

Summer 2009

CHRISTIAN LIBRARIAN



The Journal of the
Librarians' Christian Fellowship

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●SATURDAY 24 APRIL 2010: ANNUAL CONFERENCE

Connaught Hall, Tavistock Square, London. Details: p. 12.

PRAYER NOTES FOR SUMMER 2009

PLEASE PRAY FOR

●The work of the Librarians' Christian Fellowship and its forthcoming programme of activities including the *Service of Thanksgiving* and the *Annual Public Lecture*. Pray that both events will be well attended.

●Suitable volunteers who are willing to respond to requests for assistance with Christian library projects – eg the current *New Testament Church of God* project.

●Individuals and organisations who have been contributing a Christian perspective to the "science and religion" debate in this Darwin anniversary year.

●Those involved in training and education for the library and information professions.

●Christian and non-Christian librarians working in the *National Health Service*.

●Christian librarians and other employees thinking their way through the "Sunday working" issue.

●Past and present LCF members who have gone into the Christian ministry – for example, Rhona Floate and John Urquhart.



LIBRARIANS' CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP

CHRISTIANS IN LIBRARY, INFORMATION AND ARCHIVE WORK

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

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THE FIRST WORD

GORDON HARRIS surveys some of the themes in the second half of St. Mark's Gospel and highlights the commission to take the news of God's rule to all creation

MIRACLES, SACRIFICE AND VICTORY

In the Spring 2009 issue I wrote about the first half of Mark's Gospel for *The First Word* feature. I promised then that I would deal with the second half of Mark in this issue.

It has been said that Mark's Gospel is all about the death and resurrection of Christ in Jerusalem, with his ministry in Galilee being a mere introduction. And it is true that the final week of the narrative takes up nearly half the number of chapters!

However, the first half of Mark is vital (as was demonstrated in *The First Word* in the last issue) in drawing out the identity, character and huge challenge of Jesus. In fact the ability of Jesus in the first half to perform miracles provides a meaningful background in the second half to his steadfast determination to stay on the Cross and to die. No wonder it seemed to his enemies around the cross that "*He saved others, but he can't save himself*" (ch.15 v. 31). In fact, he chose not to.

My observations on the second half of Mark are based on my reading of the gospel while on weekend retreat. They are not intended to be a commentary. I leave that to biblical scholars.

So, the second half opens with Chapter 9 and the Transfiguration, and its link with the Old Testament, but this glory is

rapidly followed by Jesus' exasperation with his disciples and his compassion towards the spirit-possessed boy. His father's outburst "*I do believe; help me overcome my unbelief*" has resonated with seekers down the centuries.

These feelings of yearning also connect with the Rich Young Ruler in the following Chapter. In his case it was not doubt but security which drew him back. Even so, "*Jesus looked at him and loved him*" (ch. 19 v. 21).

There is a sense of sadness, foreboding, risk and uncertainty in the second half of Mark. Jesus insists that He is going to be put to death. Rather than stay in Galilee, Jesus leads his squabbling and fearful disciples to the very centre of opposition: Jerusalem. Everything: hierarchy, leadership, servanthood, the status of Jewish worship, is to be turned upside down. Jesus predicts nothing but suffering and catastrophe.

Jesus' cleansing of the temple, teaching on forgiveness, altercations with the authorities, foretelling of the end times, and His anointing, all swirl into a kind of vortex which culminates in His arrest.

He enters into a situation of increased loneliness and isolation. The Saviour of the world is heaped with insults, pain and humiliation. He gives up his life. This lowest of points is followed by the highest of points: he is restored to life. And even then he has to rebuke the disciples "*for their lack of faith and their stubborn refusal to believe those who had seen him after he had risen*" (ch. 16 v. 14). They are finally commissioned, as we are, to take the news of God's rule to all creation.

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

ANNUAL REPORT

The last year's activities have included talks on family history and work/life balance, tours of the *Church of England Record Centre* and the *Bible Society*, and a visit to a location featured in Dan Brown's controversial novel *The Da Vinci Code*. LOUISE MANNERS reports

WELL ATTENDED AND ENTHUSIASTICALLY RECEIVED



The Annual Report of the Librarians' Christian Fellowship for the year April 2008 – March 2009. Presented to the Fellowship's Annual General Meeting held on Saturday 25 April 2009 at St. Nicholas' Church, Maid Marian Way, Nottingham.

Main events

The Annual Conference on Saturday 19 April 2008, "*Looking Back and Reaching Out*", was well attended and the presentations enthusiastically received. Richard Ratcliffe, Archivist at the *Methodist Central Hall*, Westminster, spoke on "*Non-Conformist Church Records: how to trace your Christian ancestors*." Jeff Bonser, formerly Director of the *Christian Enquiry Agency*, spoke on "*Inns Offer Room to Jesus*", describing the work of the CEA, the *ReJesus* web site, and the "*Sing Christmas*" project in Leicestershire.

The Annual Lecture was held in Winchester on Saturday 18 October 2008, with Paul Valler, an Associate Speaker from the *London Institute for Contemporary Christianity*, speaking on “*Get A Life: winning choices for working people*”. This dealt with the subject of work/life balance. There was a lively question and answer session afterwards.

Visits

On Tuesday 20 May 2008, members of the Fellowship took part in a visit to the *Church of England Record Centre*, located in Bermondsey, South London. On Saturday 12 July 2008, a group of LCF's Scottish members took part in a visit to *Rosslyn Chapel*, near Edinburgh, a location made famous or notorious in the novel and film *The Da Vinci Code*. On Tuesday 16 September 2008 members took part in a visit to the *Bible Society* headquarters in Swindon. The final visit of the year took place on Saturday 18 October 2008, prior to the Annual Lecture in the afternoon. On this occasion we visited the Library of *Winchester Cathedral* where attractions include the Great Winchester Bible.

Publications

Four issues of *Christian Librarian* have been published since last year's AGM. In addition to transcripts from talks given at LCF meetings, the magazine has included articles on such topics as Performance Management, the *Evangelical Library West*, theological librarianship, life after librarianship, and coping with upheaval in the workplace. Contributors included members of LCF plus guest contributors, such as the popular Christian writer and speaker Adrian Plass.

A licensing agreement has been signed with EBSCO Publishing so that the full text of *Christian Librarian* is now available on EBSCO's databases. Subscribers to EBSCO's services can retrieve articles from our journal, and the Fellowship will receive a small commission for each item so retrieved.

Four issues of the *E-Newsletter* have also been circulated to members with e-mail facilities and placed on the web site. In addition to news items on LCF activities this has included short items on such topics as: MLA's *Guidance*

on the Management of Controversial Materials in Public Libraries, Family History, William P. Young's novel ***The Shack***, the forthcoming third film in C.S. Lewis's ***Chronicles of Narnia*** series, *Lambeth Palace* library, the work of the *Oxford Industrial Chaplaincy*, and books for Christmas and Easter.

Electronic

Information about the Fellowship continues to be available on the LCF web site, which is regularly updated by Mary Wood. More members are needed for the LCF group on the social networking site *Facebook*.

Library Assistance Programme

This has been a fairly quiet year for our library assistance programme at home and abroad – but some appeals for help have been received. Our member Mary Barker has been assisting the *Summer Institute of Linguistics/Wycliffe Bible Translators* with a library project in Aix-en-Provence but there were no LCF volunteers willing to help with a library project in a Christian school and orphanage in India. A request for assistance has also been received from the *New Testament Church of God*, for a library project based in Northampton.

Publicity Opportunities

As usual, press releases about the work of LCF were distributed to the Christian, librarianship and book trade press, and this resulted in items in such publications as ***Baptist Times***, ***Methodist Recorder***, ***Christian Marketplace***, ***Bookseller***, and ***Library and Information Gazette***. In November 2008, The Secretary recorded an interview on the work of the Fellowship for a community radio station in South Wales, broadcasting over the Internet. LCF leaflets were displayed on the *Transform Work UK* stand at *Spring Harvest* – at the Skegness site in 2008 and at the Minehead site in 2009. We have a current project to make contact with Christian Unions in universities offering undergraduate courses in library and information studies with a view to recruiting student members for LCF.

Executive Committee

The Executive Committee met four times during the year. Our Welsh/Western Rep., David Moulder, elected at the AGM in April 2008, was temporarily released from his duties so that he could return to his role as Librarian of the *World Maritime University*, Malmo, Sweden on a short term basis. He hopes to return to the UK and his LCF role in the near future. There are no retirements from the executive committee this year – but thanks are due to Christine Gagan who has carried on as our Library Assistance Manager for one further year after retiring from the committee last April. We are pleased to welcome two new committee members this year – Sara Batts as London rep. and Mary Barker as Library Assistance Manager.

