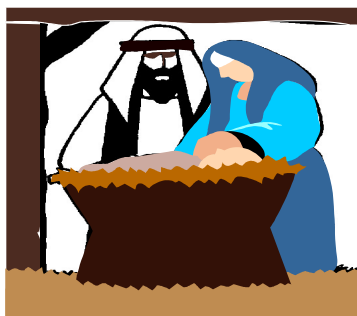


Winter 2011

CHRISTIAN LIBRARIAN



The Journal of the
Librarians' Christian Fellowship

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- ***PAST PERCEPTIONS AND FUTURE STRATEGIES***
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EVENTS AT A GLANCE

●SATURDAY 28 APRIL 2012: ANNUAL CONFERENCE

Chancellor's Room, Hughes Parry Hall, Cartwright Gardens, London, from 10.30.a.m. Speakers: **Michael Coveney, Sara Batts, Gordon Harris, John Wickenden.** Details: p. 7.

●SATURDAY 6 OCTOBER 2012: ANNUAL PUBLIC LECTURE

Speaker: **Robert Hicks**, *Creative Publishing*, on *Lost Letters and Early Writings from the First Century – from a publisher's point of view.* Bristol (To be confirmed) See p. 7.

PRAYER NOTES FOR WINTER 2011

PLEASE PRAY FOR

●The work of LCF's executive committee as it plans for the future and considers ideas put forward by the Fellowship's Review Group.

●LCF's programme of activities in 2012 and especially the annual conference planned for 28 April 2012.

●Christian publishers as they respond to demands for books in electronic form and as they take advantage of new opportunities for publishing their books in the People's Republic of China.

●The work of the *Arts Centre Group* and its individual members as they complete their fortieth anniversary year.

●The ministries of the Bishop of Exeter, the Rt. Rev. **Michael Langrish** and of our recent lecturer **Dave Roberts**, currently working in France but continuing with his wider role as a speaker and writer.

●The work of other Christian professional groups and for individual Christians who may find themselves in difficulty in their workplaces.

●Library and information staff in an era of reductions in spending, cutbacks, re-organisations, redundancies and other challenges.



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*. Address: 34
Thurlestone Avenue, Ilford, Essex, IG3 9DU, England. Tel. 020 8599 1310. E-mail
secretary@librarianscf.org.uk

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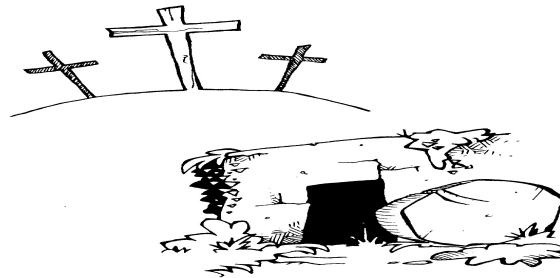
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- 43: John Waddington-Feather: All Change**

THE FIRST WORD

MARGARET KEELING calls for a re-examination of what needs to be protected in library and information services and ponders questions raised by a recent visit to the Garden Tomb and other holy sites in Israel

PAST PERCEPTIONS AND FUTURE STRATEGIES



On 1 October 2011 the Arts Council took over responsibility for libraries and museums. Its report, ***Culture, knowledge and Understanding***¹ looks at how libraries and museums can be incorporated into Arts Council England over the next ten years in order to provide ‘great museums and libraries for everyone’. In her introduction, Dame Liz Forgan (Arts Council Chair) feels the ‘alchemy is in the connection between the past, the present and the future... between different aspects of the cultural life of the nation and its citizens’. While it’s easy to assent to the high level aspirations of excellence, advocacy, sustainability, and leadership, the reality of practically working together for change will be challenging.

Perceptions and reality – as library and information professionals we have a distinctive view of libraries' unique contribution. We may need to re-examine our perceptions of what is unique and must be protected, and where we can let go of the past in the interest of working together

¹ *Culture, knowledge and understanding :great museums and libraries for everyone*’ can be downloaded from www.artscouncil.org.uk

on future directions.

I've just got back from visiting Jerusalem, Galilee and the Dead Sea – a holiday which proved to be a time of uncovering and challenging some long standing perceptions in terms of present reality – and what is reality as presented to tourists or pilgrims? Certainly we were well aware that the preservation and veneration of 'holy sites' was likely to obscure as well as illuminate the Bible narrative

We were in Jerusalem for Yom Kippur when the city literally shuts down into silence as Jewish laws of what can be done are imposed. Just before that we experienced the continuous murmur of prayers at the Western Wall when as many as possible hurried to get there to atone for their sins before the end of the year.

There was sadness too – looking at the stone sealed Golden Gates still awaiting the coming of the Messiah above the Jewish cemetery just below the walls – a prime spot for the Jews who wanted to be resurrected first. In contrast, the Garden Tomb was an oasis of stillness, and the message on the back of the little door into the sepulchre '*He is not here, He is Risen*' said all that was needed.

A city where the past controls the present and is reflected in the growing pressures on the mostly English volunteers who run it – restrictions being imposed on length of visas, and number of visits- '*they don't want us here*'.

The words seen around the city, '*Pray for the peace of Jerusalem*', also reminded us of those who need our prayers for the future – the Arab Christians who are rejected by all groups, the Palestinian gardener who drives in at 3.00 am to avoid being arrested for coming to work there.

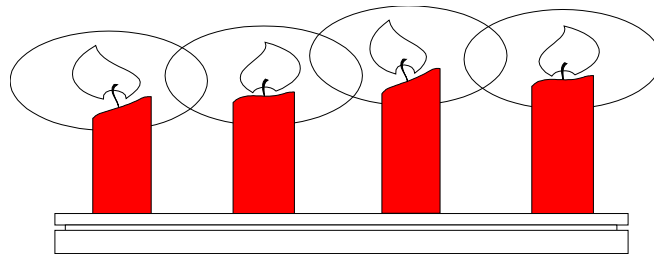
Perceptions, realities – so many situations where it's easy to be over confident in what we 'know' and not really engage with the complexity of the influences affecting our lives, work and witness. But, we face future uncertainties grounded and confident in the One who died and is risen.

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

THE SECOND WORD

LOUISE MANNERS enjoys the exquisite craftsmanship of the medieval Church during recent visits to the British Museum, Wales and Chester Cathedral

SAINTS, RELICS AND DEVOTION



The former reading room of the *British Museum* was an extremely holy place during the ***Treasures of Heaven: saints, relics and devotion in medieval Europe*** exhibition. Relics being exhibited were from the British Museum's own collection and from all over the world. Much of the Church treasures in England were destroyed during the Reformation, so it was a revelation to see the exquisite craftsmanship and beauty of the reliquaries on display. In addition the explanation of how early Christian burial practices evolved from Roman burial practices proved fascinating.

A trip to Wales included a guided tour of Chester Cathedral, a place of Christian worship since 660 AD, and a visit to the Erddig *National Trust* property at Wrexham. The intimacy of the 13th century Chapter house contrasted with the dignity of the 13th century Lady Chapel containing the shrine of St. Werburgh. I enjoyed the peacefulness of the cloisters, restored in the twentieth century, with a sumptuous sculpture by Stephen Broadbent, '*The water of life*'. The Erddig chapel had separate entrances for the gentry family and for the servants, very Downton Abbey!

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



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

EVENTS FOR 2012

Next year's Annual Conference has been arranged for **Saturday 28 April 2012** and we will be returning to the **Chancellor's Room, Hughes Parry Hall, Cartwright Gardens, London.**

Michael Coveney, who works for *Transform Work UK* and is also the independent chairman of LCF's review group, will be the first speaker of the day and LCF members **Gordon Harris, John Wickenden** and **Sara Batts** will be taking part in an afternoon session on ambition and career advancement as seen from a Christian point of view.

There has been a delay in finalising the venue for next year's annual public lecture but readers

may like to note that we are hoping to hold this in Bristol on **Saturday afternoon 6 October 2012.** Our guest speaker **Robert Hicks**, proprietor of *Creative Publishing*, has agreed to speak on the subject *Lost Letters and Early Writings of the First Century – from a publisher's point of view.*

PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL NEWS

- Congratulations are due to LCF's committee member **Robert Foster** who married **Estelle** on Saturday 17 September 2011 and to our Reading member **Margaret Stone**, and her husband **Luke**, whose daughter **Ellen** was born during September.

- The August 2011 issue of **CILIP Update with Gazette** included an obituary of our past President, Professor **Ken Bakewell**, who died on 31 March 2011.

The writers, Eric Hunter and Linda Ashcroft, recorded Ken's distinguished career in librarianship as well as his Christian faith, his involvement in LCF, and his role as a Reader in the *Church of England*. They closed by quoting the passage from 2 Timothy 4: 7-8 which had been read at Ken's funeral: "*I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith*".

- We were sorry to receive the news that **Avis Davis**, wife of LCF's Life Vice President, Professor **Donald G. Davis, Jr.**, died on 30 September 2011 after a long struggle against illness.

Avis met and married Donald during two years of graduate work at the *University of Illinois* at Urbana-Champaign. She hosted coffee mornings and open houses for Donald's students at the *University of Texas at Austin* and also for students from the *Inter-Varsity Christian Fellowship*. She worked for several years in the *Logos Bookshop* in Austin and served as an elder and church librarian in her local Presbyterian church.

LCF readers will want to give thanks for Avis' life and pray for Donald, his three grown up children and other members of his family at this sad and difficult time.

- Professor **Donald G. Davis, Jr.**, is the editor and compiler of ***The Truth That Makes Them Free: spiritual journeys of Christian faculty members at the University of Texas at Austin***, a new collection of essays in which twelve faculty members, from various denominations and traditions, write about their Christian faith.

Donald is the Professor Emeritus of Library History at the *University of Texas at Austin* and taught in the university for thirty five years before retiring in the academic year 2005-2006.

- **Louis Hemmings**, a past contributor to the LCF publications, is the publisher of a new edition of Jack Clemo's classic work ***The Invading Gospel***, originally published in 1958.

Well known as the deaf and blind poet of Cornwall's clay mining district, the late Jack Clemo wrote ***The Invading Gospel*** as his own testimony to the essential Christian message. The theme of the book is described on the cover as “*a distinguished poet describes his journey from isolated self-involvement to the joy of Christian fellowship*”.

Copies of the reprint can be obtained from Louis at Avonbeg, Newtownpark Avenue, Blackrock, Dublin, Ireland, price £13.25, including postage and packing.

