Narnia books* which is included in HTB's **UKfocus** supplement for December 2009, pp. 6-8.

Dr. Ward provides an introduction to the ideas outlined in his book **Planet Narnia** (O.U.P., £9.99, Pbk. Edition, May 2010, ISBN 978-0199738700.) He argues that, alongside the obvious biblical parallels, the seven **Chronicles of Narnia** each include symbolism associated with one of the seven planets of medieval cosmology.

- Gerry Power's article *The Library at Queen's – a place of light and learning* provides an introduction to the new £50 million library at the Queen's University, Belfast.

Of particular interest is the *C.S. Lewis Room*, situated in the tower on the first floor. The circular room includes a centrepiece map of Lewis's Narnia drawn by the well known illustrator Pauline Baynes. There is a woven carpet featuring the head of Aslan and a replica of the wardrobe door featured in the film version of **The Lion, the Witch**

and the Wardrobe.

The writer notes that Lewis's mother, Florence Hamilton, was one of the first women to study at Queen's. The article appears in **The Graduate**, Autumn 2009, pp. 10-11.

- Huw Morgan's article *Just Some Joseph Looking for a Manger* is a study of spiritual themes in the songs of Leonard Cohen. Cohen is a singer/songwriter and poet whose songs and career have undergone a revival in popularity during the past couple of years. He is Jewish by birth and spent some years living in a Buddhist monastery, but he is also well informed about the outlines of the Christian faith. Some of his songs are based on stories from the Old Testament, and there are also direct and indirect references to Jesus. The search for meaning and significance is a recurrent theme for Cohen and many of his songs clearly refer to transcendent aspects of love for a personal God. This article appears in **Third Way** for December 2009, pp. 8 – 12.

CATHEDRALS ON THE NET

Leading a recent visit of Christian librarians to see the Library of *St. Paul's Cathedral* has inspired me to take a new look at information resources on cathedrals available on the Internet.

Britain Express provides a

Cathedrals in England A-Z at http://www.britainexpress.com/Where_to_go_in_Britain/Cathedrals/Cathedrals1.htm

This provides a photograph of each cathedral (in the majority of cases) and a short account noting particular points of historical and architectural interest. There is a link to each cathedral's web site, and e-mail, telephone and fax contact details. A location map is provided and there are links to nearby attractions and accommodation. The listing is not limited to the Church of England's cathedrals but includes other denominations.

Sacred Destinations at <http://www.sacred-destinations.com>

includes detailed articles on the history and significance of each cathedral and numerous photographs of the interior and exterior of each building. For St. Paul's Cathedral there is an intriguing photograph of the cathedral seemingly threatened by the metal spider outside *Tate Modern*.

Heritage Britain at <http://www.heritagebritain.com/counties/cathedrals.html> provides a listing of UK cathedrals by county. The site notes that Great Britain has fifty six cathedrals: forty two in England, eight in Scotland and six in Wales. The entry for each individual cathedral, however, seems to be limited to an address and telephone number and links to nearby hotels.

Wikipedia offers a detailed article on cathedrals at <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cathedral>

noting their history and organisation, the effects of the Protestant

Reformation, and the functions of cathedrals, among other topics. The article provides some useful definitions and explanations. For example, although cathedrals are usually the seats of bishops, some pre-Reformation cathedrals in Scotland have retained the title cathedral even though they are now part of the *Church of Scotland* which does not have bishops. Some cathedrals (e.g. York) are known as minsters, derived from the Latin *monasterium*. Wikipedia also offers a comprehensive listing of the world's cathedrals arranged by country which can be found at http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_cathedrals.

ANGELS AND VAMPIRES

Although it must be flattering for an author to be hailed as "*the new C.S. Lewis*", past LCF speaker **G.P. Taylor** has admitted that the label has not been entirely helpful to him in his literary career. Like his famous predecessor, Graham Taylor has become well known as a writer of fantasy novels for children and young people written from a Christian perspective. However, the styles of the two writers are very different and comparisons can be misleading.

G.P. Taylor first became well known with the publication of ***Shadowmancer*** (Faber, £6.00, ISBN 978--571233229), a tale of

smuggling and the supernatural set in eighteenth century Yorkshire. For his latest literary venture for younger readers he has moved ahead into the nineteenth century and embarked on a series of fantasy adventures featuring the orphan boy Mariah Mundi. The third and latest book in the series is ***Mariah Mundi and the Ship of Fools*** (Faber, £12.99, ISBN 978-0571227006).

G.P. Taylor's books should find favour with those Christian parents who have reservations about other writers in the fantasy genre such as Philip Pullman and even J.K. Rowling. However, he has also recently moved into the unfamiliar territory of "chick lit" with the novel ***Rosie: Note to Self*** (Authentic Media, £8.99, ISBN 978-1850788331), a romantic comedy loosely based on the biblical book of Ruth and co-written with **Claire Connor**.

Anne Rice first found fame with her series of vampire novels, including ***Interview with the Vampire*** (Futura, £7.99, ISBN 978-070860731), which was filmed with Tom Cruise and Brad Pitt in leading roles. Since her return to the Catholicism of her childhood, however, Rice has started writing novels based on Christian topics. Following two novels inspired by the early life of Jesus, she has returned to supernatural themes with ***Angel Time: The Songs of the Seraphim*** (Chatto and Windus, £17.99, ISBN 978-0708860731), a story involving angels, time travel and a professional killer in search of

forgiveness and redemption.

Anne Rice may have stopped writing about vampires, but these bloodsucking creatures of the dark imagination are still prominent in popular literature. **Stephenie Meyer's *Twilight*** (Atom, £6.99, ISBN 978-1904232657) and its successors have been very successful and are said to be especially popular with teenage girls. There have already been two films based on the series. A recent Christian critique of the ***Twilight*** books is available in **Dave Roberts' *The Twilight Gospel*** (Monarch, £7.99, ISBN 978-12854249760) in which the author argues that the Meyer novels contain important moral and spiritual lessons although there is also a naïve promotion of vampire mythology and the cult of beauty.

EBSCO PUBLISHING

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

DOES GOD WORK HERE?

How can Christians help to make their workplaces happier places? How far should Christians go in talking about their faith? GRAHAM HEDGES reports on a recent major Conference organised by Transform Work UK.

Along with my fellow committee member, Mary Wood, I was pleased to attend the *Does God Work Here?* Conference held at the *Birmingham Christian Centre* on Saturday 14 November 2009. The Conference was organised by *Transform Work UK* as their first national conference and was attended by several hundred members of Christian professional and workplace groups all keen to explore the relationship between their faith and their working lives.

After an opening session of worship, the meeting continued with a video message from Dr. **John Sentamu**, Archbishop of York, who welcomed the conference. Stressing the creativity of God, Dr. Sentamu urged that delegates should not divorce their faith from their work or their concern for politics, the environment or questions of justice. The Bible is a love story of God's involvement and engagement with his creation. The workplace is one arena where

Christians can observe God at work, and then join in the creative process through the power of the Holy Spirit.