Membership

There are two hundred and four paid up members of LCF (twenty-four have still not paid their subscriptions for 2009). There are also fifteen additional subscribers to *Christian Librarian*. Forty individuals and organisations receive free copies of *Christian Librarian*.

Tribute to John Burne

We have to report the death of one member of the Fellowship this year – John Burne, who lived in Biggin Hill, Kent, during his later years. John worked in government libraries for many years, including a number of years as Librarian of the *Marine Laboratory* in Aberdeen. During that period he was a speaker at LCF's Scottish conference in Edinburgh in May 1990. After his retirement from government libraries, he accepted the position of Librarian at the *World Maritime University* (where David Moulder was his successor) and he later worked for ten years as Operations Manager for the missionary organisation, *Operation Mobilisation*.

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
LIBRARIANS'
CHRISTIAN
FELLOWSHIP
NEWSLETTER



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**TUESDAY 14 JULY 2009:
SERVICE OF THANKSGIVING**

This issue may arrive in time to remind readers that we are holding our next *Service of Thanksgiving* on **Tuesday 14 July 2009** in **Room N208, de Havilland Campus, University of Hertfordshire, Hatfield, Hertfordshire**, from 5.30.p.m. This will take place during this year's *Umbrella Conference* arranged by CILIP (*Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals*).

The Rev. **David Ronco**, a locally based Baptist minister, will be our guest speaker and other participants will include **Gordon Harris**, President of the Librarians'

Christian Fellowship, and Dr. **Bob McKee**, Chief Executive of CILIP.

Please support the Service with your prayers, and if possible your presence, whether or not you are able to attend the *Umbrella* event as a whole. The *Service of Thanksgiving* is one of the "public faces" of the Fellowship and usually attracts a good number of delegates who are not members of the Librarians' Christian Fellowship. However, the conference schedule is always tight and this year our short time of worship will coincide with an exhibitors' reception. We would like to ensure a good attendance, and will be grateful to members who make a special effort to come to Hatfield to attend the Service.

Hatfield should be an accessible venue, especially for members from our London and Southern regions. By train, it is less than half an hour from London King's Cross.

We will need the services of a couple of stewards to greet delegates, hand out service sheets, etc. If you can help, please let me know.

**SATURDAY 1 AUGUST 2009:
VISIT TO BIBLE WORLD
EXPERIENCE**

Our Scottish members are arranging a visit on the above date to the Scottish Bible Society's *Bible World Experience* at 7 Hampton Terrace, Haymarket, Edinburgh. They will be meeting at 10.30. am for a two hour

tour beginning at 11.00. am. The cost of the tour is £3.50.

The day's activities will also include lunch in the Royal Botanic Garden's Terrace Cafe and a tour of the Gardens beginning 3.00. pm. (Cost £3.00).

If you would like to book a place on the tour(s), please contact Anne MacRitchie, 6A, Mount Street, Rosemount, Aberdeen, AB25 2RB. Tel. 01224 630430. E mail anne.macritchie@tiscali.co.uk

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

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

The library of the original St. Paul's Cathedral was almost completely destroyed in the Great Fire of London. Sir Christopher Wren's library chamber was restocked by the Commissioners for rebuilding St. Paul's who purchased valuable Bibles and liturgical texts. Later the library acquired several thousand books from the private collections of Henry Compton, Bishop of London, and John Mangey, Vicar of Dunmow and

Prebendary of St. Paul's. In the nineteenth century, large collections of ecclesiastical tracts and pamphlets were acquired and improvements made in the library's holdings of sermons preached at the Cathedral.

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

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

The Church of Christ the Cornerstone, at **300 Saxon Gate West, Milton Keynes, MK9 2ES**, will be the venue for this year's *Annual Public Lecture* on the above date, beginning 2.30.p.m. Our guest speaker will be **Alan Howell**, Manager of the *Kitab* bookshop which provides Christian resources for the Asian community. Alan will be speaking on the subject "*Changes and Challenges in Literature Outreach*" and will base his address in part on his own experiences in Christian literature work in both the United Kingdom and Turkey. Further details will appear in our next issue, but please book the date now and plan to attend.

EVENTS FOR 2010

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

- Next year's *Annual Public Lecture* will be held on **Saturday 23 October 2010** at **Manvers Street Baptist Church, Bath**, from 2.30.p.m. Our guest speaker will be the Rev. Dr. **Alan Garrow**, who is Vicar Theologian at *Bath Abbey*, and an authority on the Synoptic Gospels. Book these dates now, and plan to attend!

TWUK NATIONAL CONFERENCE

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

It would be good if members of

LCF could be represented at this conference. If you would like to attend, or would like more details, please contact TWUK's Director, Tom Stevens, on 01480 428344, e-mail stevensth@btinternet.com

UK CHRISTIAN RESOURCES HANDBOOK

The latest edition of this major reference book has recently been published by *Bible Society Resources*.

The *Handbook* (published in earlier editions as the *UK Christian Handbook*) lists five thousand Christian organisations and services under various classified headings. Coverage includes Christian artists, craft producers, training retreats, hotels, colleges, web-sites, bookshops, conference centres and much more. The publishers promise information from the essential to the quirky. Some of the more unusual entries include *Holy Socks*, *God's Bicycles* and the *Christian Vegetarian Association*.

The *Handbook* is surely an essential purchase not only for reference libraries but for ministers, clergy, church secretaries, etc.

UK Christian Resources Handbook 2009-2010 (ISBN 978-0564045266, price £59.99) can be ordered from IVP Books, Norton Street, Nottingham, NG7 3HR.

EDITORIAL COMMITTEE

I am interested in recruiting members for a revived editorial committee which would be involved in producing articles for ***Christian Librarian***. Candidates would be expected to contribute ideas to the editorial process and research and write articles on agreed topics. Attendance at occasional committee meetings *might* be required, though it could well be possible to conduct the business of the committee entirely through e-mail. I also need at least two more volunteers to write occasional articles for the *Eye on the Profession* series launched by Richard Waller in the Spring issue of ***Christian Librarian***. The idea of the series is that contributors will survey recent issues of the librarianship press, highlight matters that may be of concern to Christians, and provide a personal viewpoint on some of these issues. Please get in touch if you are interested in helping in either or both of these ways.

NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH OF GOD

We have recently received an appeal for help with a current project to catalogue and manage a collection of research material bequeathed to the *New Testament Church of God UK*.

The New Testament Church of God houses a unique collection of books, research papers, videos, tapes and other materials on the

black majority churches in England during the period 1972-1992. In partnership with other black majority denominations they are seeking to develop this collection of prized material into a specialist library and make it accessible to scholars, researchers and members of the public.

The proposed library is based in Northampton and financial compensation is available for any librarian or librarians who would be willing to undertake the necessary work in their spare time.

If you are interested in helping, or learning more about the project, please contact LCF's new Library Assistance Manager, Mary Barker, 22 Pasture Road, Wembley, Middlesex, HA0 3JL. Tel. 020 7603 8478. E mail cvmslibrary@yahoo.com

TOP SHELF SCRIPTURES

You may have seen the press coverage of the MLA (Museums, Libraries and Arts) Council's ***Guidance on the Management of Controversial Materials in Public Libraries*** which was issued during February. Some of the press reports concentrated on the suggestion that public libraries might keep the sacred texts of the major religions on their top shelves in order to avoid offending Muslims who believe in placing the Koran in a pre-eminent position.

Some concern has been expressed that this proposal would have the effect of making the Bible and other religious texts less

accessible and turn them into sacred objects that are revered rather than read. Although some of the media reports have over-sensationalised the idea, there is certainly a risk that, if the Bible is taken out of the normal Dewey sequence, it will be more difficult to find by library users.

Our committee member Mary Wood points out that the section on religious texts does not form part of the main guidance but is part of a case study of how Leicester City handled complaints from Muslims. The *Federation of Muslim Organisations in Leicester* suggested that the texts of the major religions should be shelved together on the top shelf so that no priority would be given to any particular religion. However, this is not advocated by the report as appropriate in all circumstances but offered as an example of good practice.

Our Australian member, Winifred Johns, asks *“Have the Islamic pressure groups ... been told about the classification system of arrangement and how it guides readers to the location of publications, which ceases to be effective as a location guide if another arbitrary shelf location – conflicting with the system – is introduced?”*

Our Essex member, Andrew Fitch, recalls, *“I had an interesting conversation ... with a reader who suggested the Holy Koran should be placed on a top shelf. I took the usual line that 297 is a relative location, and in any library could well be found on the top shelf. His*

approach was non-confrontational, educated and diplomatic, so I felt able to share with him that for me, as a Christian, the important factor is that the Bible should be readily available, and in traditional and contemporary versions. My worry about a policy of placing sacred texts in a dedicated “honorific” location would be that it could be seized upon by the anti-political correctness lobby/media and used as a stick to beat us with”.