- **Louis Hemmings**, well known as a poet and bookseller, has also been involved in a radio series ***Back to the Seventies*** on ***Cross Rhythms Radio***. This takes a fond look back at the early days of contemporary Christian music and includes interviews with such artists as Bryn Haworth, Adrian Snell, Steve Turner, Stewart Henderson (past LCF speaker), Graham Kendrick and After the Fire along with many classic Christian rock tracks. This series is due to be repeated one each day in Christmas week up to 24 December 2011.

You can find more information about ***Cross Rhythms Radio*** at <http://www.crossrhythms.co.uk/radio/cityradio/>

● Past **Christian Librarian** contributor Dr. **Michael Ward** has won the *Scholarship Award in Inklings Studies* for his book ***Planet Narnia: the seven heavens in the imagination of C.S. Lewis*** (O.U.P., £9.99, ISBN 978-0199738700)

The award is given each year by the (American) *Mythopoeic Society* to the author of a book on C.S. Lewis, J.R.R. Tolkien, or Charles Williams that makes a significant contribution to the scholarly understanding of any of these three Christian writers. Michael Ward's much acclaimed book provides evidence that C.S. Lewis based each of his seven ***Chronicles of Narnia*** on symbolism associated with one of the seven planets of medieval cosmology.

ARTS CENTRE GROUP

Christian Librarian subscriber Canon David Winter was the preacher at a service arranged to mark the fortieth anniversary of the *Arts Centre Group* and held at the *London Institute for Contemporary Christianity*, St. Peter's Church, Vere Street, London on Saturday 29 October 2011. The service was led by the Rev. Cindy Kent, from *Premier Christian Radio*, and also included contributions from past LCF speakers Stewart Henderson and Tony Jasper. The service was followed by a dialogue between film director Norman Stone and Frank Field MP on the subject *Living as an Artist in a*

Broken World.

Two days previously, on Thursday 27 October 2011, Tony Jasper hosted the ACG's *Jack Clemo Poetry Awards* at the *Society of Authors* in Kensington, London. The winning entry for 2011 was announced as Martyn Halsall's poem *Haiku Masters*, describing one person's experience of the aftermath of the Japanese earthquake.

The ACG's fortieth anniversary celebrations had begun several weeks earlier, on Friday 9 September 2011, with a special lecture at *All Soul's Church*, Langham Place, London. Actor Nigel Goodwin recalled the early history of the ACG and the original vision that had prompted the creation of an informal meeting place for Christians involved professionally in the various branches of the arts and media.

Although formal membership of the ACG is limited to Christians who are involved professionally in these fields, there is also a category of *Friends of the Arts Centre Group* for others who are interested in the work and want to support Christians in the artistic community. You can obtain more information from Colin Burns, Administrator, *Arts Centre Group*, Menier Chocolate Factory, First Floor, 51 Southwark Street, London, SE1 1RU, telephone 0207 407 1881, or you can visit the web site at

<http://www.artscentregroup.org.uk>

STILL SPEAKING VOLUMES

The Christian Book Promotion Trust's *Speaking Volumes* project, has a re-designed web site. Please visit www.speakingvolumes.org.uk to see the latest edition of the *Speaking Volumes* book list of recommended titles and to find out how your church(es) can order a set of books at half price for donating to a local public or school library.

Speaking Volumes has also recently invited publishers to submit titles for the third *Ultimate Christian Library Book* award. A short list of titles will be drawn up and in the new year members of the Christian public will be invited to vote on the adult and children's titles that they would most like to see on the shelves of their local libraries. The winning books will be announced at next May's *International Christian Resources Exhibition*. For more details please visit www.christianbookawards.org

BIBLE YEAR THEN AND NOW

2011 has been celebrated as the **Year of the Bible**. The four hundredth anniversary of the **King James Bible** has been marked by books, television and radio programmes, and exhibitions. The *Biblefresh* programme, devised by the *Bible Society* and the *Evangelical Alliance*, has encouraged greater Bible reading and highlighted the contemporary

relevance of the Scriptures.

I have been carrying out some work for the *Evangelical Alliance*, cataloguing and indexing some of the news sheets that the organisation has produced over the years. When working my way through the 1960s I discovered that 1961 was also designated as a "*Bible Year*". The three hundred and fiftieth anniversary of the **King James Bible** was widely celebrated. At the same time many people welcomed the publication of the New Testament section of the **New English Bible**. This was a new translation in contemporary English which sold five million copies on its day of publication alone.

Resources produced by the *Evangelical Alliance* in 1961 included an illustrated magazine introducing the value of systematic Bible study, a touring Bible exhibition, car stickers and envelope seals. A Bible Rally was held at the Royal Albert Hall and a house party was arranged in North Wales. No doubt other churches and organisations made their own contributions to the celebrations.

Writing in the Spring of 1961, the Rev. John Caiger² noted that the translators of the **New English Bible** intended that their version should be used for private reading, rather than as a replacement for the King James version in church. The writer suggested that the danger with colloquial versions of the Scriptures was that they would

² Caiger, John. The Challenge of Bible Year. In *Evangelical Broadsheet*, Spring 1961, pp. 1-3.

quickly become out of date. He believed that the biblical message needed to be expressed in a “timeless” language that would be accessible for several generations, at least. A succession of translations might be fascinating for the general reader, but would do little to encourage serious meditation and devotion.

Subsequent history has taken little notice of John Caiger's reservations. The **New English Bible** was duly replaced by the **Revised English Bible** and the last fifty years have seen a steady stream of fresh translations.

It seems unlikely that there will ever be a single English translation of the Scriptures accepted and used by all Protestants, let alone all Christians. However, there are positive as well as negative aspects to this. Inevitably, a translation is one step removed from the original languages of the biblical writers, and it is useful to have access to the insights of a number of different translators. We should give thanks for the resources that are available to us, and resolve to use them more effectively.

How have *you* celebrated this year's **King James Bible** anniversary, either in your church or in your library? Can any of our older readers recall taking part in the equivalent activities back in 1961? Please send me your reports and I will include them in our next issue.

BOOKS AND MORE BOOKS

2011's **Year of the Bible** has seen a spate of books celebrating the literary and spiritual legacy of the **King James Bible** and chronicling the influence of the Scriptures on our national life.

One of the visually most impressive books of the year has been Helen Moore and Julian Reid's **Manifold Greatness: the making of the King James Bible** (Bodleian Library, £19.99, ISBN 978-1851243495), which was issued to coincide with a major exhibition on the KJB which ran for several months at the Bodleian Library in Oxford. The King James translation was produced by three separate teams of scholars - in London, Cambridge and Oxford - and **Manifold Greatness** concentrates on telling the story of the Oxford team. The book is lavishly illustrated with reproductions of relevant biblical editions and manuscripts, portraits of the individual translators and photographs of Oxford colleges and churches.

The current celebrations of the KJB inevitably raise questions about the monarch who sponsored the translation. Some answers to these questions will be found in David Teems' biography **Majestie: the king behind the King James Bible** (Nelson, £9.99, ISBN 978-1595552204).

The influence of the Bible on our language and literature is widely acknowledged, but fewer people are aware of the profound

influence that the Old and New Testaments have had upon our political life. Nick Spencer's ***Freedom and Order: history, politics and the English Bible*** (Hodder and Stoughton, £16.99, ISBN 978-0340996232) is a timely book exploring the links between the English Bible and the rise of democracy, the abolition of the slave trade and radical movements in politics.

Professor Tom Wright, former Bishop of Durham, has recently published his own translation of the New Testament as ***The New Testament for Everyone*** (SPCK, £14.99, ISBN 978-0281064267). This arose as a by-product of his successful ***For Everyone*** series of New Testament commentaries which are intended to be read by people who would otherwise never think of picking up a Bible commentary.

The series has recently been completed by the publication of ***Revelation for Everyone*** (SPCK, £9.99, ISBN 978-0281064632) which should prove invaluable in helping readers to understand this most difficult of biblical texts.

CURRENT AWARENESS

- Chris Wright's *Balanced on Top of the Pile* challenges a popular perception that the ***King James Bible*** was the earliest English Bible.

Although for a thousand years

the Latin ***Vulgate*** was the only edition used in churches in England and Western Europe, in the ninth and tenth centuries portions of the Latin Bible were translated into Anglo-Saxon.

It is wrong to assume that the Roman Catholic Church did not want an English Bible. Many European countries had early translations in their own languages. However, until Henry VIII split from Rome, England supported the teaching of the Church that any unauthorised translation was heretical. The translations of Wycliffe and Tyndale were, of course, unauthorised.

Much of the antagonism of the authorities to William Tyndale's translation was based on the translator's anti-Catholic comments included as marginal notes rather than the main text itself.

Many errors crept into early editions of the ***King James Bible***. In the eighteenth century scholars at Oxford and Cambridge went back to early printings to determine the intentions of the original translators. Most current editions of the KJB are based on the work of these scholars.

The article appears in the ***Church Times*** for 18 February 2011, pp. 19-20.

- A recent article in the ***Methodist Recorder*** challenges the view that there were no attempts to criticise or revise the text of the ***King James Bible*** before the publication of the ***Revised Version*** in 1881/1884.

As early as 1656, during the Commonwealth, a parliamentary sub-committee was appointed to consider a revision of the translation. However, the dissolution of Parliament intervened to prevent any such revision being carried out.

Three years later, a Dr. Robert Gell published *An Essay towards the amendment of the last English translation of the Bible*.

Anthony Purves, a Quaker shoemaker, produced an entirely new translation in 1764, though this was not widely read outside the *Society of Friends*.

John Wesley issued his own text of the Bible in 1790 and this contained more than 12,000 deviations from the accepted KJB text.

Another Methodist, Dr. Adam Clarke, included his own translation of the sacred text as part of his Bible commentary published during the early nineteenth century.

Later Methodist scholars played their part in fostering understanding of the Bible. William Fiddian Moulton promoted understanding of the Greek New Testament and worked on the **Revised Version** alongside the Anglicans Westcott and Hort.

John Vickers' article *Methodist Bible Translators* appears in the issue for 6 October 2011, p. 19.

- The November/December 2011 issue of *Idea*, magazine of the *Evangelical Alliance*, includes a number of articles which look back

over 2011's **Year of the Bible**.