The first 'live' speaker of the day was **Chan Abraham**, Group Chief Executive of the *Luminus Group* and Chairman of Transform Work UK. Setting out a vision for Christians in working life, Chan suggested that the contemporary workplace is not always a happy place, as evidenced by the high level of sickness and absenteeism in some sectors of employment. There have been many changes in society and working life since the 1950s, not all of them for the better. Christians, however, can help to create a vision of how their places of employment can be better places in which to work. The speaker encouraged his audience to take a positive attitude to working life, telling them to say to themselves each morning "*something good is going to happen to me today*".

Chan Abraham has obviously been successful in making his own company a happy place in which people can work. The Luminus Group, which provides affordable housing "*in communities where people can feel safe, happy and fulfilled*", was recently rated Number One for employee well being in a ***Sunday Times*** listing.

Chan questioned whether the Church is 'working' and suggested that many churches do little to help and encourage their members in their working lives.

After this session, Mary Wood suggested to me that this analysis of the local church might not be

entirely accurate. It is true that, in the past, many churches have shown little interest in the working lives of their members, but this seems to be changing. There is a growing interest in workplace ministry in the Church, and in the Christian community generally, and Mary recently took part in a discussion group on work issues in her own local church.

Is this the experience of other LCF readers? How helpful do you find your local church when it comes to addressing current issues in working life? Please let me know *your* experiences and thoughts and we will include them in a future issue.

The theme of working life as an extension of Christian ministry was taken up by the next keynote speaker, **David L'Herroux**, Chief Executive of *United Christian Broadcasters*, who spoke on the *24/7 Church*. Although now the head of a Christian media organisation, David spent many years in the *Littlewoods* organisation, starting out as a cleaner and moving on to many senior executive positions. He stressed that Christians are called to be the Church *in the community* and highlighted the contribution of biblical characters such as Joseph who made a difference in unpromising situations. God wants his people to be "*the best*" that they can be and people of integrity, grounded in the Bible. David is tired of the secular world being '*the head*' and the Church being '*the tail*'. It is time to release creativity among the

Christian community.

The day's programme continued with an interview with **Caroline Spelman**, Member of Parliament for Meriden and Shadow Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government.

Describing herself as "*Little Miss Sugar Beet*", Caroline explained that she came from a farming background and first became involved in politics through a concern for trade justice issues. She is now a member of a prayer group which meets at the Houses of Parliament, and which brings together members from various political parties. About twenty per cent of members of Parliament have described themselves as Christians.

In recent times, churches have shown a greater interest in the political process, often hosting 'hustings' meetings during election campaigns. However, Christians differ in their political opinions, and Christian politicians cannot always vote in the way that their fellow churchgoers would like, though 'free votes' are held from time to time.

The parliamentary expenses scandal has diminished public confidence in politics, but Christian members of parliament need to speak truth and offer leadership.

Caroline acknowledged that secular opposition is often experienced in contemporary politics. However, Christian members of parliament have an opportunity to show that British society still has Christian roots. People of faith have more in common than divides them and can

peacefully co-exist with others while making a difference in society. Christians should be bold in the face of secularisation.

Political life, however, can be described as “*swimming among the sharks*” and Christians in politics need “*a large and constantly flowing measure of grace*”.

It is all very well to proclaim that Christians should regard their working lives as an extension of Christian ministry, but in recent times some Christians have found themselves in trouble for doing just that. During a lunchtime 'fringe' session, delegates were given a chance to hear from **Duke Amachree**, who was allegedly removed from his position as a Homelessness Prevention Officer with the *London Borough of Wandsworth* after advising a client to put her faith in God. Duke's case has parallels with those of Caroline Petrie, the nurse sacked for offering to pray for a patient and Olive Jones, the teacher who is reported to have lost her job in similar circumstances. Both have since been re-instated.

Duke Amachree was suspended from duty in January 2009 and later dismissed from his post after being told that it is not acceptable to talk about God in the workplace. His case has been taken up by the *Christian Legal Centre* and *Christian Concern for Our Nation* but his appeal for re-instatement at Wandsworth has been unsuccessful.

As an employee of the public library service in Wandsworth,

Duke's case has a special significance for me. However, it is often difficult to assess the rights and wrongs of a particular case from the sensationalised reports that have appeared in the press. I have not personally been involved in any cases where Christians have got into trouble for talking about their faith at work. I have, however, investigated several cases in which public libraries have attracted adverse publicity for refusing to display posters for Christian events. In a number of instances, I have found that the situation is more complicated than has been apparent from the rather one-sided reports that have appeared in sections of the popular press.

Sooner or later, though, there is bound to be a case in which a Christian member of library staff gets into trouble for talking about his or her faith to colleagues or clients. When that happens, what role should the *Librarians' Christian Fellowship* play? I would be interested to receive comments from readers.

The Duke Amachree case was also mentioned in an afternoon workshop session on *Christian Groups and the Law*. **Romaine Thompson**, one of two senior partners in *Anthony Collins Solicitors LLP* and an authority on employment law, described current EU and government regulations which are intended to outlaw discrimination on grounds of religion or belief. She drew attention to an ACAS guidance document ***Religion or Belief in the Workplace*** and also ***Religious***

Liberty in the Workplace, a recent publication from the *Christian Institute*.

Christians need to be careful to avoid suggestions of harassment but should aim to find some middle ground so that they can bear witness to their faith. The gospel message, however, is always going to be offensive to some people.

Mark Mullins, of *Christian Concern for our Nation*, suggested that conversations on faith should be held on a one to one basis when witnesses were not present. I did wonder whether this advice would have been helpful in the cases of Duke Amachree, Caroline Petrie, and others. Perhaps it would have been better if there *had* been other colleagues present to hear what was said or was not said on the occasions in question.

In addition to the main sessions, the conference offered an impressive selection of workshop sessions. **Ros Turner**, Groups Support Manager for Transform Work UK and a former LCF speaker, led a session on *Recruitment for Professional Groups*.

Ros advised her audience to stress the *benefits* of membership to would be members, rather than the existence of newsletters, meetings, and other activities.

We were encouraged to draw up lists of particular categories of people in our own professions who might need specialist support from Christian professional groups. My own list included non-qualified library and information staff, students and

the newly qualified, staff moving into senior positions for the first time, those approaching retirement, and those working in non-traditional areas of information work. Are there others? And how can we reach them if they are not already members of the Fellowship?

We were encouraged to identify groups in our own professions who were *not* joining Christian professional organisations. Do they live in particular regions? Why are they not joining?

The workshop session included some useful discussion on publicity materials, web sites, attendance at conferences and exhibitions and other areas, all of which need to be investigated further by our own executive committee. Ros stressed, however, that rank and file members have an important role to play in recruiting friends and colleagues into membership of a Christian professional group.

Is this an area in which *you* could make a contribution? Are there Christian library or information staff in your organisation who have not yet joined LCF but might be willing to do so if given a personal invitation? Please let us know if you would like us to provide publicity materials for passing on to your colleagues, or would like us to send information on your behalf.

Time did not allow me to attend more than two workshop sessions but Mary Wood attended sessions on *The Multi-Faith Workplace* and *Diversity*.

The first session was led by **Jeff Steady**, formerly of the *Audit*

Commission. He defined the multi-faith workplace as one where people of more than one faith work together and may want to express their faith.