A forthright view is expressed by our Suffolk member, Ngaio Malcolm, who writes, *“I could well imagine that the Muslims are very happy to have the Koran on the top shelf, not only to show it respect but also because it will be more inaccessible there and the mullahs do not really want ordinary Muslims or non-Muslims to be too familiar with its contents. This is because anyone reading it with an open mind will be struck by the paucity of verses advocating peace with non-Muslims and the huge number advocating violence against them”.*

Ngaio concludes: *“It will be a great pity if any Christian librarian in a position to stand against this tide of Islamification fails to do so. Let the Muslims have their Korans on the top shelf by all means but insist that the Bible be easy to find by putting it in the right sequence”.*

Mary Wood believes that, on the whole, we should congratulate the MLA on a balanced report that promotes freedom of expression within the law and the responsibility of librarians to make stock selection decisions as best they can in

accordance with principles and common sense.

Does anyone have any actual experience of being told to place the Koran or other religious works on the top shelf? And what do you think of the **Guidance** document as a whole – not just the section on religious texts? Please read the document on the MLA web site at <http://mla.gov.uk> and then send me your comments!

DARWIN ANNIVERSARIES

Charles Darwin has enjoyed a high profile recently in the broadcasting media and the religious and secular press. 12 February 2009 was the two hundredth anniversary of the birth of this famous natural historian and 22 November 2009 will mark the one hundred and fiftieth anniversary of the publication of his book **The Origin of Species** (Wordsworth Classics, £3.99, ISBN 978-1853267802) in which he first expounded his ideas on natural selection as the driving force behind evolution.

Although I doubt if there are many Christians who still believe, with Archbishop Ussher, that the world was literally created on 23 October 4004 B.C., many believers still find difficulty in reconciling evolutionary theory with a traditional reading of the creation stories in Genesis. On the other hand, there are many Christians who are professionally involved in the sciences and who are prepared to give assent to evolution as the

method by which God carried out the great process of Creation. In the past these theistic evolutionists have sometimes found it difficult to promote their views due to the reluctance of some Christian bookshops to stock books that present anything other than a literal 'creationist' view of human origins.

It would be interesting to know the attitude of Christian booksellers to a number of recent books whose authors combine loyalty to the Bible with assent to Darwinian theories. Denis Alexander's **Creation or Evolution** (Monarch, £10.99, ISBN 978-0825462924) answers the question "*Do we have to choose?*" with a resounding 'no!' The author provides a careful analysis of both evolutionary theory and Christian beliefs about Creation, and suggests ways in which contemporary Christians can read the Adam and Eve story.

Charles Foster's **The Selfless Gene** (Hodder and Stoughton, £10.99, ISBN 978-0340964351) provides "*a new and lyrical vision of a world crafted by evolution but one permeated by meaning and beauty, and ultimately to be made perfect*".

Although Charles Darwin himself drifted into agnosticism in his later years, he never became an advocate of the militant atheism currently espoused by Richard Dawkins and other scientific critics of religion. Nick Spencer's **Darwin and God** (SPCK, £9.99, ISBN 978-028106-825) is a study of Darwin's religious views and highlights Darwin's opinion that it is still possible to accept the theory of

evolution while believing in a Creator God.

Richard Dawkins' ***The God Delusion*** (Black Swan, £8.99, ISBN 978-0552773317) has inspired a number of responses from Christian writers. Keith Ward's ***Why There Almost Certainly Is A God*** (Lion, £7.99, ISBN 978-0825478427) is one of the latest titles to appear on the market.

Many Christians, however, remain unconvinced by the arguments of the theistic evolutionists, and there is a flourishing creationist movement on both sides of the Atlantic. Recent additions to creationist literature include Paul Garner's ***The New Creationism: building scientific theory on a biblical foundation*** (Evangelical Press, £8.95, ISBN 978-0852346921).

No doubt the debates about science and religion will continue throughout 2009 and beyond. Happy two hundredth birthday Charles!

NEWS FROM NARNIA

Admirers of C.S. Lewis's ***Chronicles of Narnia*** were disappointed to hear in December 2008 that the *Walt Disney* organisation had pulled out of financing and distributing the third film in the series. This raised serious doubts about whether ***The Voyage of the Dawn Treader*** would ever be made. However,

Lewis fans will have been reassured in January when *Walden Media*, who hold the film rights to the series, announced that they had come to an agreement with *Twentieth Century Fox*, who have become the film's new backers. The film is now expected to be completed in time for a release date in December 2010.

Norman Stone's documentary ***The Narnia Code*** was broadcast on BBC1 on Thursday 16 April 2009. The programme provided an introduction to the theories of Dr. Michael Ward, whose article ***Silence Please! C.S. Lewis and the Seven Heavens*** appeared in the Spring 2008 issue of ***Christian Librarian***.

EBSCO PUBLISHING

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

NOTTINGHAM 2009

LCF members returned to Robin Hood country for their Annual Conference at St. Nicholas' Church, Maid Marian Way, Nottingham, on Saturday 25 April 2009. MARY WOOD reports

For our annual conference this year, we returned to St. Nic's church in Nottingham, just a short distance from the city centre and the railway station.

The day started as usual with worship, led this year by Mary Wood, with contributions from Robert Foster, Gordon Harris, Colleen Powell, Margaret Keeling, Kirsty Robinson and Christine Gagan. The readings – the story of Daniel and his friends serving at the Babylonian court and guidance on holy living from Paul's letter to the Colossians – and the hymns – *'Fill Thou, O Lord my life in every part with praise'* and *'Be thou my vision, O Lord of my heart'* - focused on the theme of living for God in a godless society, a challenge which faces all of us in our work and daily activities.

This year's AGM followed the normal pattern with a report on the year's activities from our chair, Louise Manners, a financial report from our treasurer, Nick Horley and the election and re-election of officers, notably Sara Batts as the new regional representative for London and Mary Barker, who has

agreed to take on responsibility for co-ordinating library assistance projects, as a member without portfolio. A prayer of thanksgiving for the life of John Burne, a member who had died in the past year, had been written by David Moulder and was read out by Graham Hedges.

We then proceeded to vote on a number of amendments to the LCF constitution. For the most part, these were necessitated by the demise of the UCCF Professional Groups Coordinating Committee. We are now affiliated not just with the UCCF, but with a number of additional groups including *Transform Work UK* and *Christians at Work*, but there is no need for this to be mentioned in the constitution. We also needed to make provision for future amendments to certain clauses in the constitution covering doctrinal matters, which hitherto have required approval from the PGCC.

Proposals to create new posts for Web Site Manager, Library Assistance Manager and Students/New Graduates Officer on the executive committee were also approved.

Finally, an issue relating to the geographical division of our regional groups was raised by Philip Hayworth, LCF representative for the Northern region who suggested that members in North Wales would relate more readily with the northern region than with the Western region. It was agreed that this would be discussed by the executive committee at their next meeting at the end of June. If members have

any views on this, please let Graham Hedges have your thoughts. On the subject of regional representatives, it should be highlighted that we are still looking for volunteers for the posts of Irish, Southern, Eastern and Western representatives. If you are at all interested in either of these posts, please contact Graham for more details.

The formalities complete, we moved on to the first of our two main conference sessions. Our speaker was the Rev. Andii Bowsher from *St. John's College*, Nottingham, who had chosen the intriguing title, "*Adam and Dewey*". Drawing on a lifelong interest in, linguistics and culture, Andii explored themes relating to classification, naming, taxonomy and folksonomy. Starting from the (to us) bizarre classification of animals in the Celestial Emporium of Benevolent Knowledge in Jorge Luis Borges' book *The Analytical Language of John Wilkins*, Andii illustrated how classification systems are influenced by differing world views and cultural perspectives. He went on to explore the implications of the story of Adam naming the animals in Genesis chapter 2. Here, as opposed to the Koran where God teaches Adam the names of the animals, we see that God invites Adam to contemplate the animals, to see what he makes of them and to construct his understanding of the world through experience and reflection. Could Adam have been the first librarian? More profoundly, is there a sense in which we as librarians are involved in the work of God as we help others to exercise

their God given ability to learn and make sense of the world? If you are interested in these themes and ideas, you might like to have a look at Andii's blog at: <http://nouslife.blogspot.com/>

Over a delicious buffet lunch served by caterers from St. Nic's, we had the opportunity to talk further with Andii and to chat with each other before the afternoon session. This was led by the Rev. Rhona Floate, priest in charge in the parish of Wool and East Stoke in the diocese of Salisbury, whose chosen title was no less intriguing than that of the morning session: "*Desert Island Texts: resources for integrating occupation and vocation.*" Vocation is often discussed only with reference to those entering Christian ministry and there is a perception that the church has little to say about day to day work, whether in or outside of employment. Yet, as Paul Valler pointed out at our 2008 annual lecture last October, work is part of life; work and life need to be integrated rather than balanced!