Krish Kandiah gives advice on how to *Read the Bible* (p. 5) and Rebecca Taylor recalls some of the highlights of the *Biblefresh* programme in *Bikers, Bloggers and the Bible* (p. 14-15).

Nick Spencer writes on *Biblical Influence: how Scripture shaped Great Britain* (p. 8) and Dave Landram describes *The Antiseptic effect: The Bible and social renewal* (p. 16).

Glen Scrivener chronicles the effects of the Bible on the English language in *Quoting the King* (pp. 12-13) and Claire Musters recalls *How Churches Renewed Their Love of the Bible* during 2011 (pp. 26-27).

- A recent article notes that publishers of religious books are facing increasing demands to make their books available for electronic devices such as the Amazon Kindle.

Canterbury Press and *SCM Press*, both owned by *Hymns Ancient and Modern*, recently started publishing Kindle versions of their titles. SCM's Senior Commissioning Editor says that e-books are a "godsend" to theological students, many of whom "live miles from a library".

Hodder and Stoughton recently issued the **New International Version** of the Bible in various e-book formats. *SPCK* began publishing books on Kindle at the end of 2009 and now publish for other e-readers as well. Their most popular authors, Tom Wright

and Alister McGrath, are equally popular in electronic format.

Continuum have launched an "e-books store" where many of their titles are available to download in Adobe PDF and e-pub formats.

Amazon.co.uk claim that they are now selling more Kindle books than paperbacks.

Ed Thornton's *Religious Publishers Kindle a Light in Darkness* appears in the **Church Times** for 7 October 2011, p. 9.

- A recent article notes that since about 2003 it has been possible to legally publish and distribute Christian literature in the People's Republic of China. There are now about six hundred broadly Christian books in print in China and some two hundred Christian bookshops have opened during the past ten years.

Books with foreign ISBN numbers cannot legally be distributed in China. The Chinese authorities are said to especially favour biographies, old books with historical value, and books on marriage and the family.

These new developments present great opportunities for publishers from the Reformed tradition, though lack of funding has stood in the way of taking full advantage of the present situation. The *Banner of Truth Trust*, however, has signed a multi-book contract that will allow them to translate and publish their books in China.

Michael Haykin's article *Christian Publishing in China: a*

huge opportunity appears in the **Evangelical Times** for October 2011, pp. 23-24.

- *Regent's Park College*, in Oxford, has successfully applied to the *Heritage Lottery Fund* for a grant that will make the treasures of Baptist history available to a wider audience.

The College's *Angus Library and Archive* includes more than 70,000 printed books, pamphlets, journals, church and Association records, church histories, manuscript letters and other artefacts from the late 15th century until the present day.

As well as raising awareness of the Library the £80,822 development grant will provide the basis of a second bid in late 2012.

Paul Hobson's report *Grant Opens Doors to Baptist History* appears in the **Baptist Times** for 21 October 2011, p. 1.

EBSCO PUBLISHING

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

MEMBERSHIP MATTERS

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

A warm welcome to one new member. Also listed below are those who have changed their details since July. Please inform the Membership Secretary of any changes of address, job etc.

NEW MEMBER

BARKER, Rev. Stanley J., 86 Croesonen Parc, Abergavenny, Gwent NP7 6PF - Tel: 01873 561103

CHANGES TO ADDRESS, JOB ETC.

BARKER, Mrs Mary E., 86 Croesonen Parc, Abergavenny, Gwent NP7 6PF - Tel: 01873 561103

WATTHEWS, Miss Elizabeth M., 21c St. John's Court, Sunfield Close, Ipswich, Suffolk IP4 5JS - Tel: 01473 727236

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING



Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of the Librarians' Christian Fellowship held on Saturday 2 April 2011 in the Bertha Wright Room, Carrs Lane Church Centre, Birmingham .

About twenty two members and friends of the Fellowship were present. The retiring President, **Gordon Harris**, was in the chair. He began the proceedings by welcoming members and guests to the meeting and by presenting "*apologies for absence*" from a number of members and friends including John and Penelope Andrews, Heather Lewis, Eleanor Neil, Elizabeth Pool, Marie Shipley, Richard and Norma Waller, Arabella Wood and Jean Woods.

Acceptance of the minutes of the meeting held on Saturday 24 April 2010 was proposed by Margaret Keeling, seconded by Janice Paine and agreed by the meeting.

MATTERS ARISING

It was reported that, following discussions at the previous year's meeting, a Review Group had been set up to consider the present work of the Fellowship and to make recommendations for the future. Michael Coveney, of *Transform Work UK*, had been appointed as an independent chairman and the other members of the Group were Margaret Keeling, Gordon Harris, Louise Manners, Mary Wood, Vernon Burgess and Tayo Ajibade. It was hoped that the Group would be able to produce recommendations in time for the executive committee's final meeting in 2011 and that these could be considered by the wider membership in the new year.

ANNUAL REPORT

LCF Chair **Louise Manners** gave a report on the work of the Fellowship during the year ending March 2011. Highlights of the year had included the April Conference, with speakers Tony Jasper and Eddie Olliffe, and the October public lecture on "*The Five Lord's Prayers*" given by the Rev. Alan Garrow of *Bath Abbey*,

There had been visits to *Wesley's Chapel*, London, *Stirling Castle*, the *John Rylands Library*, Manchester, *Bath Abbey* and the *Evangelical Library*, London.

LCF continued to publish *Christian Librarian* and the *E-Newsletter* and maintain a web site. Publicity for the Fellowship had appeared in a variety of Christian and librarianship periodicals.

LCF continued to be involved with other organisations including *Christians at Work* and *Transform Work UK*. It was noted that the first named had recently "downsized" and now consisted of only one member of staff.

Initiatives for the future included the establishment of the LCF Review Group. It was hoped that this would address a number of current issues, including the problems of an aging and declining membership.

After the annual report **Mary Wood** led a prayer of thanksgiving for the lives of a number of members and friends who had died in the preceding year: Roger Devenish, Jonathan Morgan, Joyce Woolford, Edward England and Maurice Hobbs.

TREASURER'S REPORT

Our Treasurer, **Nick Horley**, distributed copies of the accounts for the year ending 31 December 2009.

The balance carried over from 2009 had been £6191.15. Income during the calendar year 2010 had been £6277.12. Expenditure had been £6118.04. Income had, therefore, exceeded

expenditure by £159.08. The balance carried over into 2011 had been £6350.23.

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

ELECTION OF OFFICERS

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

President: Margaret Keeling

Proposed by: Executive Committee

Life Vice President: Gordon Harris

Proposed by: Executive Committee

Vice President: Kirsty Robinson

Proposed by: Executive Committee

Secretary: Graham Hedges

Proposed by: Janet Danels and Diana Guthrie

Overseas Secretary: Eleanor Neil

Proposed by: Vernon Burgess and Graham Hedges

Midlands Regional Rep./Web Site and E-Newsletter Manager: Mary

Wood

Proposed by: Louise Manners and Margaret Keeling

Library Assistance Manager: Mary Barker

Proposed by: Janet White and Christine Gagan

In response to a question from Philip Hayworth, **Graham Hedges** said that he was committed to serving as Secretary for one further year. He would decide whether to continue after that time in the light of the Review Group's recommendations and whether he felt able to implement them.

Gordon Harris thanked the committee members for their work on behalf of the Fellowship.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Graham Hedges announced details of the Fellowship's activities for the remainder of the year. These included a visit to the *Museum of the Book*, another walking tour of Oxford, in the footsteps of the translators of the ***King James Bible***, and the October public lecture in Reading with guest speaker Dave Roberts, author of ***The Twilight Gospel***.

There was no further business and Gordon Harris declared the annual general meeting for 2011 to be closed.

IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF THE OXFORD TRANSLATORS

GRAHAM HEDGES reports on a recent walking tour arranged to mark the four hundredth anniversary of the *King James Bible*

Fifteen members and friends of the *Librarians' Christian Fellowship* made their way to Oxford on Friday 2 September 2011 to take part in another afternoon walking tour of the city. As on three earlier occasions, this was ably led by our good friend Peter Berry, official tour guide for *Blackwell's Bookshop*. This time, however, the focus of our tour was very much on the four hundredth anniversary of the publication of the ***King James Bible*** and the contribution made to that Bible by scholars from the various Oxford colleges.

Those members of the group who could get to Oxford in time also paid a morning visit to the exhibition ***Manifold Greatness: Oxford and the Making of the King James Bible***, then housed in the Exhibition Room of the *Bodleian Library* but subsequently transferred to the *Folger Shakespeare Library* in Washington, D.C. In between times members of the group enjoyed an excellent lunch at the Mitre, built on the site of inns that

can be traced all the way back to 1261.

The original decision to make a new translation of the Bible was made in 1604. The task was entrusted to six companies of about fifty churchmen and scholars, based in Cambridge, Oxford and Westminster, of which number twenty four were based in Oxford. Scholars associated with fourteen of the Oxford colleges were involved in the translation work, and we were able to visit the majority of these colleges during the course of the afternoon.

Our first port of call was Balliol College where George Abbott, described in the Bodleian exhibition as perhaps the most successful of the translators in terms of professional advancement, was an undergraduate and later a fellow. He served in the Second Oxford Company of translators which worked on the Gospels, Acts, and Revelation. Later academic and ecclesiastical appointments were to follow and Abbott was appointed as Archbishop of Canterbury at the comparatively early age of forty-nine.

Thomas Holland, Rector of Exeter College, was a member of the First Oxford Company that worked on the translation of several of the Old Testament prophets.

Lincoln College has links with two of the translators, Richard Brett, later Rector of Quainton, Buckinghamshire, and Richard Kilby, Rector of Lincoln College.

Three translators had associations with Christ Church College including Thomas Ravis who was Dean of Christ Church and served as Head of the Second Oxford Company.

Four translators were associated with Corpus Christi College, including John Rainolds, who was President of the College and in whose lodgings some of the translators met. The Bodleian exhibition included a portrait of Rainolds, an inventory of his personal library, and a book of insects that had been part of his collection. The exhibition noted that some of Rainolds' books were left to Sir Thomas Bodley for inclusion in the new University Library.

Sir Henry Saville, of the Second Oxford Company, was an undergraduate at Brasenose College and later Warden of Merton College. He had been Queen Elizabeth II's tutor in Greek and was also a supporter of Sir Thomas Bodley. The Bodleian exhibition described him as "*the most glamorous of the translators*" but noted that some thought that he was "*too much inflated with his learning*". He was one of the few translators who did not take holy orders nor receive a Doctor of Divinity degree.