Although some Christians feel that their faith is being silenced in the workplace, a lot of positive things are happening. The equality and diversity agenda has given rise to new opportunities and there are now over two hundred Christian groups in the workplace, including all the London borough councils. Seven hundred free Bibles have been given out at *British Telecom* in response to requests.

One member of the audience shared the story of how he was asked to give a talk about '*what makes you tick?*' He talked about fear, fun, and faith and it was so well received that he was asked to give the talk again to other groups. Some humanist members of staff were not pleased, however. There may be a price to pay for sharing your faith.

The speaker stressed the importance of walking in love, being a listener, being sensitive to the leading of the Holy Spirit and being prepared to be vulnerable. Sometimes those of other faiths are more open to spiritual issues than those with no faith. Muslims are often pleased to see Christians standing up for what they believe.

The seminar on *Diversity* was led by Dr. **Adrian Miles**, also a former member of the Audit Commission staff. This was mainly concerned with how to develop Christian workplace groups within the diversity framework of

organisations. Christians can have the same privileges as other groups but we need to be open to non-Christians who may wish to find out about us.

Time was running out and the formal programme concluded with an all too brief panel discussion. Chan Abraham, in a few concluding remarks, suggested that as Christians we need the mind and wisdom of God as we work to make a greater impact in society. As delegates we were encouraged to reflect on what we had heard. We were not there by chance!

The Conference proved to be a useful and worthwhile occasion and Transform Work UK are to be congratulated on arranging such an event. We were told at the close of the afternoon that the 2010 conference is likely to be an overnight event, possibly to be held in the Manchester area on **Friday 12 and Saturday 13 November**. It would be good to see more LCF members at this next event, so please make a note of these provisional dates now and plan to attend.

You can obtain more information about Transform Work UK from TWUK, Brook House, Ouse Walk, Huntingdon, Cambridgeshire, PE29 3QW. Telephone 02480 428 344. E mail info@transformworkuk.org

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

A TRIP TO SERBIA

JANET WHITE reports on a recent visit to Belgrade where she was able to use her library skills to assist the Christian community

Over the years I have often read of opportunities to help on library working parties but have never been free to participate. In April 2009 all this changed when a surprise trip to Serbia came my way, bringing with it a chance to use my library skills.

At Easter, I left my post as a primary school librarian and prayed that God would show me what projects to get involved with when I was free of work commitments. Just before the end of term I was asked by my friend, Sandra, to accompany her on a short trip to Serbia in late April. Sandra had been invited to speak at the *Belgrade Bible School* (HUB) about women, in the Bible and working in the church now. We quickly established that there was work to be done in the library, which I could do while Sandra gave her talks. In fact, a British couple had been sorting out the English books in the library on a voluntary basis but did not have time to complete the work. We were able to meet up and, when I arrived at the Bible School, I was able to finish the task of getting the books into Dewey order. The fact that they had done most of the preparation work was helpful to me and they were delighted that the

work was not left unfinished.

It was so encouraging to us all to see how God had arranged the timing of our visit and, while I was working there, a local Christian lady visited to hear Sandra speak and was able to convey that she had been a librarian and could see what I was doing. I hope that she will be able to offer the Bible School help to keep the library running and to organise the small section of Serbian books.

The Bible School had never had a woman speaker before and Sandra and I were made so welcome. We both spoke at evening meetings arranged for the women students, staff and local Christians and we had great times of fellowship even though everything was done through a translator.

We spent one evening sharing with the ladies group at a Baptist Church in the centre of Belgrade and felt a real sense of sisterhood with them. They fed us traditional cakes and we shared fudge and Cadbury's chocolate with them! There are still parts of the city where the scars of war are very visible and it was interesting to see how the country is moving on from the times of conflict. Evangelical Christians are a minority group and the students we met are all keen to serve God amongst their own people. It was a privilege to meet them all and to help the Bible School in a small way.

Janet D. White is the former Librarian of the *Brent Primary School*.

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***

We would like to remind current members that subscription renewals are now due for 2010. It would be greatly appreciated if payment could be sent **before the end of April**. Minimum subscription rates for 2010 are: £22 (full rate), £14 (retired, unemployed and students), £14 each for married couples both in membership; overseas (outside Europe) please add £4 for postage. If you have **changed address, job, etc.**, please let us know as soon as possible.

REJOINED

SHELDON, Mr Martin B., 1 Richmond Court, St Peter's Street, Roath, Cardiff, CF24 3AZ - Branch Libn., Penylan Lib., Cardiff. Home.tel. 0292 0464909, E-mail martinsheldon2009@hotmail.com

LATE RENEWAL

ISAKSEN, Miss Karen, 37 Sandon Close, Ashingdon Gardens, Rochford, Essex SS4 1TT - Tel: 0777 6025374 - Email: karen.isaksen@hotmail.co.uk

CHANGES TO MEMBERSHIP DETAILS

ALLAWAY, Mrs Sylvia M., 206 Boundary Road, Wood Green, London, N22 6AJ - Info.Libn., L.B.of Camden. Tel: 020 8888 7896 - Email: sylvia.allaway@virgin.net

ARTHUR, Mrs Elaine, 6 Sevenoaks Drive, Castledean Park,

Bournemouth, Dorset BH7 7JG - Senior Manager Customer Services,
Dorset Lib. Service, Dorset Co.Co. Tel: 07515370270 - Email:
elainearthur1@yahoo.co.uk

BARBER, Miss Elizabeth M., Flat 4, Albeny Gate, Belmont Hill,
St.Albans, Herts AL1 1BH - Proprietor, St Albans Music Centre Tel:
01727 851990

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

DRAKE, Mrs Pamela M.B., 5 Dovepoint Road, , Meols, Wirral CH47
6AP - Tel: 0151 632 4637 - Email: pam.drake@hotmail.co.uk

FAWCETT, Mr Derek J., 37 Macie Drive, Corsham, Wiltshire, SN39
9EJ. - Tel: 01225 812360

GARVIE, Mr Donald, 11 Primrose Street, , Bangor, County Down BT20
3AZ N.I. - Deputy Libn., Union Theological College, Belfast. Tel: 028
9147 2521 - Email: donald.garvie@talk21.com

KIRK, Mrs Catherine C., 3 Fox Cover, Chinnor, Oxford, OX39 4TH -
Information Services Manager, Wycombe High School. Tel: 01844
353135 - Email: catherine_kirk@btinternet.com

MORGAN, Mr J.C., St. Andrews, Hilders Cliff, Rye, East Sussex, TN31
7LD. - Archivist, Dr. Williams' Library. Tel: 01797 223169 - Email:
jonathan.morgan6@btopenworld.com (S)

POWELL, Miss Colleen D., 7 Honeysuckle Close, Wyecroft Park, Ross-
on-Wye, Herefordshire HR9 7RJ - ICT Support Asst., Glos.C.C. Tel:
01989 769668 - Email: colldawn@btinternet.com

STONE, Mrs Margaret, 35 Hollins Walk, Reading, RG30 2BU - Asst.
Libn. IT Services, Library Services, University College London. Tel:
0118 958 5691 - Email: margaret.stone@ucl.ac.uk