Rhona shared her own personal occupational journey, which included twenty years working in libraries, first in the water industry and later in plant science research, before ordination in the Church of England. She also talked about her search to understand what it means to work as a Christian. Yes, she could '*do everything as to the Lord*' and be ready '*to give a reason for hope within her*' but the feeling that there is more to it was inescapable.

Throughout the afternoon, we broke into small groups to discuss

questions such as 'What do you understand by vocation?' 'How strong is your personal sense of calling in relation to your vocation?' Rhona facilitated the discussions and encouraged us to share our insights with each other.

Referring back to Andii's talk in the morning, she explored how we can model aspects of God's nature in our work, reflect his image in our daily lives and show people what He is really like. We were also introduced to the discipline of seeking not just 'proof verses' from the Bible to help us learn how to address problematic issues at work and in the community, but to examine Biblical narratives for what we can learn from them. This was illustrated with examples from Rhona's own experience, for example, the difficult issue of how to approach plans for the closure of a school in her parish. Often, it's about understanding what questions we need to ask, not just finding a ready-made solution. Our understanding of vocation is a work in progress, but we can begin to see that our way of life should reflect the ways of God and that 'good practice' can be 'God practice.'

The conference closed with a vote of thanks to all who had contributed to making the day so enjoyable and worthwhile, and especially to our two speakers. Andii and Rhona both stimulated our thinking, challenged us to reflect how we live and work and gave us lots to take home for further reflection.

Without wanting to end on a negative note, I can't end this report

without expressing my regret that so few members were able to join us at the conference this year (less than twenty in fact). I've been attending LCF conferences since the mid-1990s, missing only the odd one since then. Each has been different, but all have been interesting, stimulating and encouraging. While understanding that most of our members are busy people with multiple commitments I do wonder what we can do to make it easier for more members to participate. Would a different time of year be preferable? Which venues are most convenient? What kind of event would be attractive? Which subjects of most interest? The executive committee would welcome feedback and suggestions from members, meanwhile, those of you who missed the conference this time will be able to read the transcripts in the next issue of ***Christian Librarian***.

Next year's conference date has already been confirmed as Saturday 24 April 2010, with guest speakers Tony Jasper and Eddie Olliffe. We will be back in one of our favourite venues, the Connaught Hall, in Tavistock Square, London, so why not put the date in your diary now and watch this space for more details? I'm sure it will be a great day!

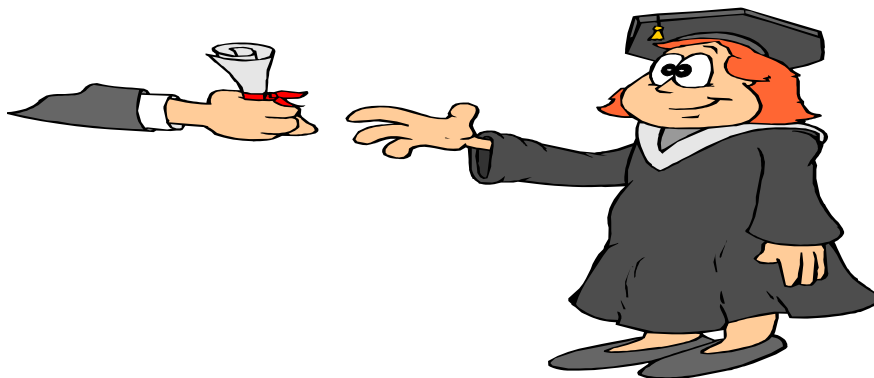
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MAIN ARTICLES

Are the library schools providing graduates with enough skills for their work? Is there more to librarianship than simply delivering information? In the second article in our series, ROBERT FOSTER surveys the professional press and looks at some current issues in education for library and information personnel

EYE ON THE PROFESSION

PREPARING FOR A WIDE RANGE OF CAREERS



It is quite rare for there to be an issue of CILIP *Update* which does not include something about qualifications. Since one of CILIP's functions is to accredit its members this is not altogether surprising. However, there is currently some debate about the nature and value of LIS-based qualifications, whether they are the university courses or another scheme. It is regularly pointed out that these awards should mean something to employers, and that they indicate what a person can do in their particular area of work. As LCF considers how it reaches out to individuals who are newly qualified or who are on a course of study, it seems worth looking at what the profession is saying.

There is some concern within CILIP that the library schools are not providing graduates with enough skills for their work. This is a crucial point because for many people these qualifications are expected to be the ticket to a first or new professional post. One occasionally sees in the CILIP magazines a letter from someone who has not found their place in the profession, and it is noticeable that this year's President, Peter Griffiths, has himself commented that there is "*a tension between what the schools are able to teach and what the profession wants them to teach so that new*

graduates are employable in fields where they are needed now.”(1)

Part of the problem is that the profession is now very diverse. An LIS qualification now has to prepare people for a wide range of careers. This is picked up in an article about National Occupational Standards in the March issue of **Update**, entitled ‘*Defining common ground in the information professions*’, where the authors say that “*we do not believe that we will see a cohesive ‘information profession’ – LAIS is too complex for that*”. They also point out that “*information management skills are increasingly appearing in the standards developed by bodies representing other professions.*” (2) Many jobs now require information skills, and people outside the profession are having to acquire quite advanced knowledge. The implication is that LIS standards, and therefore qualifications, should be developed by focussing on the wider world of information-based work or those within the traditional professional field will become marginalised.

Another issue is the pace of change and the greater expectations which technological developments have brought. The article just referred to says “*the web now dominates as an information resource, a service provider and a growing electronic market place*”. Another piece, published in August 2008 in the **Journal of Information Science**, asks “*have the developments in the handling of information left the traditional information professionals behind? Are the present day information professionals sufficiently involved in information systems design?*”(3). Its author, Barry Mahon, seems to imply that unless we are true ‘*information architects*’, our skills are not specialist enough for the customer now using the internet: “*information professionals are not able to keep pace with the expectations of users, despite the range of new tools at their disposal.*” He also says rather sadly “*there is little indication that LIS training had broadened its scope to deal with the new requirements.*”

This somewhat bleak picture though is perhaps rather aimed at one facet, or even role within the profession. Peter Griffiths says that CILIP has a job to do in defining “*what we mean by ‘professional’ and perhaps even what we mean by ‘librarian’*” because of the overlap with other information professions. The aspect of the variety of roles comes across in the occupational standards article as well where it says “*we do believe we can work towards a much better understanding of what the major skills are and what different roles and competencies achieve.*” Perhaps it is too much to expect someone emerging from an LIS School or finishing a first qualification to be able to slot into any part of the profession.

Something else to consider, and touched on by the occupational standards article is that standards should place “*appropriate weight on values and attitudes in addition to statements of competence.*” They do not say what those are, as perhaps they will vary slightly from workplace to workplace. John Pateman’s views on the subject were outlined in the same issue of **Update** in an article entitled ‘*Should users of professionals hold the keys?*’ (4) According to this article, his view is that “*a library qualification does not*

*automatically mean that someone is suited to work effectively with the community in a public library” and instead we should look for the “more generic skills in communication and negotiation”, as well as developing “empathy towards library users”. John Pateman’s regular contributions to **Update** receive their fair share of criticism, but surely many will agree that their role in the workplace often goes beyond simply delivering information.*

An example of this comes across in an article in the **New York Times** on 16 February about a school librarian who has a literacy teaching function in a school where there is a high immigrant population. (5) She helps pupils to evaluate what they read and discuss their findings with their friends. She also has the task of getting some pupils to read anything at all, which she does by trying to find out what they might be interested in. She even has a day in the week which is Internet-free. Has she ceased to become an information professional? Hardly, but it is not a job that any information professional could do as well as another.

Those constructing courses and programmes have a fairly unenviable task of trying to produce something which will satisfy a wide number of workplace requirements, and to provide material which will not become irrelevant the day after a person qualifies. As another **Update** article on the LIS courses suggests, many do find their studies are valuable in a number of ways.(6) But qualified or not, individuals can also be assured that whether they are in technical or customer service, in education, or waiting for an interview, they have a valuable personal, and perhaps immeasurable contribution to make.

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How widely were Charles Darwin's books stocked in the infant public libraries of the late nineteenth century? Did Darwin's ideas on evolution and natural selection encounter any particular opposition within the emerging library movement? ROBERT FOSTER marks this year's Darwin anniversaries by delving into library history

AUTOMATIC SELECTION



VICTORIAN PUBLIC LIBRARIES AND DARWIN'S BOOKS ON EVOLUTION

A great deal has been written on the reception of Darwinism, particularly in the nineteenth century. Given that this was a time when public libraries in Britain were developing, I wondered what sort of impact Darwin's books had in that setting. However, Darwin's two most controversial books ***Origin of species*** and ***Descent of man*** were published prior to the formation of the Library Association, and probably for this reason there is little in the way of library-based literature to draw upon. The British Library has printed catalogues of some public or 'free' libraries from the 1860s and 70s, and they suggest that these books were acquired, certainly from around 1870 onwards. But catalogues on their own are just snapshots, and it seems unwise to draw too many conclusions.