The Bodleian exhibition included reminders that the **King James Bible** was by no means the earliest translation of the Scriptures to appear in English. Translations of parts of the Bible dating from the ninth century onwards were

included in the display cases and extracts from an Old English poem based on Genesis could be viewed on a screen. John Wycliffe's banned translation of the Bible was on display alongside English laws outlawing the use of translations.

Other items of interest on display at the Bodleian included proceedings of the 1604 Hampton Court Conference, which had first authorised the KJB translation, a facsimile of the rules to be followed during the course of the translation, and proposals for an English translation of the Bible written by Sir Thomas More as a riposte to William Tyndale.

It was interesting to see a copy of Tyndale's New Testament owned by Anne Boleyn, a copy that must have been acquired at a time when Tyndale's work was officially banned.

The work of the non-Oxford translators was represented by a sermon from Lancelot Andrewes, Dean of Westminster and head of the First Westminster Company that worked on Genesis through to II Kings.

The exhibition noted that acceptance of the KJB by the general public was not immediate. Many dissenters continued to quote from the earlier **Geneva Bible**, among them writers such as John Bunyan, Daniel Defoe and John Milton. John Donne was described as perhaps the earliest preacher of national importance to switch to the KJB.

Although our main emphasis during the afternoon tour was on

the translators of the **King James Bible**, we were also able to benefit from our guide's wider and extensive knowledge of Oxford and its history. For example, we received a running commentary on well known figures who had been undergraduates at the various Oxford colleges.

Exeter College, for example, includes among its alumni the writers J.R.R. Tolkien, Alan Bennett and Philip Pullman, the Pre-Raphaelites William Morris and Edward Burne-Jones, and the actor Richard Burton. The College is a fourteenth century foundation, although only one tower remains from the fourteenth century.

Balliol College was attended by the novelists Graham Greene and Nevil Shute and former Prime Ministers Harold Macmillan and Edward Heath also studied there.

The evangelist John Wesley studied at Lincoln College and his room can sometimes be visited by arrangement with the college authorities. Many years later the spy novelist John Le Carre was a student there.

The poet T.S. Eliot studied at Merton College. The novelists John Buchan and William Golding and Monty Python's Michael Palin were undergraduates at Brasenose College. David Cameron, the twenty-sixth Prime Minister to graduate from Oxford, was also a student there.

University College includes among its alumni the former United States President Bill Clinton, the scientist Stephen Hawking and the

writers Percy Bysshe Shelley and C.S. Lewis.

Queen's College, dating from 1234, includes among its past students Edmund Halley, discoverer of the comet, novelist Thomas Hardy and Mr. Bean himself, the actor Rowan Atkinson.

Many places of interest were pointed out to us during the course of our travels, among them the Bear Inn, dating in its original building from 1242 and said to be the oldest public house in Oxford.

Outside University College we paused to inspect a memorial plaque to the pioneering scientists Robert Boyle and Robert Hooke, who performed experiments inside the College.

At Corpus Christi College the sundial surmounted with a pelican in the middle of the quadrangle was another point of interest. This was erected in 1581 and a perpetual calendar was added to its pillar in 1606.

Our day among the dreaming spires of Oxford was much appreciated by the members of the LCF group and we are grateful to Peter Berry (and the staff and scholars of the Bodleian Library) for making the occasion so memorable and for adding to our knowledge of the **King James Bible** and its background.

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

IT'S ONLY A STORY

BUT ...

DIANA GUTHRIE reports on LCF's Annual Public Lecture which looked at "the resurgence of a spirituality of personal supernatural power" in best-selling literature

LCF members returned to the *Reading International Solidarity Centre* on Saturday 1 October 2011 to hear this year's annual public lecture given by Dave Roberts, author of *The Twilight Gospel* and other books.

Dave Roberts started by putting popular literature into its historical context. Pre-literate society depended on oral storytelling for entertainment, and as more and more people learned to read and write, the newly literate wanted something entertaining to read. Fiction has been enormously important in the growth of literacy, with Christians involved from the beginning, from the Sunday School movement and the 18th century desire for edifying literature, to the growth of the woman's magazine; many publishers (even Mills & Boon!) have Christian roots. However, the 1960s counter-culture, fascinated by myth and world religions, loosened the hold that Christianity had on fiction. This created a new openness in the West to other world-views, and the resulting fiction picked up and

combined elements from the Christian and the mythical traditions.

Earlier thinkers, such as Isaac Newton, had few difficulties in marrying scientific materialism with spirituality, and although since World War II there has been a strong emphasis on rationalism, this does not seem to have dented the popularity of mystical or Christian fiction. It's reckoned that one in twenty of the world's population has read Dan Brown and Stephenie Meyer, who look for spirituality within materialism – but it's a spirituality arising from within the person (not from God). Atlantis – the mythical city that disappeared beneath the waves, taking with it many supernatural powers – has proved to be fertile ground for these writers, who have built on the idea of the supernatural being not drowned but merely submerged, just waiting for the right conditions to bring it back again.

What have been the traditional Christian approaches to this? First of all – radical denouncement; this approach finds even the work of Tolkien and C. S. Lewis very dubious, and tars most non-overtly-Christian fiction as dangerous stuff. But 'the occult' encompasses an enormous range of beliefs, from 'nature religions' to Satanism; so-called 'white magic' throws up quite different ethical concerns from the evil of Satanism, so they need different approaches.

Secondly - '*it's only a story*', an approach that looks for a redemptive analogy, trying to link

the good in the story to Scripture. And indeed this approach has sound antecedents, as St. Paul, in particular, was obviously familiar with Roman beliefs and mystical religions and was happy to use them as a bridge to his hearers. Writing a story is one of the best ways of popularising an idea, as witnessed by Dan Brown's use of the Jesus-married-to-Mary-Magdalene theory, which has been around for centuries.

Thirdly - prophetic discernment. Can a mythical story contain truth? Many myths (such as the flood myth, which occurs in so many traditions) obviously do. We need to take a step back to look not just at the details, but at the meaning at the heart of the myth - what is it trying to say? Parables are a wonderful example of how a deep truth can be clothed in a story.

Dan Brown's novel, ***The Lost Symbol***, deals with 'the power within' (a Gnostic heresy); he uses Scripture (amongst other works) as a mystical handbook, mining it for ideas about secret knowledge (e.g. Satan's 'ye shall be as gods' promise in Genesis 3). Brown believes that the supernatural is an adjunct of the mind, a much more persuasive idea than obvious mystery. And this idea can be found in other writers, such as Rhonda Byrne (***The Power***, and, ***The Secret***), who propounds the idea that what you say can alter reality.

Stephenie Meyer's ***Twilight*** series also draws on religious themes, though it preaches worldly views. It plays on the idea of a

beautiful, powerful elite (a belief which has in the past bolstered the evil of National Socialism).

The Christian response to all this needs to arm people with Godly wisdom, not to ban books (never an effective deterrent). Jesus' teaching (especially his parables) makes people think, so that they can consider and reject destructive ideas. We believe in the supernatural, but it has to originate from God, not from within ourselves.

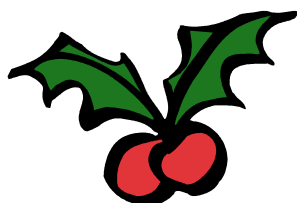
One of the questions following the lecture focused on whether Christians should read authors such as Dan Brown and Stephenie Meyer. Dave Roberts believes that superstitious fearfulness (rooted in a withdrawn, Essene Puritanism, and found in variants of Evangelicalism) can be overcome by spiritual discernment; many major authors use elements of Biblical teaching, even if they have rejected a personal faith.

Another questioner wondered why the secular Western world is so attracted to spirituality / other-worldliness; Dave Roberts believes that people are looking for a moral construct, and that the occult is always there, bubbling away beneath a rational approach to life; even Christian festivals such as Christmas incorporate a lot of mythological traditions.

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

REVIEWS

THE BOOKWORM'S CHRISTMAS STOCKING



Definitive Biography

F.F. BRUCE: A LIFE

Tim Grass

Paternoster, 2011, £14.99, Pbk, 283pp,

ISBN 978-1842277379

This book is subtitled “*The definitive biography of a New Testament scholar*”, which constitutes a good summary of its contents. Professor Bruce will be remembered by long-standing members of the Fellowship as our lecturer in November 1982 when he spoke on “*Two Centuries of New Testament Criticism*” to an audience of about eighty in Loughborough (p.189). Many will also be familiar with his written works.

Bruce was born in Elgin in the north-east of Scotland in 1910. His father was an evangelist with the group of Christians known as Open Brethren. Bruce grew up in this community and remained with the Open Brethren throughout his life. Indeed I think some understanding of the Brethren is necessary fully to appreciate this biography and the relationship between Bruce’s church affiliation and his academic activities. After a brilliant school career Bruce entered the *University of Aberdeen*, where he graduated with a first class degree in classics in 1932. His academic career in classics developed for some years until in 1947 he was appointed to set up the Department of Biblical History and Literature in the *University of Sheffield*. “*Bruce seized the opening with both hands, later describing the opportunity to focus on biblical studies as ‘enjoyable beyond words’*” (p. 52). From there he went on in 1959 to be Rylands Professor of Biblical Criticism and Exegesis in the *University of Manchester* where he remained until his retirement in 1978.

Bruce contributed largely to the way evangelical biblical scholarship gained respect in the wider academic world. He was able to disagree profoundly with fellow scholars on academic matters, yet remain on friendly

terms personally. He was a prolific writer producing some fifty books, besides innumerable articles, reviews and other material. The bibliography in this book extends to some thirty-five pages. Apart from his academic life Bruce was a devoted family man, able to relate easily to children. Many of his students also testify to his concern for them. He had an attractive dry sense of humour and was often seen with a twinkle in his eye.

I recommend this book as an interesting account of a remarkable man. And if anyone has not come across Bruce's written work, please sample it. I am sure you will be impressed by the author's ability to explain sometimes difficult issues with clarity.

Penelope Andrews lives in Lancaster and is a long standing friend and supporter of the *Librarians' Christian Fellowship*.