WHITE, Mrs Janet D., 79 North Road, Dartford, Kent DA1 3ND - Tel:
01322 226148 - Email: k.w.white@ukgateway.net

MAIN ARTICLES

RICHARD WALLER welcomes some recent CILIP publications which help to define the role of a good public library service and considers the threat to civilisation posed by the destruction of libraries

EYE ON THE PROFESSION

LIBRARIES ARE MORE IMPORTANT THAN WE THINK

'I can't give you a printable comment' one library chief told CILIP *Update* ⁽¹⁾ after a speech to the *Public Libraries Authorities* conference by Margaret Hodge, the Libraries Minister. Never fear, Sir, *Private Eye*, that resolute dragger into the daylight of facts the rich and powerful hoped were deeply buried in distant locked cellars and never one to lose a chance to tweak an official nose, has not hesitated to do it for you. A brief account of a speech suggesting that we ought to cast off our twin set and pearls image and do various innovative things was accompanied by a list of London Authorities who have already been doing them for years! ⁽²⁾ I suspect the rest of us are simply trying to figure out how to find the cash to re-locate to shopping centres or shoehorn a coffee shop into Carnegie buildings designed by people who quaintly believed that libraries were only about books, etc. Come to that, are there any public libraries not running loyalty card schemes and stocking manga? We have both in Wigan and we are seldom in the forefront of innovation!

The *Public Libraries Journal* dodges a confrontation by allowing a selection of personal views of the conference, one of which states that the Minister's speech sounded like a telling off and

that her suggested innovations were not that innovative ⁽³⁾. I suppose this is on the principle of not biting the hand that feeds you.

I mentioned the fact that other people don't always understand what goes on in libraries in my '*Eye on the profession*' this time last year, but if one can excuse members of the general public it is hard to excuse the Libraries Minister! It is worrying when the people in charge and who dole out the cash appear not to have a clue about what is actually happening in our public libraries.

A much more useful intervention came to my notice via ***The Guardian*** ⁽⁴⁾, which drew my attention to a leaflet produced by CILIP, '*What makes a good library service?*' ⁽⁴⁾ Four A5 pages outlining some criteria for deciding whether a public library is doing a good job or not. This I do commend to everyone who works in or uses a public library. As a summary of what public libraries are all about it is brilliant. I particularly liked the ten questions you need to ask on the last page. It is designed for the councillors who actually have the ultimate control of services and budgets. It is worth making sure those with the power get to see a copy if this lies within your remit. Yes, it is couched in political management speak, which I rather dislike, but the fundamental principle of communication is '*use relevant language*' and this does.

About the time I saw that leaflet, I also saw a much weightier affair, also sponsored by CILIP, and enchantingly entitled, in best Victorian tradition, ***All-Party Parliamentary Group on Libraries, Literacy and Information Management: Report of the enquiry into the governance and leadership of the public library service in England.*** ⁽⁵⁾ This alarming sounding thirty two page document was nothing of the sort and had fourteen very sensible proposals on the subject of who should have power over the public libraries in England.

Of particular merit, I thought, were proposals 2 & 3 which said that there needed to be clear guidance on what constituted '*a comprehensive and efficient service*', which is what the 1964 ***Public Libraries Act*** says there ought to be. There is no real definition of this, and the situation has become immeasurably worse with the abolition of the *Public Library Service Standards* (PLSS). These at least demanded that each authority attempted to meet

certain defined levels of service, and it can hardly be a coincidence that the disappearance of these was immediately followed by Wirral's decision to close lots of libraries, sparking a controversy that has been rumbling in the professional and national press for some time.

The report makes the point that the only enquiry now made about libraries is National Indicator 9, which is simply a telephone survey asking people at random whether they have used the library lately. This scarcely tells anyone anything about how a library service is doing. At least the PLSS kept everyone up to a minimum standard and this safeguard has now vanished.

I don't often read book reviews, but one in *Focus on international library and information work* made riveting reading. A review of Stone and Bajjal's book *The destruction of cultural heritage in Iraq* ⁽⁶⁾ made one see the value of libraries very clearly. Whatever the wrongs, or, more improbably, the rights of the invasion of Iraq, there is no doubt they didn't do the libraries of Iraq any good at all. Saddam Hussein was very clear on the danger of libraries that kept accurate records of what had happened during his rule and in the chaos of the invasion he made sure that 25% of the stock of the *Iraq National Library and Archive* vanished to try to make sure no one could tell what he had been up to. It was burned, apparently. I don't know that I had ever thought of an archive of state records being a danger to the government, but I suppose it depends on what sort of government it was. Saddam was clear enough in his view that the rest of the world might not see his rule in quite the same way as he did. Considering what did come out, what enormities did this conflagration manage to conceal?

In the same issue of *Focus* there was a brief article '*Extremism and the destruction of libraries*' ⁽⁷⁾, a summary of a talk by Rebecca Knuth who has spent a lot of time studying the way in which extremist political groups behave towards libraries and has written several books on the subject. The article makes the point that both right and left wing extremists behave in exactly the same way and destroy books that oppose their views or were produced by some hated group, Jews, Bosnians, or whomever. It can also be part of an attempt to destroy a culture, as with the Chinese in Tibet. This kind of thing makes one realise that, as the article says, the

vener of civilisation is very thin and it doesn't take a lot to break it down.

These two examples show that libraries have a value in culture and history that makes them vulnerable when the times alter. Maybe we don't realise what a priceless asset we are sitting on at times. No invaders or extremists have threatened British books and libraries for many centuries. It makes you think about how impoverished we would be if large parts of our written heritage were wiped out. Libraries are more important than we think.

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

How did literature outreach to the Asian and Muslim communities begin? What is KITAB, and how does it operate? What vision inspires the sharing of the Christian gospel with those of other faiths? ALAN HOWELL recalls some of his own experiences in distributing literature both here in Britain and in Turkey

CHANGES AND CHALLENGES IN LITERATURE OUTREACH

The Librarians' Christian Fellowship Annual Public Lecture given on Saturday 17 October 2009 at the Church of Christ the Cornerstone, 300 Saxon Gate West, Milton Keynes.

You have to cast your mind back a long time to the first time when Christians actively sought to provide literature for Muslims. Many feel that Henry Martin was the first, to translate the New Testament into Hindustani, Persian and Urdu. But in fact we have to go back to just a century after Mohammed to see the first Christian who saw a need and set about sharing his faith. He held high office under the Saracen Caliph of Damascus, studied Islam and attacked it in his writings. A section of a larger piece of writing by him is on ***The Superstition of the Ishmaelites***. There still exists today two short dialogues or disputations between a Christian and a Saracen.

Moving on to the 12th century there was Petrus Venerabilis, a Benedictine Abbot of Cluny, who also studied Islam, and he was the first to translate the Koran into a European language. He pleaded with his superiors to translate the Scriptures into Arabic, but to no avail. He urged that Christianity must, for its own life, defend itself against Mohammedan attacks, and win Muslims through pleading the truths of the Gospel, not by the sword. He was quoted as saying "*Whenever Mohammed's error is denounced as heresy or as pagan or heathen, we must oppose it by our pens, we must oppose it by our deeds*". St. Francis of Assisi was also known to have a yearning in his heart for the Saracens to know Jesus.