So I have concentrated on the period 1885-1897, when the Library Association's mouthpiece was first ***The Library Chronicle*** and then ***The Library***. This was some time after the initial impact, but for many people it was quite possibly the first time that they were able to get their hands on copies and read them for themselves. When ***Origin of species*** first appeared in 1859, there were no more than twenty-five free library authorities, most of them with one library only. Over the next twenty years

that figure would increase significantly, but large parts of the country were still not served at all, including most of Greater London and most towns in Scotland. This situation was largely transformed between 1885 and 1897, putting far more copies of Darwin's books into circulation. Added to this, more people could read: literacy climbed from 75% of males and 65% of females in 1861, to 93% for both in 1891 (1).

Darwin's material seemed to have been something which librarians liked to have in their collections. One Library Association address in 1885 called *Origin of species* 'a really sound book' compared to some of the fictional works libraries had to acquire at the time. (2) One of the major talking points of the profession in the Victorian era was the public's overwhelming preference for fiction over non-fiction, and it clearly bothered some librarians. The esteem in which Darwin was held was shown at a meeting of the Library Association in 1895, when conversely Darwin's fondness for a good story was used as an argument for not taking the problem of fiction loans too seriously.(3)

Librarians would have been pleased then that Darwin's books were well-read. In the first six months of opening in 1888-1889, Belfast Free Library found that *Descent of man* was borrowed twelve times, *Origin of species* fourteen times and *Voyage of HMS Beagle* seventeen times. These were not the highest figures in their list – Thomas à Kempis' *Imitation of Christ* had a figure of twenty nine. A book on playing the piano also had a figure of fourteen issues. Even so it looks as though Darwin was a relatively popular non-fiction author there. (4) A similar situation was observed at Harborne Branch Library in Birmingham where it was noted that *Descent of man* was one of the more popular non-fiction titles in 1895, along with Lubbock's *Pleasures of Life*, Mill's *Political Economy*, Ruskin's *Sesame and Lilies*, Cross's *George Eliot's Life*, Hughes's *A Week's tramp in Dickens Land*, and Farrar's *Life of Christ*. (5)

Further endorsement came from the People's Palace Library in Mile End. A report given to the Library Association in 1890 read: "*It was not long before we discovered which books would be most popular, and here I have to record an astonishing fact, viz., that Darwin's Descent of Man and the Origin of Species were, as they still continue to be, amongst those in the greatest demand. Fiction, as usual, is first in the field of popularity—it could not be otherwise amongst our class of readers.*"(6) The People's Palace Library is noteworthy because apart from having only 8,000 volumes, it depended very largely on donations. It was not a Free Library under the 1855 Act, but acted as a public library within the People's Palace organisation.

These examples also show that Darwin's books were part of a standard stock collection, each library having them from the day of opening or soon after. Aberdeen was another. When it advertised its first Free Library in the *Aberdeen Weekly Journal* in 1886, it used Darwin to show how the catalogue worked: "*The works of each author are arranged in alphabetical*

order under the name of the author, wherever or however known. Thus all the works in this Library attributable to Darwin appear in order under his name.” (7) Darwin was clearly an essential author for any library to have, and had a high profile amongst librarians and readers alike.

There is one extract, though, from **The Library**, which suggests pro-evolution books might be excluded on religious grounds. It comes from 1893, and was written by a representative of the **National Reformer**. **National Reformer** had been asked by **The Library** to suggest some rationalist books to go in public libraries, and the first suggestion read: “*The works of such representatives of evolutionary thought as Darwin, Spencer, Haeckel, Huxley, Wallace, Romanes, and Weissmann, ought to be in all public libraries irrespective of questions of orthodoxy and heterodoxy. Such works do not need to be pushed on 'Freethought' grounds : but Freethinkers should see to it that they are not excluded from any public library by clerical influence.*” (8)

Some clergy, though, were quite positive about having Darwin’s books on evolution made available. In 1894, at the opening of Kilburn Public Library, the address was given by the Rev J.E.C. Welldon, who was then Headmaster at Harrow. He said that in cultivating the skill of rapid reading, “*most readers would find time to diligently study the Bible, Pilgrim’s Progress, Homer, Dante, Shakespeare, Goethe, Gibbon’s Decline and Fall, Darwin’s Origin of Species and others of the first rank.*” (9) So he not only expected the book to be in the library; for him it was recommended reading. Whether he wholly agreed with Darwin we are not told – Welldon was regarded as an evangelical - but it appears he regarded **Origin of species** as a classic, and part of a canon of literature. The **Boys Own Paper**, published by the Religious Tract Society and taken by many libraries, had also called **Origin of species** a ‘great book’ in an 1882 article, without accepting all of Charles Darwin’s conclusions. (10)

Clergy who sat on library committees (which approved book purchases) must have been similarly comfortable with Darwin. Between its opening in 1868 and 1871, Nottingham had either two or three clergy on its library committee and it had a copy of **Origin of species** when it opened and obtained **Descent of man** as soon as it appeared in 1871. Kensington’s committee chairman was a clergyman when the library opened in 1891: it had all Darwin’s books on evolution, and ten titles by Darwin in total. Edinburgh’s first committee in 1890 had a prominent clergyman and had duplicates of the two evolution books. On this evidence, the **National Reformer** had little cause for concern, certainly as regards Darwin. Perhaps their complaint was a more general one about the way they felt their cause was treated: the writer of the 1893 article added that library committees *might be more* “disposed to meet Freethinkers with some of the liberality usually shown to theological readers.” (11)

Part of the appeal of Darwin seems to have been the man himself. The **Oxford Dictionary of National Biography** says that when he died “Agnostic

scientists, Liberal politicians, and broad-churchmen joined in paying homage to one who, though an unbeliever, symbolized England's success in conquering nature and civilizing the globe during Victoria's reign. They consolidated Darwin's most enduring image. In their speeches, sermons, and memoirs, the Kentish squire and patriarch became the iconic scientist—detached, objective, a lone seeker after truth, released by personal wealth and stoic dedication in the face of long-continued illness to bestow priceless truths on humanity. By the end of the century everyone wanted this Darwin as an ally.” (12) The Mitchell Library in Glasgow found that biographies of Darwin were in significant demand. (13) This interest in Darwin would naturally have been associated with interest in his writing. The *ODNB* goes on: “From secularists to Salvationists ... efforts continued to enlist his authority by appealing to his life and works.”

However, although catalogues reflected this popularity, the larger libraries in particular also kept books which gave an alternative or opposing viewpoint. Sion College, which ran a general library primarily for clergymen, bought not only all Darwin's books but most of the responses as well. It is possible that in the large libraries these books were acquired simply as through a policy of expanding collections as much as possible. Leeds Public Library had such an objective. (14) However, on occasions an indexer had clearly been to some trouble to reflect the evolution debate. Edinburgh's 1891 catalogue, which had no fewer than seventeen titles by Darwin, had under the subject heading '*Darwinism*' a sub-heading '*fallacies of*.' That the term '*fallacies*' was used rather than say '*criticism*' is intriguing, but it may simply reflect the approach taken by the material included there. This section also included a reference to critical articles in the *Edinburgh Review*, a reminder that individuals could find responses in journals and magazines if they knew where to look. In principle then, readers would have been able to see other viewpoints on evolution at their library.

Today, one review on Google Books refers to *Origin of species* as '*probably the best-known, least read book*' (15) and most people will now form their opinions of Darwin from other sources, such as textbooks. Secondary sources must surely have played their part in late Victorian Britain too, but many people did also read *Origin of species* for themselves. One wonders what they made of it. The small amount of library-based literature on the topic suggests this book (and *Descent of man*) was read for a range of reasons. 'Freethinkers' regarded it as a textbook for a secular age; others read it out of admiration for Darwin. There is also a strong likelihood that some read it like any other classic work, as a formidable argument to be reflected on; whilst some may have wanted to tackle Darwin's views. Probably some were just curious. Whatever the reason, Victorian libraries provided a means for general readers from all backgrounds to study something which obviously mattered to many.