Being Part of the Economic System

GOOD VALUE: CHOOSING A BETTER LIFE IN BUSINESS

Stephen Green

Penguin, 2010, Pbk., ISBN 978-0141042428

I recently read Stephen Green's book ***Good Value***, an assessment of the current world order from a personal and mostly business-orientated point of view. I found it erudite and frustrating - a bit like a walk along the seafront without being able to see the sea because of lots of ornate plants blocking the view. You like some of the plants, but you came to see the sea, and you have the feeling the plants are all out of place and shouldn't be there at all.

He starts off making what I hoped were promising critical statements such as "*If...the basic structure of the world economy is built upon sand..then what is the justification for all our labours?*". He also finishes by referring to the Cross in the midst of the uncertainty of a rapidly changing world. In the middle there is quite a lot of history, mainly from an economic point of view, and a mild, gentle analysis of weaknesses and strengths within global capitalism, including what went wrong in 2008. There is also an appeal to the individual within business to personally reflect on motivations and values.

The reference to the cross of Christ is welcome, but is earlier linked to what he rather confusingly refers to as "*the eternal feminine*". He fails to outline central building blocks of faith, instead writing "*Millions of words have been written...however we seek to describe it theologically is of no account if it does not strike us at the centre of our being.*" This is a good point, an essential one, but he does not go on to speak of redemption, atonement, or

resurrection.

Similarly his criticism of the world economic system is, taken as a whole, muted and unspecific, and in fact he comes closer to justifying it than he does to recommending reform. He frequently refers to the market as a force for good, and dismisses any alternative to globalisation as either "*drifting*" or living in an unreal world. Instead he aims at changing individuals' perceptions and motives through appealing to their consciences. He uses the story of Faust to make a comparison with the modern age's preoccupation with selfish progress, but seems to imply that the way out of this on an individual basis is to cooperate in this quest unselfishly by "*giving back*". He makes little attempt to address more fundamental concerns about the world economic system - he is firmly mainstream, and dismissive of attempts to live in a simpler or alternative way.

This is a real shame, as the book shows moments of insight and compassion. For example "*We cannot fulfil ourselves in business through power or work or wealth.*" Yet, sadly, he offers little alternative. Capitalism and the market are taken as key driving forces behind human progress - despite the fact that for hundreds of years societies have been more bound together by the common good and societal obligation than the market. I would argue that this has contributed far more to peace and prosperity than any period of free trade, and in fact is a necessary condition of it. Libraries, incidentally, I would argue, are based on the concept of shared knowledge for the common good rather than a market-based idea of selling knowledge to the highest bidder. In a way a library can be seen as an exercise in redemption - buying back what is lost or dispersed, and then making it available to everyone, but safeguarding it and making sure it retains its distinctiveness as a collection.

There are clues as to why this might be his attitude - he does not believe in the devil, for example, instead arguing that belief in the devil is a projection of human evil onto something else. He also embraces aspects of the New Age-style philosophy of Teilhard de Chardin. My major criticism of his analysis would be that he seems to confuse the quest for human "*progress*" and development with the building of the Kingdom of God. Of course, the two need not conflict with each other, but they sometimes do. Building Babel had nothing to do with seeking God and everything to do with demonstrating humanity's power and independence. The profit motive is not analogous with the desire to extend the boundaries of the church, and globalisation is not the same as building the Kingdom of Heaven. Co-operation with the commercialisation of the world is not our duty, I would argue.

At one point, he says "*At its best... there is no more powerful engine for development and liberation than the market.*" To be fair, he also acknowledges that "*At its worst, it is a dangerous moral pollutant.*" I am no economist, but am I alone in thinking that the last thing we need at the

moment is a call to embrace a vision of free-market globalisation, aided by technology, more wholeheartedly?

As the former CEO and Chairman of *HSBC*, Chair of the Prime Minister's *Business Council for Britain*, and an ordained priest, Mr. Green is an influential man - and I am personally disappointed that he does not do more to help us understand how we can as individuals practically develop alternative, just, sustainable ways of being involved in the global economy.

When I started to write this, I wasn't expecting to be quite so critical of the book – so, please don't take my word for it – have a look for yourself, if you have time.

Nick Horley, BA, MSc(Econ), MCLIP, serves as the Treasurer of the *Librarians' Christian Fellowship*.

Entertaining and Well Written Novel

DAYDREAM BELIEVER

Mike Burke

Highland Books, 2010, Pbk., ISBN 978-1897913864

This book is about a jaded, widowed parish minister getting the blues and deciding to get himself a sabbatical which proves to be quite a journey. A journey that is actual, musical and spiritual and results in a complete change of lifestyle for him.

The Rev. Ken Birley was in the habit of joining a local rock band once a week for 'jam' sessions. Then it was suggested they go on tour as support group for a U2 tribute band with the addition of an attractive female singer. This resulted in him re-visiting various cultural influences including U2, *The Matrix*, Dietrich Bonhoeffer and *Dr. Who* and having a variety of new encounters which made him think seriously about the direction his life was taking. His father also died towards the end of the tour giving him more pause for reflection.

I found the book entertaining and well written and the Rev. Birley surprisingly easy to relate to. I became quite caught up in wondering how things would work out for him. I was pleased that he re-married, gave up the parish ministry in favour of less formal gatherings in a pub and became an arts teacher in an inner city school and "*never felt so alive, so free and so at home*".

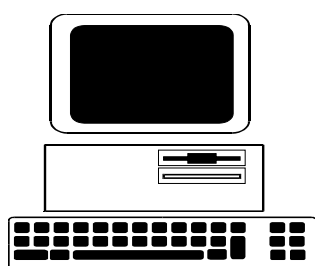
Anne MacRitchie, BSc, serves on the executive committee of the *Librarians' Christian Fellowship* as Scottish Regional Representative.

ARTICLES

ROBERT FOSTER suggests that there is not enough critical reflection on information obtained through the Internet but applauds the use of social networking sites to promote library services

EYE ON THE PROFESSION

Navigating Through the Mass of Information



One of the recent Blogspots on CILIP's web-site focuses on the way in which young people use the Internet as an information source (<http://communities.cilip.org.uk/blogs/informationadvice/archive/2011/10/12/truth-lies-and-the-internet.aspx>). It points to a 2011 report by the *Demos* group which surveyed the responses of five hundred teachers. Entitled ***Truth, lies and the Internet: a report into young people's digital fluency*** it found that the web is '*fundamental to pupil's lives, but many are not careful, discerning users of the Internet*'. The CILIP blog notes that '*School librarians will not be surprised at the concern that plagiarism often masquerades as research, but the point that pupils often regard conspiracy theories as based on fact and are unable to see through hate or extremist sites may perhaps be a little more surprising*'. As expected the pupils are found to be comfortable with technology. It is the judgement of what is reliable that is lacking. The report, which however does not mention the role of librarians, can be purchased as a pamphlet for £10, or downloaded for free (<http://www.demos.co.uk/publications/truth-lies-and-the-internet>).

Some very similar subject matter, this time taking into account some pupils' viewpoints, was published in the June issue of ***Journal of***

Librarianship and Information Science (43:2, pp. 106-119). This article was based on some structured interviews with Danish high school pupils aged between fifteen and twenty. The number of respondents was small – just twelve – eight of which were girls and four were boys. Interestingly, the responses showed that there was a degree of critical appraisal of their sources: “*They focus on the originality of information, and reliability, authority and credibility*” (p. 116). However, the findings showed there to be a gap in understanding about what they then did with the information. The authors have the conviction that libraries are intended as places of learning, and that learning includes engaging in the process of reflection, evaluation and decision. Libraries, they feel, should have a role here in encouraging this as it relates to information literacy. But how practical is such a conclusion? It should be noted that the participants were chosen at their school to provide a range of responses, not because they happened to be found in a library. Nevertheless, all of them viewed the public library positively as a place to facilitate study; half of the participants ‘*had had some kind of formalised introduction to the public library*’; only two did not use public libraries for homework, but they both thought it was beneficial to those who did. Is this comparable to what people find in the UK? Are these twelve respondents representative of pupils in Denmark even? To what extent is the librarian able to be a coach in helping people assess what they read? Despite the questions, it was encouraging to see librarians presented as those who could help young minds navigate their way through the mass of information and on their way to some kind of evaluation. One might ask what values and influences help (or hinder) that evaluation, but the process is surely something of which a Christian interested in education would be supportive .

Another study on young people’s reading appeared in the March edition of ***Journal of Librarianship and Information Science*** (43:1, pp. 46-55), entitled ‘*The importance and pleasure reading in the lives of young teens: self-identification, self-construction and self-awareness*’. This concentrated on the reading of twelve to fifteen year-olds in east Canada. The abstract says that the study found that pleasure reading ‘*enhanced academic performance, social engagement and personal development*’ and that ‘*teens, like adults, use pleasure reading as a means of everyday life information seeking ... they gain significant insights into mature relationships, personal values, cultural identity, physical safety and security, aesthetic preferences and understanding of*

the physical world Reading for pleasure then can be a significant player in how people learn and can be encouraged as an activity in the same way as academic study. The emphasis on self is perhaps a sign of the times, though I'm not sure this is something we can do much about professionally.

It is the 'social web', though, that is one of the greatest areas of change and perhaps challenge in library services. A junior colleague said how he had gone into his public library and found all the computers in use, and all but one of them was logged into *Facebook*. A number of universities, though, now seek to promote their services using the best-known social networking sites. *London School of Economics's* E-Services Manager, Dave Puplett, made a presentation at *Umbrella* this year on LSE's approach, and this also appeared in CILIP's ***Multimedia and Information Technology*** journal in August (37:3, pp. 20-21). He said: "*The social web, oriented and people and the connections they have with each other, could open access to libraries' content and awareness of library services*". It works, he believes, because people share their experiences, the library's message is relayed via different avenues, and you get plenty of feedback. There are a thousand people who follow the library on *Twitter*; the bookmarking site *Delicious* gives the library a chance to boost use of its various web pages; the *Facebook* page is there because *Facebook* is so widely used and they also use *Flickr* for pictures. Dave Puplett suggests that one of the reasons why the social web hasn't been adopted more widely is because *Facebook* in particular is unashamedly '*people first, content second*'. But the conclusion is that this is where university libraries have to be to promote access to organised content. I think it emphasises the way academic libraries are now. They often have an assortment of group study rooms, cafes and other break-out areas. In that sense it is merely the electronic extension of what is happening physically, and if that is a good thing, then there is no particular need to frown upon it. The LSE library initiative seems to be as much for itself as for the students, but it still leaves open some similar issues that the *Demos* report raised. Is there enough critical reflection on what is read?