Perhaps the most prolific of the pre-Henry Martin scholars who was drawn to share his faith with Muslims was the little known Raymond Lull, who was born in Majorca in 1235. He had a lovely existence up to his thirtieth year, and it was only when he was serving in the court of James II, King of Aragon, that God spoke to him. He had a dream where he saw a vision of the Christ crucified three times, and as if speaking to him he then took on the motto "*He that loves not, lives not and he that lives by the Life cannot die*" He withdrew and contemplated, and in that contemplation he spoke with Franciscan monks. One of them urged him to become a missionary to Islam.

Likewise in our own day, language study is a key to reaching out. You have to learn the language and learn the script in order to communicate. This is what Raymond Lull did more than seven hundred years ago in the days before dictionaries, grammar and language teaching. He set about spending nine years producing an aid to understanding the Arabic language. From there he produced a book, a sadly understated document called the ***Ars Major***. The presentation of the Christian truth in the cause of missions in general - and the missions to Muslims in particular - is worthy of the highest talent, and the highest creative effort that our educational systems can produce. Such was the ***Ars Major*** which, albeit very much a polemical work, set out to prove to Muslims that Jesus was the truth and that Mohammed was deceived.

It wasn't then until the early nineteenth century that the evangelical movement came into being. Henry Martin, already mentioned, translated the Bible into the languages of Asia, and also had the Gospels in Arabic in preparation. He was vilified for doing this. But it wasn't just the Gospels that were being translated into these languages.

If we look to the end of the 19th century, Christian writing in these languages was prolific. Different writers had different views on how to share their faith. One was a man called Karl Pfander, an Austrian. He fervently believed that Muslims were wrong and only the truth of Jesus was acceptable. His most famous work, ***The Balance of Truth***, is still in print today. There he set out clearly that we should explain the truth and give people the opportunity to see right from wrong and see who God the deity was. Reading him today, you would say that he was quite a controversial author. His style of evangelism, which one might call 'hitting people over the head with the gospel', disappeared about fifty years ago and is very different from the kind we see today.

William Henry Temple Gardner was one of the first to change the approach. He was inspired by two Americans who were visiting England and he decided to serve as a missionary in Cairo. His family thought he was wasting his life. They deplored the “*devoting of his life to a mission to educate Mohammedans, spending years of labour to make one proselyte*”. Gardner’s mission was as teacher and evangelist but also as writer. He found the Christian literature written for Muslims too argumentative, an insight that prompted him to move away from an attack on Islam to focus on explaining to Muslims the problems they encountered with various Christian beliefs.

This was very much the view of his contemporary, an American Samuel Zwemer, who toured much of the Muslim world. It is said that he visited the Balkans, India, Africa, and China but it is as a writer that he is best known. He wrote nearly forty volumes, many in foreign languages, in an attempt to prove his case. He said “*No agency can penetrate Islam so deeply, abide so persistently, witness so daringly, and influence so irresistibly as the printed page*”. That printed page will be with us for many years to come.

So what of today? CLC (formerly the *Christian Literature Crusade*) was the vision of Ken and Bessie Adams, who came across to England and they decided that they wanted to share their faith after they had seen Jehovah’s Witnesses going from door to door handing out literature. They wanted to be a constant witness on the high street and so in 1941, with the help of the *Evangelical Publishing House*, they rented rooms in Colchester and there they began to accumulate and distribute Scriptures, even with the limited amount of paper available during World War Two. Since then, CLC has gone from that single office, to fifteen bookshops across the UK, to hundreds of small outlets over the world. (It is interesting that it was Americans who brought the idea to the UK which was then exported back to the USA.)

The largest provider of Christian literature in the UK (at the time of speaking) started out as *Send The Light* (STL). More recently it has been known in this country as IBS-STL, a subsidiary of the American ministry now known as *Biblica*. STL was initially a small group of people who, mainly through the work of *Operation Mobilisation* (OM), saw the need to provide written materials for mission. It started in Bolton, and later moved down to Bromley, where up until the mid-80s it resided. In 1986, when, according to reports, it was on the verge of going under, they changed the way they supplied Christian literature to bookshops and in one year doubled the sales. Up until 1993 STL was still part of OM. At that point it was allowed to develop independently and establish its own long-term goals. It has since become

the distributor for Word, Tyndale Press, Zondervan, Moody, Baker and so on. But perhaps the most significant move happened in 2007 when it merged with the *International Bible Society*. This was an organisation in America, providing cheap and attractive Bibles, Gospels and New Testaments for distribution in bulk. Thus STL was able to attain its aim of providing everything a Christian bookshop would need. So, one might say, Biblica hopes to go on into the future providing not only Christian literature in English but, since they have taken over the *International Bible Society*, in foreign languages too.

So where does KITAB fit in to this? KITAB is the brainwave or 'heart's desire' of a group of returned missionaries. Prior to KITAB there was a small office in the basement of the CLC bookshop in Sheffield, in West Street. There they provided Asian literature for anyone. The manager of this office had to return home, however, but the missionaries wanted to retain this resource, and it was at this point that the vision became KITAB. Over the years, what was a partnership of individuals making up a committee, almost became part of an agency called *People International*, for which I have served; but following the fall of the Berlin Wall in the late 1980s, KITAB remained independent.

Then in 1995 it became part of the *Ministry Among Asians in Britain*. This was quite an interesting time because it saw the convergence of three different ministries involved in literature outreach amongst Asians. Firstly, there was a library founded in Bolton in 1984, and so there was a place where Christians could find resources, both scriptures and teaching books on Islam and other Asian faiths. It then also became the home for a correspondence course called ***Word of Life***. Then into the same offices, KITAB also moved from its previous home in Sheffield, to form part of a wider ministry. From there, KITAB was called back to its roots, you might say, to a brand new office in Milton Keynes. *Ministry Among Asians in Britain* having changed its name to *Urban Vision*, is an integral part of *Interserve*. So when *Interserve* moved from their offices in London to Milton Keynes it called upon *Urban Vision* and KITAB to join it and work together from one building.

I believe that every person that is involved in literature outreach needs to have a vision for what they are doing, that they are convicted and called. I trained as a scientist but from a very early age I loved books. By the time I was eight or nine I was reading five or six books per week, and in my twenties and thirties I would read up to one hundred and fifty books a year. After leaving Bible College I had the desire to work as a teacher or youth

worker, but it didn't work out. God had a plan for me, though, and the desire I felt to work with students, international ones in particular, saw me becoming a supplier of Christian literature in foreign languages to students. This was very much prior to my first meeting with KITAB. As in 1989 I spent three months in Turkey handing out the New Testament as I travelled. When I returned to the UK I was immediately involved in preparing bookstalls for missionaries on deputation. From there the call came to get involved in KITAB .

In terms of the challenges of literature outreach, I'd like to dwell a little on my later experiences in Turkey. The work there was unique. Having served in KITAB for four years I felt God calling me to serve overseas, and because I had spent time before in Turkey, it seemed a natural place for me to go as it had a great need for people to assist in the production of Turkish Christian materials. The agency that I was to join had its roots in the early days of evangelical outreach to Turks. Starting in the 1960s the OM workers moved in, but it was a good decade before these Christian workers realised they needed something that they could give to the Muslim people there. A cross-agency project made it possible to produce Christian materials in Turkey, which was essential, as literature cannot be freely distributed unless it has been produced there. Even today, all pamphlets books and publicity have to be vetted by the security forces or the police.