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What does it mean to be a health librarian in an age of 'Evidence-based Healthcare' and constant political and technological change? What opportunities are there for raising awareness of the Christian faith in the context of a hospital library? **STUART GLOVER** provides an insider's guide to an important sector of library and information work

ISSUES IN NHS LIBRARIES



If you watch the news, especially the political news, the most common phrase you've heard in the last six months must be "*credit crunch*". However cast your mind back before then. Some of the most common phrases from government ministers were those explaining how much money has been ploughed into health and education. I'll let teachers and academic librarians speak for the latter, but certainly a lot of money has been thrown at the NHS in the last decade. It is also fair to say, if my experience over the last five and a bit years in two different NHS Libraries is typical, that for once libraries have generally seen their fair share of that money.

As with a lot of the extra NHS cash, quite a lot has gone on staffing. I remember when I was applying for jobs in mid-to-late 2002, after finishing at library school, that all over the UK, there were plenty of opportunities in NHS Libraries. Indeed it is probably that financial injection into the NHS that gave me the opportunity to get into health librarianship in the first place.

So what do NHS Librarians do? Well let's clear up a myth that is

often made by people I speak to (I'm sure other librarians wouldn't make it!). Hospital librarians do not go around the wards with a trolley of books offering a tatty Catherine Cookson to each patient. Some do go around the wards, but we'll come to them later.

We live in the age of 'Evidence-based healthcare'. That means that clinicians are expected to use published evidence from studies and clinical trials, alongside their own expertise and knowledge, to carry out patient care. NHS Libraries are here to facilitate that process: to house and supply the best quality medical literature possible. We also help to assist students training to be doctors, nurses or allied health professionals. Many NHS Libraries will allow access to any NHS staff, including cleaners and porters, but the clinical staff are usually the main user group.

The duties we carry out will be familiar to many of you. I trained as a librarian, I call myself a librarian and I work in a library – therefore most of my day is spent doing library stuff! We buy and process books, we maintain the library management system, we answer queries, we carry out literature searches for people, we train people how to use the electronic resources, we administer the electronic resources ... oh, how we administer the electronic resources!

The issues I want to mention in this article are perhaps things you may not be aware of. Perhaps they are unique to NHS Librarianship, although they may well not be!

Firstly we come to Clinical Librarians. These are fully qualified librarians who are sent out into the wonderful world of the hospital. The idea is that they take information directly into the clinical setting. So while I sit in a library, they are, as often as possible, out on ward rounds and at clinical team meetings. They prompt staff to put evidence at the heart of their work and to try to create a culture of questioning and learning. *University Hospitals of Leicester NHS Trust*, for whom I work, were one of the pioneers in this area, and many other NHS Trusts have since established similar teams of librarians.

The other main issue for librarians to deal with in the NHS is that of constant change. Now, I realise that I have already said that I wanted to focus on issues that may not affect other sectors of the profession, and change is one that comes with virtually every territory, but in the NHS generally, and in the provision of on-line resources in particular, it has now reached farcical proportions.

The problem is that as autonomous as NHS Libraries are, we have to deal with a ridiculous number of stakeholders. It is not just the NHS Trusts themselves, there are other local NHS Trusts, local Universities,

Strategic Health Authorities, Workforce Deaneries, the Department of Health, the NHS Institute for Innovation and Improvement, NHS Connecting for Health and the National Institute for Health and Clinical Evidence (NICE) to name only a selection. All of them, at one time or another, want to influence policy and decisions whether locally, regionally or nationally that can ultimately affect the work of NHS Librarians.

For example, when I started work in health libraries, the electronic resources that were available to the whole NHS were brought together as the National electronic Library for Health (NeLH). The main bibliographic databases (e.g. Medline, Embase, Cinahl) were provided through Ovid. Then we learnt that the provision of the same databases would be through Thompson Dialog. This of course, meant retraining all of our users.

Then the National electronic Library for Health was done away with and a new web-site was created, called the National Library for Health (NLH). The people behind it decided to stop buying in on-line resources and instead to create their own. We lost access to ZETOC (journal tables of contents) and found we had nothing to replace it. NLH eventually developed MyJournals which acted as an A-Z list of journals and a table of contents service. However at the end of 2008 they launched a new MyJournals service which was an A-Z list but not a table of contents service. They have therefore subscribed to ZETOC again. The main databases are no longer provided through Thompson Dialog, now we get them through Ovid, but the interface for them is through the NLH so we had to retrain everyone again! In April 2009, we know that NLH is being done away with and NHS Evidence (hosted by the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE)) will take its place. We have not heard much about this new service but one thing I believe to be true is that they will no longer develop their own resources but will happily accredit third party resources as being of a suitable standard.

By the way, if you didn't follow all that, don't worry there is no test at the end!

One collection that we have at Leicester that I don't think is typical of NHS Libraries (but will be familiar to the public librarians amongst you) is our "Time Out" collection. It is a very small collection of non-medical fiction and non-fiction books. I highlight the size of the collection in case some worry that it is trying to be a rival to public libraries in Leicestershire. It is not and never could be that, but it can be used to tempt NHS staff into the library who otherwise wouldn't know we

were here.

Being a Christian and having responsibility for occasionally stocking the collection on one site, I was keen to have at least one book that could be a witness for the Lord. But which one could I choose that would appeal to the wide range of people working in the NHS? Eventually I chose ***What Darwin Didn't Know*** by Geoffrey Simmons (2004, Harvest House Publishers, ISBN 978-0736913133). This was not just because of the two hundredth anniversary of Charles Darwin's birth, but also because I believe that the creation-evolution debate has popular appeal and is one of the fault lines of debate within and outside the church. However I was also concerned about being fair and balanced. I don't know why, I guess it's just a weakness of mine! Anyway I decided to also buy a book what gave a counter argument. That led to one man, Professor Richard Dawkins, and while not specifically about evolution, I decided to buy his latest offering, ***The God Delusion*** (2007, Black Swan, ISBN 978-0552773317).

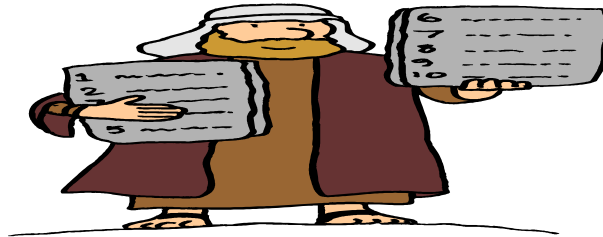
I did think about this decision for quite a while, and the Bible verse that came to my mind was Philippians chapter 1, verse 18 which reads "*The important thing is that in every way, whether from false motives or true, Christ is preached. And because of this I rejoice.*" Now I admit to taking this verse out of context, but I think the principle holds true. In that verse the Apostle Paul reminds us that even when people preach the gospel out of false motives, to cause trouble or to glorify themselves rather than God, the Holy Spirit is still able to use that message to bring people to faith. I realised that even if someone did take the ***God Delusion*** out and read it, the Holy Spirit would be able to use Professor Dawkins' words to convince them that there indeed was a God! Indeed recently at our church we baptised a girl who had come to faith in part through listening to a CD by the rap artist Kanye West. Although West does or has claimed to be a Christian, it is still a wonderful reminder that God does sometimes have some very unexpected ways to call people to himself.

This article has only touched the surface of NHS Librarianship. If anyone is interested in a career in this sector, I would thoroughly recommend it and would be happy to give any further information they wanted.

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Changing working patterns have led to increasing pressure to work on Sundays. RICK PEARL considers some biblical passages that stress the importance of a day of rest and worship and gives advice on how we should respond to Christians whose understanding of Sunday observance may differ from our own

SUNDAY



HOLY DAY OR WHOLLY INCONVENIENT?

British society has changed considerably during the course of the last hundred years. Advances in technology have increased our life expectancy and material standard of living as well as changing both our work and leisure experiences. The average amount of hours worked per person per year has fallen from two thousand six hundred and twenty four in 1913 to one thousand four hundred and eighty nine in 1998 (1).

At the same time, the nature of the working week has changed with a considerable increase in Sunday working since the ***Sunday Trading Act*** 1994. Many more leisure activities and professional sporting occasions are also now held on Sundays. These changes pose many questions for twenty-first century Christians and churches. How should we as individual Christians or groups respond to increased demands to work on Sundays? How can churches support people who have to work on this day? What should we do with all this extra leisure time? What is the Sabbath really about in 2009 anyway?

The Bible speaks of a day of rest as early as the second chapter. '*And God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it he rested from all the work of creating that he had done*' (Genesis 2.3). Several further passages stress God's desire for the Israelites to rest, to focus on him and to remember his actions in creation and in saving them from Egypt (2).