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

MICHAEL LANGRISH challenges librarians and information technology professionals to consider their vocation in a society in which information is instantly available

WISDOM, WORD AND WIKI

An Address to the Service of Thanksgiving held on Tuesday 12 July 2011 at the de Havilland Campus of the University of Hertfordshire, Hatfield, Hertfordshire. The service was arranged by the Librarians' Christian Fellowship as part of the Umbrella 2011 Conference organised by the Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals.



Bible Reading: Letter of James, Chapter 3, verses 13-18 (King James Bible, 1611)

13Who is a wise man and endued with knowledge among you? Let him shew out of a good conversation his works with meekness of wisdom.

14But if ye have bitter envying and strife in your hearts, glory not, and lie not against the truth.

15This wisdom descendeth not from above, but is earthly, sensual, devilish.

16For where envying and strife is, there is confusion and every evil work.

17But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy.

18And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace of them that make peace.

The other day I head someone say that information has become like money. We can't get enough of it, and it still doesn't seem to make us really happy. Certainly we inhabit a world where the way in which we access information is

changing rapidly. More than forty years ago, when Gordon Harris and I were students together, undergraduates used to purchase large numbers of textbooks and one of the most valuable things you could be given was a large, fat book grant. The number that students buy now has dwindled considerably, and academic bookshops seem to have more books devoted to the ways in which we can access information electronically than they do about most other subjects, especially those subjects in which knowledge changes rapidly. Newspapers are frequently found on-line, and when faced with a subject about which they know little, most people see an Internet search as the way forward rather than a trip to a library or bookshop. *Wikipedia*, for good or ill, Rules OK, and even the novel is not immune to this trend, with the development of devices such as *Kindle*. I have to confess that I have just succumbed! And yet, to be honest, as a lover of books, I feel this could be a bit of a shame. I still find it easier to judge the likely reliability and relevance of the printed word than I do of the electronic, but that may simply be because of my age and the way in which I was brought up and taught to acquire knowledge as a young person.

You do not need me to tell you that information technology is changing, and that is nothing new, after all. Once, the printing press was a radically new development in information technology. But at the same time as there is technological change, the Christian faith is also seen and felt to be under attack, not least in the western world. This raises the question, certainly in my own mind, as to whether these two dramatic changes in culture are in any way related. And even if this is not the case, what the parallel might say to any of us, including a book-loving bishop.

What I want to try and do this evening is to think about three words, all beginning with the letter W, and to try and answer the question of how they might relate to the Christian gospel, how they reflect changes in society and culture, and also how they might inform a group of people like yourselves, whose business is the making available of information as and when it is required. The three words are Wisdom, Word and Wiki. You do not need me to tell you that two of them are important words in the Bible: the third one is, not surprisingly, notable for its absence.

Let's start with the word that is not in the Bible: Wiki. According to *Wikipedia* (where else would I look?), this means a web site that allows the creation and editing of any number of inter-linked web pages, via a web browser, and using a simplified mark-up language text editor. The word, as I am sure you all know, is Hawaiian. It means fast. Its most well known manifestation is that fount of, dare I say it, variable knowledge, *Wikipedia*. It is very interesting, incidentally, that a friend of mine has recently told me that his two children have been banned by their school from accessing it. How you would

enforce that, I do not know!

Essentially the word “Wiki” has come to embody the idea of getting data, getting it fast and getting it now without the trouble of having to think very much in the process. In that sense, it seems to me exactly what information technology should, perhaps, be all about. Getting the information that I need, and getting it now. The trouble is that I am not sure at all that information technology should be *just* about the rapid availability of data, of facts and figures. If we are going to use information properly, then we have to understand both the information itself and also the context in which it is both gathered and used.

There is, in fact, a very distinct, and a very big, difference between data and knowledge. Data we might describe as being simply so-called bare facts. Knowledge is something much bigger, and that is the application of the facts, with understanding and insight. When God addressed Job, out of the whirlwind, and asked him “*What is this that darkens counsel, by words without knowledge?*”, that is the very point that God is making. Job's words are facts without a considered understanding.

That brings me to my second word, which is just that: Word. This is a singular, proper noun which as such means a great deal more than mere facts. The Bible uses this term ‘*Word*’, in Greek ‘*Logos*’, to refer to true knowledge and an understanding of context and value rather than merely disconnected data. That is central, and that is key. “*In the beginning was the Word*”, wrote the author of the Fourth Gospel as he tried to describe the indescribable. Word, Logos, meaning not just the written word or the spoken word, but the word that goes to the heart of things: the first principle, the word that brings reconciliation, integrity, wholeness, peace. Compare the words of that first chapter of John's Gospel with a statement that just gives you the bald facts about something, and you will see what I mean.

There is a distinction between Wiki and Word. Bald facts cannot express what the gospel writer is trying to say at this point. In his description of Jesus Christ he is attempting to do something that goes beyond basic human understanding and also explains the deeper 'hows' and 'whys' of the universe. In describing Jesus as 'Word' he was, of course, borrowing a concept from ancient Greek philosophy, but he is also illustrating the truth that God transcends mere facts and figures. God has to him a depth and a reason that tests human understanding to the limit. If men and women are made in the image of God, and if they find their fulfilment in Christ, then that says something to us about our complexity, and the implications of that for our understanding and our comprehension too. The remarkable thing, of course, is that transcendence does find human expression in the form of Jesus

Christ, as Godhead encounters humanity in Mary to produce Jesus. who is both wholly human and wholly divine. Indeed, the writer of John's Gospel echoes my very point about the distinction between facts and knowledge when he writes that "*The Law, indeed, was given through Moses, grace and truth came through Jesus Christ*".

In Jesus, word, faith, comprehension of truth, takes a step forward and goes more deeply. This brings us to our third concept which is: Wisdom. The Greek word is *Sophos*. Again, this is a word that we find very commonly in Greek philosophy, but it is also an idea that is deeply embedded in the Bible, especially in the Old Testament. Indeed, in the Old Testament the idea of Wisdom becomes so personalised that it almost takes on a life of its own. It is portrayed in what we call anthropomorphic terms, as if it was truly a thinking and reasoning person. We only have to read through, for example, the Book of Proverbs to be struck by the way in which Wisdom transcends both facts and knowledge and extends to their proper application and use as well. Wisdom resonates with a moral as well as an intellectual tone.

These two concepts of Word and Wisdom are so important that early Christian thinkers saw them as the two hands of God; the way in which he expressed his economy in the world, his ordering and his patterning of the way in which life ought to be. So, in our reading from the Epistle of James, there is a contrast between true wisdom and a false, earthly wisdom. When we think back over our own experience of life, I am sure that we can all think of many people who, on first encounter, appeared to be wise, but who on closer examination proved to be just knowledgeable. We have also, I am sure, come across those annoying people who seem to know everything, and dominate every conversation but actually, when we step back, we find that they have very little personal insight, emotional intelligence, or spiritual discernment at all. We are all familiar with the phrase "*Knowing the price of everything, and the value of nothing*", but I am also sure that we have all encountered people who understand very well the facts they possess, but who use this knowledge for selfish or destructive purposes rather than for the greater good.

True knowledge, within a framework of wisdom, always has a moral dimension to it. It only exists in a moral framework. I think that this is where we, as Christians, begin to find ourselves in territory which is really quite counter-cultural and subversive. There is a really dangerous trend in our society which tells us, in a variety of different ways, that information should be presented in a way that avoids value judgements. It is assumed that value judgements are merely personal and individual, just one person's use of the facts. But one fact is unavoidable. Once any piece of information impinges on a real situation, the two interact. The facts become interpreted, and

through interpretation they then impact, for good or for ill, on one or more aspects of human life. Just take one contemporary example. The *fact* of the un-affordability of a pension scheme, when interpreted into policy, becomes a matter of either challenge or fear. This interpretation is governed, in part, by the moral framework of a person or group involved.

In our reading from the Epistle of James, the writer points out the moral content of all true wisdom: the Wisdom that comes from above. Where that is present, he says, it is pure, it is peaceable, it is gentle, it is willing to yield (in other words, it is willing to admit when it is wrong), it is full of mercy and good fruits, and it is without any trace of partiality or hypocrisy. Wisdom is never just facts or data, or even the kind of knowledge which transforms facts and data into understanding and insight. Wisdom goes far deeper. It involves knowing the true place and significance of different aspects of knowledge in the grand scheme of things. It grasps the importance of seeking at all times to evaluate the use and application of that knowledge and to do so in a coherent, moral framework and in a way that can barely, if ever, be expressed in words alone.

Yet there are so many indicators that we inhabit a world in which people seem to want the output of the Wiki with little attention to the Word, with its deep understanding, and still less to Wisdom with its ethical and social weight. You only have to reflect on the “dumbing down” that has occurred in the national press, over a number of years, not to mention the current scandal of the misuse of data by *News International* and, I am sure, others. We only have to pause and ponder on that for a moment to realise the truth of this statement: Wiki without attention to Word (deep understanding), and still less to Wisdom (the ethical and social weight), has disastrous consequences.

In such a world as this, religious faith, based as it is on deep truths and understanding of the Word made flesh, and God's Wisdom as the shaper of human action, can come to be seen to be increasingly alien and strange. Sometimes in response the Church tends to respond in similar kind. It begins to speak, itself, in Wiki-like soundbites. Often it is in danger of distorting the truth and creating a caricature, which while it may be different to other caricatures, like the bumbling Vicar, is still a caricature and no nearer to the truth of the Gospel.

I am going through the process of making a senior appointment in my diocese. As we all are these days, I am guided by an HR professional. I am struck by how often contemporary HR procedures seem to be designed to give me more information and data than I might feel I need. At the same time, they deny me the knowledge that might allow this information to make more sense and limit my capacity for wisdom in acting in ways that are best

for the individual and the organisation as a whole. How often do I find these days that, despite the best of HR intentions, good candidates are blocked because a member of the interviewing panel has run a quick *Google* search and found information that has shaped their opinion without the knowledge that might have provided the broader and deeper understanding, and truth, which is needed.

Then there are the concerns that I often feel when I am listening to something like the *Today* programme, where a barrage of battering questions seems more concerned to pin down a particular fact than increase knowledge and understanding. Or recent high profile court cases where making a point to win a quick argument seems to take precedence over discerning truth and how most appropriately and wisely to respond. Similarly, recent controversies around “wiki-leaks”, the use of social networking sites to circumvent court injunctions on privacy, may raise questions but they don't provide easy answers concerning the responsible use of information and its application for good or for ill.