The pioneer of the work there was Dennis Alexander, who in 1973 became the first co-ordinator of what was to become the *Turkish Literature Fund* (known by the people involved as the Lit Fund). He was quite an extraordinary man. He single-handedly chose the books to be translated, translated them, organised for them to be typeset, organised the covers, had them printed and made them available to the Christian workers for distribution. To make it worthwhile, when books were printed the print-runs were in the region of two to three thousand. So you would have these sizeable quantities and no real idea of how long it would take to sell them. However, a copy of the book was priced the same as bread, so if a loaf of bread cost the equivalent of 5p, that was the cost of the book. If a loaf cost less, the book's price matched it. The idea was that we were offering the 'bread of life'.

We did come across objections to some of the material, for example the autobiography of Joni Eareckson. This was translated and put into print, and had only just come off the press when the Turkish police arrived and confiscated every single copy. It was thought to be subversive and going against the Turkish way of life. Dennis was unperturbed by this and got the

text re-formatted, found a new cover, changed the title and printed it again. It began to sell. Within six months of the new edition coming out, the five thousand confiscated copies were returned. Apparently it had been checked and they could find nothing wrong with it. So very soon there were 10,000 copies of this book available for sale. It took twenty years for all of the copies to be sold – a very long time by a normal publisher's standards but if it wasn't for the foresight of Dennis Alexander the literature outreach would not be where it is today.

In the 1980s the Lit Fund was passed on to an individual I will call Caleb, a man not entirely convinced of his own abilities. After seeing what Dennis had done he decided to take on the administrative role, after a time it became clear that he had put his own stamp onto the organisation. Firstly, he delegated out the production of the literature. Secondly, he was the first foreigner in the Turkish Christian community to buy property and he bought a shop. He used this as a literature depot, bringing together all this material – then between fifteen and thirty titles – from wherever it was being stored, such as attics, closets and cellars. (I only know this because as one of the volunteers I had to go down into one of these cellars in a church in Istanbul and identify the books which hadn't been eaten by rats or destroyed by the damp or humidity.) Thirdly, Caleb was also the first to employ an indigenous Turk as a translator. Lastly, he saw the way privately published books were received, and got involved with the newly established Christian publisher, Müjde Yayıncılık; that thereafter was the vehicle for the publication of books prepared by the Turkish Literature Fund. (A well-known title being Steven Masood's well-known book *Into the light*.)

It is important to note that the same people who were instrumental in getting the Christian literature ready and for sale also saw the need to get the Bible available in a modern translation. One can imagine what it must be like if we had to read the 'Life of Jesus' in Chaucerian English. The Turkish Bible was first translated in the seventeenth century but it wasn't printed until 1826, in what was then Ottoman Turkish – an Arabic script. In 1924, Mustafa Ataturk decided that the Turkish language should be written in Latin script not an Arabic one. The Bible was changed from the Arabic script, but nothing else of the translation was changed.

So in the early 1980s a group of people got together and decided they wanted an up to date translation for the current time. It took nine years and when it was finally published it was heralded as something new. A special edition of this New Testament translation was printed and groups of people, mostly aged between eighteen and thirty, distributed them around Turkey as

part of a friendship evangelism programme. Some were arrested, some were deported, and some had their New Testaments confiscated. But large numbers of people were able to understand the scriptures and see them for the first time. No one in Turkey was willing to print this new translation – not even the *Bible Society* - prepared by a group of independents. So it required the setting up of a Trust in the UK and a publisher in Turkey to get it into production. In the mid-1990s the *Bible Society* brought out its own translation. Extending the translation to include the Old Testament relied on the work done earlier by the Christian workers in Turkey. Its release in 2001 brought all the church denominations together and was a cause for some celebration.

However, we need to mention an absolutely fundamental means by which a large proportion of the Christian Asian world has come to know the Bible, namely the correspondence course. It was something that the evangelical workers used in Turkey, as a starting point for their programmes of evangelism. But it didn't really take off until the 1980s, when it changed from a very covert operation to being one advertised in national newspapers. A typical ad would read: '*Have you read the Bible? Do you believe what it says? If you want a free Bible, write in and we will send you one along with some study material*'. The numbers of people writing in grew quickly. The police began to investigate it and closed down post boxes in a desire to stop this infiltration but this stimulated news items and journal articles which just made it blossom further. Suddenly the dozens of people writing in became hundreds. It's safe to say that in the last fifteen years two hundred thousand have contacted the BCC to receive a New Testament and other Christian materials. Most modern Turkish believers would say that the correspondence course has had some effect in their coming to faith.

Mail-order has always had its problems: with a mailed correspondence course there is always the fear that it will be intercepted by a nosy neighbour or family member. But in recent days the Internet has rejuvenated the way scripture and literature has been spread. Nowadays correspondence courses can be accessed, viewed and downloaded from anywhere where there is a web-enabled PC. There they can do their course, find out something more, read articles; listen to messages and sermons, without anyone else knowing. For someone with an Asian background this is much more appropriate, and something we could not have envisaged just a few decades ago.

Being a Christian and a literature evangelist in an Asian country is no easy thing. You may well have heard that since the appearance of a cartoon in a Danish newspaper, a story which went all round the world, Christians have

paid a heavy price for their beliefs. Three Turks and a German were killed in a publishing house in Malatya. They were there to distribute and share the Gospel with the people in Eastern Turkey. Two years later and the court case has still yet to be finalised. To spread the Gospel in an Asian land you may have to pay the ultimate price. So those are the changes.

The challenges we now face stem from the fact that the modern-day Asian hasn't got the time to read a large work. Accordingly, the literature we use now has no more than about fifty pages. What most enquirers are looking for is a piece of paper with questions and short answers. This is a generation of mobile phones and people who want bite-size information. More people are literate today than ever before but they don't necessarily have time for reading. I think we will see that in the next three to five years that literature evangelism will become more specialised. People are more likely to get their information through MP3 players, pod-messages, videos and DVDs, and the next generation of audio-visual material. Keeping ahead of these changing needs is essential if we are to keep up to date in explaining the Gospel.

Alan Howell is the Manager of the *KITAB* bookshop which distributes Christian literature for the Asian communities.

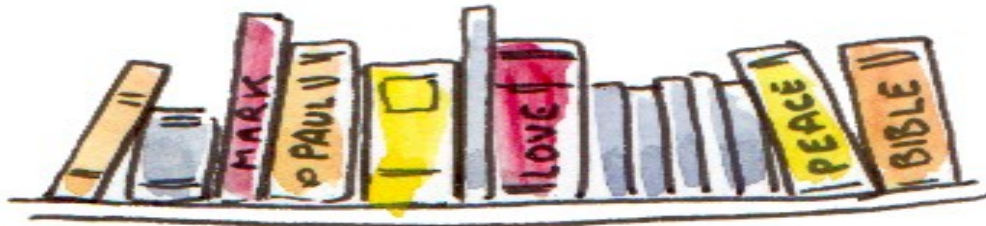
Alan was raised in Chester of Scottish ancestry and attended *Newcastle University* where he read metallurgical science before spending four years as a professional scientist in an auxiliary clay-ware ceramics industry. He spent a year at Bible College and started in Christian literature work in 1989. His involvement in *KITAB* started shortly after that and continues to this day with some time in-between spent in Turkey producing Christian literature and latterly distributing it.