John Piper, Pastor for Preaching at Bethlehem Baptist Church in Minnesota, concludes that these verses show how we are dependent on God for everything: '*All things are from him and through him and to him. Lest we*

ever forget this and begin to take our strength and thought and work too seriously, we should keep one day in seven to cease from our labors and focus on God as the source of all blessing.’ (3)

Exodus 16.23 shows God’s desire for his people to depend on and trust in him. The Israelites are stuck in the Desert of Sin, a vast and hostile environment of sand and stone. God provides food for them on a daily basis, a thin bread like substance that appears each morning. They are only allowed to collect what they need for that day, if they try to take too much and keep it until morning it becomes full of maggots. Yet on the sixth day, they are allowed to take double the amount they gather on the other days to last them over the day of rest – on this day the maggots do not appear. They had to learn to trust God to provide for all their needs. In our Western society with our twenty-four hour supermarkets, have we perhaps lost our sense of total and utter dependence on God for food, shelter and indeed our very existence?

God shows the importance of rest in other parts of the Bible. Jesus often withdrew to solitary places to spend time in prayer with his father and on one occasion encouraged his disciples to come away to a quiet place and get some rest (Mark 6.31). In a particularly dramatic example of the need for rest, the prophet Elijah experienced the highs and lows of a life spent serving God (1 Kings 19).

Elijah has just seen God send fire from heaven, has organised the slaughter of four hundred and fifty false prophets and with the assistance of God’s power has beaten the King of Israel back to the city of Jezreel in a six-mile man versus chariot race. Not an average day at the workplace, even for a prophet. One would imagine that seeing God at work in such a way would increase his faith. Yet only a day or so later he is sitting under a broom tree praying that he might die. It is only after two sleeps and two meals provided by an angel that he is fit both physically and mentally to continue his ministry. Even with all he has experienced, Elijah needed a good rest and a proper feed.

God also tells the people of Judah that a properly observed Sabbath will lead to joy in him: *‘If you keep your feet from breaking the Sabbath and from doing as you please on my holy day, if you call the Sabbath a delight and the Lord’s day honourable, and if you honour it by not going your own way and not doing as you please or speaking idle words, then you will find your joy in the Lord.’ (4)*

John Piper questions whether we really enjoy that which God meant for us to enjoy on the Sabbath – joy in knowing God – and suggests that *‘The measure of your love for God is the measure of the joy you get in focusing on him on the day of rest.’ (3)* Do we really identify with Paul’s desperate desire to know God better? (5).

Moving forward to the New Testament, Jesus attracted the wrath of the Pharisees when his disciples picked and ate ears of corn on the Sabbath. He

added to their outrage when he went straight from there into a synagogue and healed a man with a shrivelled hand. The Pharisees had established thirty nine categories of actions forbidden on the Sabbath. They were so focused on their laws that they'd lost any sense of compassion and their indignation at Jesus' breaking of their rules led them to plot to kill the very creator of the Sabbath itself. Jesus exposed their hypocrisy and gave the Sabbath back to the people as a blessing rather than a burden (6).

In summary, the Bible teaches that God wants us to take time out each week to rest, to find joy in him, to remember what he has done for us and to realise our utter dependence on him. It clearly says that this is for our benefit.

Even in our secular society research suggests that we are naturally wired to need or desire this. An NOP consumer poll found that 87% of people think it is important for family stability and community life to have a common day off each week (7). Another NOP survey of one thousand adults in March 2008 revealed that 88% of people did not notice, did not realise, or were not bothered at all by big shops being closed all day on Easter Sunday (8). Research from Australia (9) found evidence that suggested most Australian families are suffering time pressure resulting from their work and that long and atypical working hours (evenings and weekends) are associated with '*negative health outcomes*' and '*strained family relationships*.'

The reality is however that more and more people in Britain are faced with the prospect of having to work on Sundays. Parents have to consider whether to allow their children to join sporting events that would previously have been held on Saturdays and professional sportsmen and women are often unable to pursue their career without playing on Sundays. The sporting world of athlete Eric Liddell and cricketer Jack Hobbs in the 1920s and 1930s is considerably different from that of rugby player Jason Robinson or triple-jumper Jonathan Edwards in more recent times.

Ros Turner from the Christian organisation *Transform Work UK* (www.transformworkuk.org) has just returned from two weeks at *Spring Harvest* in Minehead. She reports that many of the people who stopped at the TWUK stand spoke of difficulties caused by Sunday working such as not being able to attend church and feeling isolated from other Christians. Often people didn't want to work on Sundays but felt they had no choice, especially in the current financial climate. Some believed that it was OK for those in the emergency services to work on Sundays but perhaps not for those in other professions. Yet anecdotal evidence suggests that many people who don't officially work on Sundays, such as teachers or social workers, often end up doing so just to keep up with the paperwork. How would Jesus want us to respond to this, he who related to and indeed challenged the culture of his day?

A search of the Internet reveals the wide variety of opinions held by Christians about the nature of a Christian holy day. Many consider Sunday to be the Christian Sabbath, taking this from the example of the early church

in Acts 20.7 and 1 Corinthians 16.2 which both suggest the first Christians met together on the first day of the week – Sunday. They also cite the fact that Jesus rose on a Sunday which is often the reason given why the church started meeting on this day.

Others quote Romans 14 in which Paul says that: *‘One man considers one day more sacred than another; another man considers every day alike. Each one should be fully convinced in his own mind.’*

The fact that the great apostle Paul does not explicitly say which day should be treated as sacred leads some to say that it is no longer necessary to ‘do church’ only on Sundays. Indeed *Christians in Sport* report that there is an *‘increasing trend in large American churches to have parallel services on a Saturday evening.’* (10)

One church in Swansea, Oasis church based in Gowerton, started to meet on a Saturday morning when their venue, the local Conservative club, reclaimed the room on Sundays. According to Steve Dyer, one of the leaders, they have found that several people are now attending who have to work on Sundays and would not otherwise be able to gather regularly with other Christians.

Ros Turner highlights the importance of workplace and professional Christian groups for those who find it difficult to meet with other Christians in church. She recalls talking to one man who works shifts and rarely is able to attend church but whom has now met up with other Christians in the workplace to worship and pray together.

In some places therefore, Christians are starting to explore the possibilities of meeting on other days or in other ways to enable more people to gather together to worship and to reach out to their friends and neighbours who are not Christians. Other groups retain the importance of Sunday observance. Perhaps the most important consideration is that whatever our view, we need to refrain from judging those of a different perspective and love them instead. Colossians 2.16 says that: *‘Therefore do not let anyone judge you by what you eat or drink, or with regard to a religious festival, a New Moon celebration or a Sabbath day.’*

Paul also says that we will all have to give an account of ourselves to God and therefore *‘let us stop passing judgement on one another.’* (11). We Christians have found it all too easy to criticise each other over the centuries and it does little to enhance our witness in the world which is important when we consider Jesus’ command to *‘go and make disciples.’* (12).

In conclusion, whatever situation we are facing right now, we need to remember certain truths. Jesus has been given authority over everything in heaven and on earth and that includes our personal circumstances (13). We each need time weekly if not daily to rest, to re-focus on Jesus, to find our joy in him and to remember our total dependence on him. In these times of increasing worldwide persecution of Christians, including recent stories in our own country of people being sacked or suspended for talking of their faith or

offering to pray for others, it is even more important that we protect our time spent with God and with other Christians. As for how, when and where we do these things, as well as what our reaction should be when faced with the possibility of being asked to work on Sundays, perhaps it is time for individuals, churches and the wider Christian community to prayerfully debate and consider these issues.

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Which aspects of library and information work might provide a useful background for candidates for the Christian ministry? JOHN URQUHART describes the life-changing consequences of accepting an invitation from his local church minister

COFFEE, CALLING AND THE CHRISTIAN LIBRARIAN



The cup of coffee

I often jokingly tell people to be careful before accepting a cup of coffee from a minister. For me, the consequences were life-changing.

In December 2001, the minister of my home church in Edinburgh asked me, after the rehearsal for the church nativity play, if I would like to join him for a coffee. It was not unusual for Grant to invite people back to his family home to socialise after church events, and, as he was a friend as well as a pastor, I did not suspect an intention behind the invitation.

The conversation did not so much drift as take a planned turn. There was something he wanted me to consider. He said he would never tell anyone that they had a definite call to full-time ministry, but, based on what he saw and on what other people told him, he wondered if I might explore the possibility.

I was already involved in church life as an elder. As well as visiting people, I occasionally gave a talk under Grant's oversight. I was also a joint leader of a house group and a volunteer at *Scripture Union* camps and with a school-based children's club run by *Scottish Crusaders* (now *Urban Saints Scotland*).

I was happy to be involved in such things, though I had not taken them on without thought and prayer. I was aware (not only through my own experience but through the affirmation of others) that God seemed to be developing certain gifts in me, but I did not consider that this was anything other than the necessary equipping for what I was doing. On a rational level, I believed (and still do) that all Christians are called to serve God and others, with what gifts and opportunities they have. Emotionally, I was quite content to remain a volunteer and wondered if it would be a kind of *hubris* to take on a more extensive role. Might I not be trying to over-stretch myself: to attempt too much with too little?