All of this certainly raises for me, as a disciple of Christ, the question of whether the trends in society which drive us to want the sort of information which is provided by the Wiki - all information on a plate – are at odds with the search for ultimate truth which lies at the heart of the Christian faith and indeed, I would suggest, at the heart of all true spiritual longing and seeking.

That's where I come to a conference such as this and consider the implications for those of you who make a living out of facts, and the provision of these facts. Facts alone are not enough. They need to be part of true knowledge based on understanding, and that needs to be grounded in wisdom. However, just because this lesson is most easily illustrated by reference to developments in electronic communications, it doesn't follow that it has been absent from earlier forms of information technology. As Benjamin Disraeli observed, back in 1870, ninety per cent of all books written are rubbish, and the other ten per cent are a repetition of that rubbish! However, as if to prove my general point, an Internet search tells me that this idea actually originated with a science fiction writer, Theodore Sturgeon, in 1958. No matter. You may also remember that, three thousand years ago, the writer of Ecclesiastes had already warned us, writing somewhat ruefully, that “*Of the making of many books there is no end, and much study wearies the body*”.

Word without Wisdom leads nowhere. The Christian Gospel grounds its claim to the truth in the belief that God took human flesh and became incarnate in Jesus Christ. St. John describes this as the expression of the Word in human flesh. I think that he could just as easily have borrowed the

language of Wisdom. I think his choice of 'Word' was undoubtedly shaped by the idea that the Word spoken has creative power, whereas 'Wisdom' might be used more appropriately to describe the ultimate truth which lies behind this creativity. But mere facts are not enough for healthy people in a healthy world.

When psychologists speak of child development they often describe it as going through three stages of increasing complexity and depth. The first stage is about the acquisition of facts: the "What?" questions, something which is thought to follow as a direct consequence of language. The second stage is about the relatedness and understanding of these facts: the asking of questions using the word "How?" The third concerns significance and inner meaning: the asking of the deeper questions of "Why"? That seems to me to echo my three ideas today. The problem is that modern trends often discourage the asking of the question "Why?" When that question is persisted with, the answers which are provided can often tell us far more about the pre-conceptions of the respondent than the real issue which is at stake for the questioner. I find myself living with a disturbing question as to whether in the light of the Gospel, the Good News of the Living Word, modern culture is undergoing a "dumbing down", a proliferation of information, but with a contraction of knowledge and wisdom which in psychological terms amounts to developmental regression. For me, that is where people like you come in. My hope is that librarians and information technology professionals, particularly those who view this world through the prism of their faith, will be powerful advocates for that third stage of development and that the understanding of the Wisdom, the Word of God, will never be reduced to a mere Wiki. A little knowledge on its own is, indeed, a dangerous thing.

If I may dare to suggest, your vocation may just be to ensure that we all have the appropriate resources to enable us to continue to drink deep in the well of data, but only to find ways of ensuring that the knowledge we gain is used with wisdom and a care for truth but all for the good of God's world. Amen.

The Right Reverend **Michael L. Langrish**, *BSocSc, BA, MA, Hon DD (Birm), Hon DD (Ex)* became Suffragan Bishop of Birkenhead (Chester Diocese) in 1993 and Diocesan Bishop of Exeter in 2000. In addition to being a member of the House of Bishops and General Synod, he was Chair of the Church's Rural Strategy Group for nine years, relinquishing this role in September 2009 to become Chair of the Churches' Legislation Advisory Group. Bishop Michael has been a member of the House of Lords since 2005, where he speaks on a wide range of issues reflecting his interest in children and young people, education and employment, urban and rural affairs, Aid and Development issues and the Middle East.

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

CONTENDING FOR THE FAITH OR SPOILING FOR A FIGHT?

Most readers will know that the *Librarians' Christian Fellowship* is just one of a number of Christian professional groups which have been established to bring together Christians in their respective professions, provide opportunities for Christian fellowship and co-operation, and consider issues from within a specifically Christian framework. Some of these groups are very small while others – such as the *Association of Christian Teachers* and the *Christian Medical Fellowship* – have memberships running into several thousands. Most of the groups originated within, or in close contact with, the *Universities' and Colleges' Christian Fellowship*, and many are now affiliated to the organisation *Transform Work UK* (TWUK).

One question that has always interested me during my thirty plus years as Secretary of the *Librarians' Christian Fellowship* is the extent to which Christian professional groups should see themselves as campaigning groups with definite policies and viewpoints on current issues which they seek to actively promote within their professional spheres. Members of the wider Christian community sometimes expect groups like LCF to take a definite stand on current issues, such as homosexuality or the provision of sexually explicit materials on library shelves. In practice, however, it is often clear that members hold a diversity of views on these issues and would not be happy for the Fellowship to publicly express views that are not held by everyone. One alternative approach, of course, is to see Christian professional groups as providing a forum in which different views are expressed but which leave members free to draw their own conclusions which they can put into practice in their working lives.

With these questions in mind I thought it might be helpful to find out how other Christian professional groups see their role and, perhaps, find a balance between the two alternative approaches mentioned above. To this end, I recently e-mailed some nineteen organisations, most of whom provide contact details on the TWUK web site, and asked them for their views.

I have to say that the response to this exercise has been a little

disappointing and that the majority of the groups have still to reply to my questions at the time of writing. This may indicate that the groups are unsure of their role, or it may be that they are so busy campaigning on current issues that they have little time to respond to questionnaires! The present article, then, should be regarded as a “work in progress” rather than as a definitive treatment of the issues involved.

In my e-mail to the various groups I explained that I was hoping to explore the question “*Should Christian professional groups see themselves as campaigning groups, with definite viewpoints on controversial issues which arise in their professional spheres and which they actively promote within their professions? Or should they see their role as mainly providing a forum in which their members can debate professional issues, and in which individuals are encouraged to reach their own conclusions?*”

I suggested that a number of subsidiary questions arise from this. If groups see themselves primarily as campaigning groups, how do they ascertain that the views they are expressing really reflect the views of their members? And how do they deal with individual members (perhaps a minority) who may dissent from the views of the majority. On the other hand if groups see themselves mainly as arenas for the exchange of views, how do they deal with pressure from some individual members, or members of the wider Christian community, who may want them to take a tougher line on particular issues?

It may be that most groups will see themselves, to some extent, as fulfilling both roles. In that case, I wanted to know how groups decide which issues warrant the expression of an “official view” and which are merely matters for discussion or individual conscience.

I am not sure that the responses received to date have entirely answered these questions, but I have summarised some of the replies below for the interest of LCF readers.

One of the most encouraging responses came from Christopher Jones of the *Agricultural Christian Fellowship*. In the late 1980s the ACF committee produced a booklet entitled ***Biblical Signposts for Agricultural Policy***, drafted by a member in consultation with a theologian. This was worked over by the committee and sent out as a draft to the membership and other interested parties such as *Christian Aid*. A day's consultation, open to all members, was held and the booklet re-drafted and published. This has been used since to address the basics of issues in agriculture as they arise.

One of these issues was the growing difficulties and stress that many farming families were experiencing. The ACF joined with the Chaplaincy Centre in the *Royal Agriculture Society* in establishing the *Farm Crisis Network*, with help from a similar group in Germany. This network of volunteers has, in the last seventeen or eighteen years, been of assistance to some thousands of people.

Another step that ACF has taken is to form a partnership with the

Church Mission Society and the *John Ray Initiative* (a Christian and scientific environmental study group) to develop the exploration of underlying issues, of which climate change is a very pressing example. The original booklet is now being revised by this partnership.

Paul Darley, Chair of *Christians in Engineering*, tells me that CiE is a small group and not large enough to support an annual conference. They publish a journal but sometimes find it difficult to find articles especially on topics which are specific to engineering. Comments are invited from members but few received. They are not a campaigning group but members do contact them for advice and support on issues such as being asked to lie at work, bribery when carrying out work for overseas clients, redundancy, enforced career change, and lack of support from local churches.

Contact is by letter, e-mail and telephone and the support given is informal and ad hoc. The major emphasis is on moral issues such as lying. Paul himself has had experience of being dismissed from a post when he refused to exaggerate the output of his company's machines in negotiations with a trade union. Other less personal issues arise in engineering work – such as the rights and wrongs of developing nuclear power – but these are issues on which members are likely to have different views.

Paul thinks that there needs to be a wider debate on leadership and that this applies to all organisations including the government and local churches. To what extent should leaders lead and formulate policy and to what extent should they simply seek to reflect the views of their members?

Steven Rouch, Secretary of *Christian Nurses and Midwives*, tells me that CNM is still a small group of about one hundred and seventy members in all. While it would be ideal to create a forum for their members to discuss ethical issues, in practice whenever they have tried to get feedback the response from members has been a “*deafening silence*”. Attendance at events is often disappointing but these events do provide opportunities to hold discussions and get feedback from members on what concerns them.

This minimal feedback has shaped what CNM has tried to do, in terms of writing articles, sharing news stories and holding seminars and other events. It has also led them to work with others who are concerned with similar issues in order to identify common positions on such topics as end of life care and the sharing of faith with patients and colleagues. It has mostly been the leadership of CNM that has shaped these policies, rather than the rank and file members.

On a few occasions, members have e-mailed CNM about public consultations or discussions into which they feel a Christian input is needed. One example was the consultation on a framework and core competencies for spiritual care delivery in the Welsh *National Health Service*. The CNM leadership consulted with members known to have knowledge or expertise in this area and prepared a submission based on the various comments received. However, they have not been a pro-actively campaigning

organisation, despite supporting the *Care Not Killing* campaign against euthanasia and assisted suicide.

The Rev. Dr. Joanna Collicutt, Chair of the *British Association of Christians in Psychology*, tells me that her group is essentially a forum rather than a campaigning group although they have been reviewing their identity recently.

Janet Liao, of the *Christian Dental Fellowship*, tells me that the issues raised in my e-mail were discussed at their recent annual conference and that some thirty-eight members filled in a questionnaire on the subject “*What is the Christian Dental Fellowship for?*” The answers given seem to suggest that most members view CDF as a fellowship linking together Christian dentists in their professional and personal lives. It also provides a means through which Christian dentists can support mission organisations that combine dentistry with Christian ministry. The Fellowship provides opportunities for asking and discussing difficult ethical questions that arise in the profession of dentistry and some members feel it should also be a group that voices these concerns to the relevant professional bodies. A large number of participants agreed that CDF should actively promote their official views but a significant number could not say whether they agreed or disagreed. This could be due to the fact that CDF does not currently have any “official views”!