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

You can obtain more information about the work of *KITAB* from P.O. Box 7440, Milton Keynes, MK12 5WL. Telephone 01908 552700. Web site <http://www.interserve.org.uk/kitab/aboutus.htm>

REVIEWS

THE BOOKWORM'S SPRING SELECTION



***THE RELATIONAL MANAGER:
TRANSFORM YOUR WORKPLACE AND YOUR LIFE***
Michael Schluter and David John Lee
***Lion Publishing, 2009, £8.99, Pbk., 186p., ISBN
978-0745953687***

Michael Schluter is Chief Executive of *Relationships Global*, which seeks to promote the relationships approach in organisations and at a policy level across the world. David John Lee, senior writer with the *Haggai Institute for Advanced Leadership Training*, has collaborated with him on a number of projects as well as producing a number of books of his own.

The authors argue that society is a network of relationships, private and professional. If those relationships don't work, quality of life goes down and organisational performance suffers. They believe, therefore, that management is all about relationships and this is reflected in the chapter titles: relational thinking; relational proximity; relational time management; relational conversation; relational finance; relational office culture; relational systems; relational work-life balance; relational travel; relational conflict resolution; relational pensions; relational character. The book concludes with a relational rule of life.

The personal touch is identified as a key aspect of relational management - face-to-face meeting. Management by wandering around (MBWA) is a good management technique: meeting colleagues at their workplace and discussing their problems.

The disadvantages of e-mail are discussed. "*The average email is short*

(making it liable to be abrupt). It is instantly answerable (meaning we're more likely to dash off a reply without thinking what we're saying). And it has not inherited from letter-writing the formalities of politeness (meaning we may fail to signal due respect for the recipient)." The chairman of a leading FTSE-100 company never commits any really important communication to e-mail, preferring a handwritten note by courier. It's more secure and never gets lost amid the email 'noise'.

The authors quote Professor Clive Holtham of *City University* London as saying "People are saying to me that the most important technology for knowledge-sharing is the coffee machine." Certainly tea and coffee breaks at university could be very productive and I recall that when I was librarian at the *British Institute of Management* senior staff would get together on Friday afternoons for tea/coffee and exchange of ideas.

The authors state that Sunday working has made it extremely difficult to spend shared time with others and comment that this is now just as likely to happen to lawyers, accountants, librarians and health professionals. It is stated that the UK is far ahead of its European partners in encouraging Sunday working. In 1999 thirty nine per cent of UK employees did Sunday work compared with twenty three per cent in Germany, twenty five per cent in France and fifteen 15 per cent in Spain. (Source: ***Eurostat 2000***).

As the sub-title suggests, the book is not confined to management at work but includes discussions of such matters as family life and shopping as a social activity.

Although published by Lion, the book does not mention Christianity. However, both authors appear to be Christians and the book presents a Christian approach to management and home life. Christianity is about relationships: relations with God and with other people. On page 20 there is a reference to an American retailer called *The Container Store* which has a number of simple operational principles, one of which is 'Treat people as you want to be treated'. This could have come straight from the sermon on the mount (Matthew 7:12).

This excellent book has one major flaw. There is no index, meaning that useful information on many subjects cannot easily be found. Just a few examples are: advertising, budgeting, communication, customer relations, environmentalism, family relationships, forgiveness, friendships, incentive schemes, matrix style management, meetings, open plan offices, prioritising, reporting, sexual misconduct. When will publishers appreciate how much a good index can add to a book?

Kenneth G.B. Bakewell, MA, MIMgt, FCLIP, is the Emeritus Professor of Information and Library Management at the *Liverpool John Moores University* and a Life Vice-President of the *Librarians' Christian Fellowship*.

THE REPORTER'S TALE

Tom Davies

**Berwyn Mountain Press, 58 High Street, Bala, LL23
7AB, 2009, Pbk., 447p., ISBN 978-0955353925**

An article in a Christian newspaper first alerted me to Tom Davies, some twenty-eight years ago now. At the time Tom was promoting his first book **Merlyn the Magician and the Pacific Coast Highway**, describing his travels around the world on a bicycle. I am not normally a great reader of travel books, and I have never ridden a bicycle in my life, but my attention was captured by the author's account of a series of horrendous visions which he had experienced as a VSO teacher in Malaya during the early 1960s. These visions had slowly led him to the conclusion that there was a definite link between violence in the media and violence in 'real life'.

Despite these early traumatic experiences, Tom Davies spent many years as a Fleet Street journalist, working successively as a columnist for the **Sunday Times, Sunday Telegraph** and **Observer**. Gradually, however, his journalistic experiences, especially in Northern Ireland, confirmed his growing conviction that by giving publicity to terrorist groups and other perpetrators of violence, the media were unwittingly contributing to this same epidemic of violence.

The Reporter's Tale is a passionate defence of Tom's belief that the modern media has an unhealthy and romantic obsession with the themes of violence, cruelty and perversion. During the course of his journalistic career, Tom has investigated a number of cases in which violence on the screen or printed page seem to have inspired acts of violence in the real world and these are described in detail in the book.

Despite the emphasis on the effects of violence in the media, this is an autobiography rather than a polemic and there are many entertaining accounts of Tom's early life in Cardiff, his undistinguished career as a seaman, and his not very profitable years as a philosophy student during which time he shared a house with the future Labour Party leader, Neil Kinnock.

The book also provides a revealing account of what it must have been like to work in Fleet Street during the pre-Wapping era of the 1970s. Editorial staff on national newspapers seem to have spent most of their time in an endless round of pubs and parties, pausing only to write an occasional story or fiddle their expense accounts. It is ironic that the media should have made so much of the recent parliamentary expenses scandal since, by all accounts, reporters are past masters of the art of inflated expense account living.

A number of well known media personalities flit across Tom's pages – among them Anne Robinson, Jeremy Beadle and Peregrine Worsthorpe – but none of them emerge with any real credit.

After leaving full time journalism, Tom began a new career as a writer of books, and he has achieved varying degrees of success in this role. His early novels ***One Winter of the Holy Spirit***, inspired by Evan Roberts and the Welsh revival of 1904, and ***Black Sunlight***, based on the miners' strike of 1984-85, earned him an enviable reputation as a writer of gritty novels of Welsh village life. He seems to think that the inclusion of a fantasy element (namely a struggle for the possession of the Holy Grail) in his later novel, ***Fire in the Bay***, helped to undermine this growing literary reputation. I think that he is being a little unfair to his own book but, on the other hand, I have a lifelong interest in the legends of King Arthur.

For those of us who spend our time making other people's books available to the public, ***The Reporter's Tale*** does provide a useful account of what it is like to earn your living as a writer, especially one who, in Tom's words, has become less famous with each passing year.