In other ways, I was ready for a change. I had worked for nearly ten years in the Information Service at *Age Concern Scotland* and was beginning to long for a fresh challenge. I had taken on the responsibility of co-ordinating the organisation's growing web-site, in addition to developing its library service, as well as sharing work with other members of the team in answering enquiries and sometimes writing information papers. We had recently migrated from one library management system to another, for which I had done most of the preparatory work.

This expanded workload when combined with staff cutbacks had made my role more difficult to fulfil. That is not to say that a difficult work situation should be sufficient in itself to propel someone into pastoral ministry. However, it did mean that I had gone from reasonable contentment to a more unsettled state: a state in which I was already willing to consider other options, including Grant's suggestions, even though I had up till then thought that I would be looking for similar work in the charity sector.

Although I had at various times in life, sought to be open to serving God, and had sometimes responded in faith to fresh opportunities of service, I do not think I had ever seriously thought that pastoral ministry might be the right way forward, nor was I sure that it was now. My late father had been a minister, and from a very

early age I had been used to fending off the much-asked question, 'Do you want to be a minister like your daddy?' 'I think it would depend on God calling me to do that...' had become my standard response, but as the years went on I had no compelling sense of it being likely to happen.

The cautious explorer

The nativity play talk went well, with a strong personal sense of God's help and encouragement, so I decided to take a first step forward. I went the following spring to an Enquirers' conference: a day-long event run periodically by the Church of Scotland to allow people to explore different kind of ministries, and hear what they entailed. It was as engaging to meet other people at the same stage as myself, to share experiences and pray, as it was to listen to the official speakers. I was surprised to discover another leader from my *Crusaders* group had also gone to the conference, which gave me another person with whom to discuss things.

I was by turns excited, by turns diffident, though I took the next step of a period of open enquiry, taking on a voluntary, spare-time placement with a parish minister in a city-centre church. As the year came to an end I moved from enquiry to field assessment: a six-month period of trial (again using free days and spare time) culminating in a 'local review'. (This would decide whether I should be allowed to proceed to a national assessment conference.). In that year, I had an extra allocation of holidays after having worked at *Age Concern Scotland* for ten years, which helped in allowing me to use the placement to the full without leading to exhaustion. I had to preach and take part in leading worship in an unfamiliar church and accompany someone I was just getting to know on various pastoral assignments, as well as engage in discussion with Andrew, the parish minister and field assessment co-ordinator, and Shirley, my local presbytery representative.

Reading and reflection, as well as practical involvement, were to be a part of the field experience. Michael Green's *Adventure of*

Faith: Reflections on Fifty Years of Christian Service encouraged me. He wrote that as a volunteer in young people's camps (not unlike the ones in which I had been involved) he had learned more about personal evangelism and nurture than in other formative settings. At some point (possibly later), I read ***The Way of Life: A Theology of Christian Vocation*** by Gary Badcock. This helped me put the idea of 'call' in biblical and theological perspective, as opposed to the rather vague, somewhat romantic, ideas which can persist in the Christian imagination.

During field assessment, I was also supposed to keep a reflective journal of my experiences: a discipline I found hard. I am not one of life's natural journalers, though I have always enjoyed reading John Wesley's ***Journal***. I would often resort to sending an e-mail to a friend and then cutting and pasting it into the journal rather than trying to write an entry from scratch, which seemed a rather impersonal way of communicating thoughts and feelings.

The scripture that most spoke to my situation told of the servant in the parable who was afraid to risk the loss of what he had been given, and so hid it away. (Mt 25:25) There were other gentle encouragements along the way: I was surprised by the number of people who said to me, when they heard about my placement, that they had often thought that I would make a good minister. More surprising were those whom I had not told about it and who said something similar.

When the standard reports from my co-ordinator and the psychologist had come in, together with my report on the experience, we held the local review, which produced another report drawing on all the others and what was said in the review interview.

The more challenging phase

The local review passed me on to a national assessment conference: two nights away in a retreat centre, where two groups of five applicants met a battery of practical exercises, interviews

and written work, interspersed with corporate worship and time to relax. We also had to give a presentation, take questions afterwards, and interact with the other applicants in our group.

An added complication was that my line manager's position had become vacant at *Age Concern Scotland*, and she had encouraged me to apply for her former post. I had not told my colleagues about the process I had undertaken. I judged it too risky to share information about something that seemed so uncertain and which might cast doubt on my commitment to my current work. So I found myself having to apply for the Information Manager's position before I knew the result of the church process, in case it all came to nothing. The benefit was that it made me realise just how much I wanted to be accepted for ministry training, rather than to achieve promotion in my workplace. It had been easy to become distanced from that desire in the hurdle-clearing course of repeated external assessments, and the interior journey of self-assessment and reflection.

The letter of acceptance came just in time, and I was able to withdraw before the interview and to explain to my former manager and my other referee why I was doing this.

Having cleared the last hurdle, and now possessing a copy of the most complete report anyone has ever written on me in my life, I was able to apply to Edinburgh Presbytery to be accepted as a candidate and to confirm my place at Edinburgh University to read Divinity. That the report was thorough in detailing my perceived weaknesses (as well as giving more positive observations) was strangely affirming. It was not that I had had a good day and managed to fool them into letting me through, but that they saw me fairly clearly and still concluded that I should be accepted for training. The nagging doubt that God could not possibly intend 'someone like me' to enter this kind of work is something that can resurface from time to time; so it is good to know that the church assessors affirmed my call as a flawed human being, not simply as a bundle of likely qualities for ministry, pushed to the fore.

Did I say the last hurdle had been cleared? Life is not so simple. Doors did continue to open, unlikely sources of funding materialised, but hardships and trials also arose unannounced. At the end my first term's studies, my mother began to show evident

signs of developing dementia, not as a gentle forgetfulness, but as an aggressive paranoia, marked by strong delusions and erratic behaviour. In the middle of a very intensive programme of academic study, church placements, twice-yearly residential training conferences and a portfolio of written assignments for the Ministries Council, I found myself dealing with the hardest personal difficulties of my life. I had to make painful adjustments, take hard decisions and learn a new way of communicating with my mother, who was sometimes like an angry stranger. I say these things, not to blame my mother, who was and is unaware of her own illness, but because I have usually found that only those who had experienced a similar situation really understood what I was going through, and also because I would not want anyone to think that there is always an easy way forward when we seek to obey God's leading.

My formal training for ministry of word and sacrament is now complete, though God's shaping and training still continues. My mother, now calm and contented, lives in a nearby nursing home. I am still dealing with aftershock of these events. At the time of writing, I have almost finished clearing my mother's flat in order to try and sell it (as part of her assets) for the care home fees. I have over time begun to understand my rather demanding role and responsibilities as my mother's financial and welfare guardian, after a long legal process to bring that about. I have taken a temporary locum's position in an Edinburgh church to give me some time to devote to the flat-clearing, and 'to keep my hand in', while I look for a more permanent position in the church.

Tracing connections

I was asked when this article was suggested, to think of any areas of continuity or similarity between my previous occupation and my current one. Three are obvious: both are serving professions, helping people to fulfil goals; the use of various electronic tools for organisation and communication in one role is readily transferable to the other; and my experience in the charity sector of working with

a mixture of paid staff and volunteers is something one also encounters in most churches.

There are some areas of overlap in specific subjects. One of my first places I gained library experience was in a Bible college library, so some of the more wordy theological terms were already familiar to me when I started my studies. One of the bigger projects I was engaged in at *Age Concern Scotland* was collecting relevant materials and compiling a series of reading lists for the charity's Spiritual Care Group.¹ I have also recently been involved with an inter-church debt action group, for which one of my tasks was to produce a list of sources of information and advice on debt and money management for people in S.E. Edinburgh, which brought me back to my old days of producing information resources, as well as being one of the subjects covered in the Library collection.²

Other connections are less straightforward. One of the last external presentations I did for *Age Concern Scotland* was to a talk to a pre-retirement course for staff from the *Scottish Court Service*. I had already been accepted for ministry training, although I had not mentioned this to the course participants. They broke for lunch and one of the women on the course (from a Free Church congregation in the Highlands, as it turned out) came forward to thank me for my talk: "*I maybe shouldn't say this,*" she said, "*as I don't know your background, but you would make a good minister.*" "*Strangely enough...*"

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¹ This group shared some of the same movers and shakers as a later independent body called Faith in Older People (www.faithinolderpeople.org.uk). As far as I know, they inherited the spiritual care collection from the former Age Concern Scotland Library.

² The Age Concern Scotland Library unfortunately no longer exists as such (together with my old post) after a major organisational restructuring some time after I left, and the charity has itself recently merged with Help the Aged in Scotland. A new name and a new brand should be announced later this year. For further information, see: www.ageconcernandhelptheagedscotland.org.uk

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