Speaking as the Secretary of the *Librarians' Christian Fellowship* I have a great deal of sympathy with the frustration felt by the leaders of *Christian Nurses and Midwives* and other groups at the “*deafening silence*” that is often encountered when members are asked to give their comments on current issues. There has often been a similar reluctance to contribute to debates within the membership of our own Fellowship. For example, when members were invited, a few years back, to submit their views on the display of religious posters in public libraries, only one member outside the executive committee managed to reply. Despite this, however, we have been able to produce discussion papers on a number of topics – such as children's books, library management and Sunday opening – and these have been circulated to the librarianship and religious press as a means of promoting further debate. The “discussion paper” approach has the advantage that it communicates Christian concerns to a wider audience without implying that every member of the Fellowship agrees with every last word of the documents circulated.

If Christian professional groups do decide to place a greater emphasis on their role as campaigning organisations they may have to endure criticism from other Christians, not least from those outside the evangelical movement. When the *Lawyers' Christian Fellowship* campaigned against proposed legislative changes, a few years ago, their stance came under fire from ***Church Times*** columnist Giles Fraser, who wrote: “*We may be entering a new age of Christian legalism, as an organisation called the Lawyers' Christian Fellowship has begun the task of interpreting the Scriptures for the*

*rest of us and pursuing its theological vision through the courts. It is spearheading resistance to the anti-discrimination legislation now passing through Parliament. Like many I want to cry out: "Not in my name". I find the prospect of Christian lawyers pursuing their definition of Christian interests an unappealing one. As a parish priest I can think of few things better designed to sabotage evangelism in this country than a high-profile campaign defending Christian values led by smooth Christian lawyers. Perhaps their intentions are entirely honourable, but they need to be told what a sinister impression they give."*³

In my approach to the various professional groups I suggested that it might also be helpful to explore the question of how far Christians are justified in feeling under pressure or persecuted in the workplace today. Most readers of this article will be familiar with recent cases in which Christians have been dismissed or disciplined for wearing or displaying crosses, offering to pray for patients or clients, or advising clients to put their faith in God. At the time of writing, one of the most recent cases to be reported in the press has concerned Adrian Smith, an employee of the *Trafford Housing Trust*, who has been demoted, and his salary reduced, as a result of speaking out against the church weddings of gay couples on his private *Facebook* page.⁴

The case in question certainly raises important questions about religious liberty and freedom of expression. However, according to press reports, Mr. Smith *did* identify himself as an employee of the Housing Trust on his *Facebook* page, although presumably without implying that his views on gay marriage represented the official views of his employers. I think that there is a grey area here which needs further discussion and clarification.

I must admit that I sometimes read these press reports of alleged discrimination or persecution in the workplace with mixed feelings. Certainly I have sympathy for fellow Christians who feel that they are being victimised or marginalised for expressing their faith within the working environment. On the other hand I sometimes suspect that newspaper reports are sensationalising these cases and failing to mention relevant factors. There is a parallel with a number of past cases in which newspapers have published reports of the alleged refusal of some public libraries to display posters advertising religious events. Closer investigation has usually revealed that there are other relevant considerations not mentioned by the newspapers.

I also wonder whether the alleged victims of some of these cases have been too eager to pursue their cases through the law courts. For example, wearing a cross or other Christian symbol is certainly a legitimate way of expressing one's faith, but no Christian church or denomination insists on this as a condition of membership, and there are other ways of expressing faith in

³ Giles Fraser, *The Bible is not a legal document*. In *Church Times*, 19 January 2007.

⁴ Jonathan Petrie, *Demoted for not backing gay marriage: Facebook martyr*. In *Mail on Sunday*, 23 October 2011, p. 1.

Christ in the workplace.

Past LCF speaker Jonathan Bartley, of the Christian think tank *Ekklesia*, tells me that his organisation have been monitoring the development of these cases over the last few years, and have spoken to the participants on both sides of the disputes. Jonathan predicted that disputes of this kind would increase in his book *Faith and Politics After Christendom*.⁵ His experience is that, in most of the cases, mediation is not explored, and the situation has quickly become polarised. He believes that readers should also be aware that the groups behind many of these cases – such as *Christian Concern* – have a clear agenda which may not be shared by all Christians.

Trevor Phillips, Chair of the *Equality and Human Rights Commission*, has recently acknowledged that many Christians feel “*under siege*” in contemporary Britain, but suggested that some evangelical Christians are using these disputes as a means of lobbying for political power.⁶

In response, Dr. Don Horrocks, head of public affairs at the *Evangelical Alliance*, has argued, “*Christians have been at the forefront of defending religious liberty and freedom of speech and conscience against the encroachment of a largely secular agenda that has been forcibly seeking to impose a 'one size fits all' blunt instrument of equalities legislation on everyone. Such an approach ignorantly assumes that faith adherents can simply suspend their convictions and consciences in public life and keep them private*”.⁷

There was a balanced discussion of some of these issues in the BBC1 programme *Are Christians Being Persecuted?* which was broadcast on Easter Sunday in 2010. The presenter, Nicky Campbell, concluded that many of the current problems stem from the failure of equalities legislation to face up to the problem of what should happen if the various “human rights” enshrined in the law conflict with each other. What rights should take precedence, for example, if the equal rights of gay couples conflict with the rights of religious believers to live and speak in accordance with their beliefs?

These are all on-going discussions and I will be pleased to receive the views of members of our own Fellowship as well as from the leaders of other Christian professional groups. Let's have a constructive debate on these matters and banish the “*deafening silence*” once and for all. To Be Continued (I hope).

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

⁵ Jonathan Bartley, *Faith and Politics After Christendom: the church as a movement for anarchy*. Authentic Media, 2006, £9.99, ISBN 978-1842273487.

⁶ Jonathan Petrie, *I'll defend faith, says equality chief: Watchdog can help lift 'siege' on religious believers*. In *Sunday Telegraph*, 19 June 2011, p. 12.

⁷ *Evangelical Alliance responds to Trevor Phillips on religious freedom*. <http://www.eauk.org/articles/trevor-phillips-telegraph.cfm>

THE LAST WORD

JOHN WADDINGTON-FEATHER applauds aspects of current technology but calls for a return to some traditional values founded on an unchanging God

ALL CHANGE

“Naught may endure but mutability,” wrote the poet Shelley. And how right he was; but he was more right than ever he could have imagined. Since he died in the nineteenth century the world has undergone vast changes which are still taking place. There was an incredible amount of change in my grandparents’ and parents’ lifetimes; but there has been a mind-blowing amount of change in mine.

No way would my grandmother have imagined we’d put a man on the moon. It was still in the realms of science-fiction dreamed up by writers like H.G. Wells and Jules Verne. And what would my great-great grandfather, Timothy Feather, who introduced steam-powered looms into his mills in Yorkshire at the back end of the eighteenth century, have made of the banks of electronic looms manned by one person today? Feather’s Mills and their chimney still stand: one converted into luxury apartments and the other a listed building.

One of the biggest changes in global society has been made by the Internet. People across the globe can communicate within seconds at a fraction of the cost in the past. I remember when I was a small boy of eleven or twelve in the early 1940s passing a telephone box at the end of our street and being asked by a dear old lady standing outside the box if I’d make a call for her. She’d no idea how to make a call and was frightened of the whole contraption inside the box. When I’d made the call for her and put her two pennies in the call-box, she wouldn’t hold the receiver and I was left holding it and transmitting the entire conversation to the old lady from the person at the other end. A far cry from today’s world when most of us own mobile phones and can begin a conversation to someone miles away from the contents of our pocket.

However, time has caught up on me, and today I feel very much like that old lady when I’m faced with modern gadgetry and terms. I don’t really know what “*facebook*”, “*twitter*”, “*blog*” and all the rest of the new Internetting terms mean. Often I have to ask my children or grandchildren for advice – but I persevere!

Recently as I lay on my bed in the renal ward being dialysed at hospital, I noticed that all the older patients like myself were reading books, while the

younger ones were reading from i-pads. It dawned on me that I was witnessing a literary revolution, such has happened when the printing press was invented and books were mass-produced for the first time.

So I made a few enquiries and discovered how I could convert my own novels and other books from paperbacks to e-books. I was recommended to try Lulu.com and was pleasantly surprised after one or two hitches to discover how easy it was; more so when I was given personal help by a sympathetic member of the Lulu team. So now all my **Quill Hedgehog** novels and **Blake Hartley** mystery novels, as well as the historical romantic novels, **The Illingworth House**” trilogy, can be down-loaded as e-books from Lulu.com at a fraction of the cost of paper-backs, and there will be more to follow, like my **Keighworth Chronicles**.

All change is not for the good, yet the advances in technology and science, especially medical science, have made life much easier and more healthy. But for my dialysis machine I wouldn't be writing this article now. Ten years ago I developed cancer in my one kidney and it had to be removed. Since then I've been kept alive by dialysis and drugs and by a devoted team of doctors and nurses. Thirty years ago dialysis was impossible for those over sixty five as there weren't enough machines. Since then there's been a revolutionary change in the development of dialysis machines which are now much smaller, cheaper and more efficient. The same is true in other branches of medicine which are saving lives and keeping us olden-goldies living longer and, more importantly, active

Change there will always be, but some things do not change. My faith is grounded on an unchanging God and all that He stands for in the Christian creed. My faith has matured with age, but I've not departed from it. To do that would mean a total collapse of my life, which I've seen happening in society at large where the rules governing faith have been abandoned.

The Ten Commandments were designed to hold society together and are as valid now as when they were first written. To abandon them is courting disaster, as we've seen in so many marriage breakdowns or lack of marriage altogether. Lack of faith, marriage and parental control are, I believe, major causes of the social problems in many of our cities where terrible riots have occurred recently. Pray God, marriage and faith are restored in coming generations.

I could go on at great length about change – and negative change merely for the sake of change – but let's hope that in the future more balanced and wiser generations than ours will be selective in adopting change, and bring the world nearer the Elysium we all dream of.

The Rev. **John Waddington-Feather**, BA, FRSA, is an author, the proprietor of *Feather Books*, and a retired teacher, school librarian and prison chaplain,