Towards the end of the book, Tom seems to have doubts about the validity of his original visions in Malaya. Did he really receive visions from God, or were these the symptoms of a nervous breakdown? However, he quickly regains his conviction and launches a final attack on the media, arguing that the doom-laden press coverage of the recent economic downturn and “credit crunch” has made the situation much worse than it would otherwise have been.

The story ends with Tom, and his wife Liz, far removed from the glamour of national journalism, and running an art gallery in a remote village in North Wales. There is a strong hint that ***The Reporter's Tale*** is likely to be his last book. I hope that this is not the case, as I am sure that Tom still has much to contribute to the literary world.

As a spiritual autobiography, ***The Reporter's Tale*** shows that the path to salvation is not always easy or straightforward. As a young boy Tom earned a stack of Bibles for Sunday School attendance, and was baptised by immersion in one of the local chapels. However, his spiritual progress was derailed by his teenage discovery of sex, Elvis Presley and early rock 'n' roll. In later life, his re-discovery of the Christian faith was assisted by encounters with the late David Watson and visits to the Garden Tomb in Jerusalem. His spiritual life was not helped by a growing addiction to alcohol, and the book includes a moving account of the redemptive role of Alcoholics' Anonymous in his life.

The present writer has followed Tom Davies's literary career with great interest, and I was pleased to meet him when he gave LCF's annual public lecture back in 1992. I regard ***The Reporter's Tale*** as one of the most significant spiritual autobiographies that I have read, comparable to C.S. Lewis's ***Surprised by Joy***, Jack Clemons' ***Confession of a Rebel*** and

Malcolm Muggeridge's *Chronicles of Wasted Time*. Whether it will be regarded in such a light by a wider public remains to be seen. I would encourage LCF readers to support Tom Davies by buying a copy of this book for their libraries or their own personal reading.

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

***QUITTING CHURCH: WHY THE FAITHFUL ARE FLEEING AND
WHAT TO DO ABOUT IT***

Grand Rapids: Baker, 2008, £9.99, 192p., ISBN 978-0801068232

Julia Duin's study of the mainstream churches in the USA highlights what she believes is something of a crisis. Using research done by the *Barna Group*, her own correspondence, and quotations from other written sources, she has come to the conclusion that many people with faith still more or less intact are leaving the church. She puts this down to a number of reasons, although on the whole they can be summarised as '*needs not met*'.

The book is quite autobiographical at times. Duin, who is Religion Editor of *The Washington Times*, remembers with fondness her experiences as part of the 1970s '*Jesus Movement*', and she is quite up-front about the fact that the subject of disillusionment with church is a personal matter, as she has struggled with church in recent years. She seems to long for the church to have the energy she remembered in her Pentecostal days.

However, she is not calling for the church to turn the clock back, but rather for it to rediscover its relevance. She has no doubt that the gospel is still as powerful, but that pastors and preachers are not giving it full rein, opting rather for entertainment. She also questions whether these church leaders are connecting with people well enough about the issues which concern them. There isn't enough teaching or recognition of the real problems people experience, she feels, whether those are emotional, spiritual or otherwise.

In her experience, a number of folk leave the church because their face

doesn't fit. Singles, for example, can often be made to feel excluded as the teaching is directed towards families of couples; women with gifts in ministry find few opportunities for development. The church, says Duin, is not only losing these people, it is losing touch.

The book is easy to read and feels like an extended feature article, rather than a piece of research, although each chapter has detailed references. At times it is tempting to feel that the argument is made too strongly and that churches are being blamed for not satisfying everybody all the time. However, this is probably too easy a response to make. Duin looks at a broad range of situations, including the pastors themselves and their problems. Her theme, that it is the churches themselves which are at fault – rather than a sign of the times or the leavers themselves – is uncomfortable, but the implication is that something can be done to reverse the trend.

My one reservation about the book is how applicable the situation in the US is to the UK. This is not a criticism of the author, but a reflection on the fact that the book has appeared in our shops. There probably are some comparable trends between the two nations and some church leaders here might gain something from her observations but the differences between the cultures are something to be borne in mind. 'Back to Church Sunday' has demonstrated that there are many 'churched' people in the UK who pursue other activities on Sundays. Does their non-attendance come down to the same reasons as *Quitting church* identifies? A separate survey would be called for, I believe. Nevertheless, I think this is a fair study, and could be thought-provoking on both sides of the Atlantic.

Robert L. Foster, BA, DipIM, MCLIP, works as Deputy Counter Supervisor in the Maughan Library, *King's College*, London and serves the *Librarians' Christian Fellowship* as a Committee Member Without Portfolio.

BEYOND THE FRINGE: RESEARCHING A SPIRITUAL AGE
Nick Spencer
Calver: Cliff College Publishing, 2005, £7.99,
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Unlike *Quitting church*, which examines the phenomenon of believers giving up church, *Beyond the fringe* is a study of the views of people who have no significant connection with church. The book is 'the report of the Rev. Yvonne Richmond's research in the Diocese of Coventry into the spirituality of people outside the church. It comprises the interviews carried out with

sixty people, and then breaks the transcripts down into subject areas to show areas of common belief and some diverse ones too. Thus when reading it you see a series of quotations on a particular subject, interspersed with a commentary by the author. Quotations are course anonymous, but the backgrounds of the interviewee's remarks are revealed, for example '*Female, pre-family, urban city*' or '*Male, late family, rural*'.

The book falls into two parts. Section A concerns the '*Big Questions*' which people have and how they have answered them, if they have. The questions are the 'life, world and universe' kind and the responses are very interesting. Whilst quite a number denied they believed in God, the same people were obviously equally uncomfortable with a wholly atheist philosophy. Others had surprising levels of faith, whilst still others had their own folk religion. As the title of the book suggests, the research indicates that there is quite a lot of spirituality, although in some ways it becomes somewhat superstitious.

Section B looks at how the same people view Christianity. They were asked who they thought Jesus was; what the Bible was; their attitudes to heaven and hell; about their experience of church and so on. On the whole these answers seemed to me more predictable and whilst Jesus was respected, the church came off quite badly in some ways. The book closes with some thoughts by the author on why the church experiences what he calls '*disconnectivity*' between itself and large sections of the population. He believes there needs to be a better balance between the church being distinctive and listening to those people who feel excluded. Sometimes it seems to be a case of failing to get its message across to people where the only barriers are perception and misunderstanding.

I found this book very easy to read, and I had the feeling that although the pool of respondents was not large, it really does capture a cross-section of the nation's viewpoints on matters of faith. I would have said this was a useful piece of research, and for those people who have conducted *Alpha* or *Christianity Explored* courses it might suggest what people 'on the outside' are struggling with. The author does not try to prove that Christianity is thriving outside the church, nor does the report seek to validate all belief. However, it does deal with people's experiences sympathetically and shows openness to those experiences which are obviously intensely personal. It is both encouraging at times and troubling at others: in short, it has a lot to commend it.

Robert L. Foster, BA, DipIM, MCLIP, works as Deputy Counter Supervisor in the Maughan Library, *King's College*, London and serves the *Librarians' Christian Fellowship* as a Committee Member Without Portfolio.