

Summer 2019

CLIS Christians in
Library and
Information
Services



CHRISTIAN LIBRARIAN

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EVENTS AT A GLANCE

●**ANNUAL PUBLIC LECTURE: SATURDAY 19 OCTOBER 2019:** Manvers Street Baptist Church, Bath, from 2.30. p.m. Speaker: Bob Hartman “Telling the Story ... Again and Again”. Details: p. 9.

●**CONFERENCE: 2020 VISION: COMMUNICATIONS IN A DIGITAL AGE; SATURDAY 25 APRIL 2020.** Regent Hall, Oxford Street, London, from 10.30. a.m. Speakers: Rev. Mark Woods and Alexandra Davis. Details: p. 10.

●**ANNUAL PUBLIC LECTURE: SATURDAY 10 OCTOBER 2020:** Belfrey Hall, Stonegate, York, from 2.30. p.m. Speaker: Paul Burbridge, Riding Lights Theatre Company. Details: p. 10.

PLEASE PRAY FOR

●**Forthcoming CLIS activities including the annual lectures in 2019 and 2020 and the annual conference in 2020.**

●**Christians and others working towards an ethical approach to the development of artificial intelligence and robotics.**

●**The various Christian organisations mentioned in this issue among them Instant Apostle, Christian Heritage London, Speaking Volumes, Christian Resources Exhibition, and others.**

● **Transform Work UK and the various Christian professional & sector and workplace groups that it supports.**

●**Public and other library services in an era of cutbacks, closures and redundancies.**

●**CILIP and its regional and specialist groups as they serve their members and represent the library and information professions.**



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RICHARD WALLER introduces the literary sub-genre of military science fiction and draws some conclusions about 'talking the talk and walking the walk' of faith

KNOWING IS NOT BELIEVING



There has been a lot about C. S. Lewis in ***Christian Librarian*** over the years. I admire him and as a lover of Sci-Fi I think his SF trilogy (1), a stunning work of fantasy, is even better than his *Narnia* books, *Narnia* for adults in fact. They deserve to be better known.

However, my love is really for military Sci-Fi and my favourite author is David Weber. Not only does he do the fighting well, something you don't always see properly portrayed, but he also does the politics that lie behind the wars realistically. His characters and their motivations are totally believable, real people behaving

like real people. And he doesn't glorify war either, the horror of it and the devastation it leaves behind are a constant theme. Solving problems with brute force simply produces a crop of new problems, even if the fight was inevitable. His soldiers fight because they need to, not because they want to. Those who do want to (there are some) are never sympathetically portrayed and usually villains.

Another reason I like David Weber is that he clearly knows the Bible and the main outlines of church history. In his *Honor Harrington* series (2) the misogynistic *Church of Humanity Unchained* is particularly believable, and so is the totally frightful *Church of God Awaiting* in the *Safehold* series. (3) Notably, the Protector of Grayson's brief but impassioned speech from the Throne to his recalcitrant nobility on the duty of the Christian to stand up for the weak and helpless even at the cost of life itself is as fine a piece of rhetoric on the subject as any preacher might wish to produce from his pulpit. (4) In the most recent volume of the *Safehold* series (5) Christianity is beginning secretly to re-appear amongst those who have discovered the truth that the 'church' that they have been taught to believe in is an ancient but total fabrication by skilled propagandists.

But there is a caveat. C. S. Lewis was a believer and this can be seen in his novels, David Weber is not, although I suspect he possibly thinks he is. The available biographical information does not include his church background to be sure about this. He believes in hell, as the God he convincingly speaks of is totally just, but his heroes believe in a good God who will forgive those who do their best to live morally and uprightly in a difficult world. As is a common post-modern theme, love excuses behaviour the Bible roundly condemns.

C. S. Lewis was steeped in classical thought and legend and some of his writings are set in this background (6). On the other hand some of David Weber's books could never have been written by a Bible believing Christian. He also understands and knows the classical myths but produces a world of polytheistic magic and dualistic theology, some aspects of which are repellent (7).

So knowing the word of God is not the same as knowing the Word of God. The two are different. What matters is whether we allow ourselves to be controlled by God and his truth or simply know of it, possibly with a general assent to it. As our former pastor used to put it '*You talk the talk, but do you walk the walk?*' The latter is far more important to our spiritual welfare.

References

(1) These are ***Out of the silent planet*** (1938); ***Perelandra/Voyage to Venus*** (1943); and ***That hideous strength*** (1945).

(2) The *Honor Harrington* Series starts with ***On Basilisk Station*** (1993) and concludes twenty-seven later with ***Uncompromising honor*** (2018).

(3) The *Safehold* series is ongoing, starting with ***Off Armageddon Reef*** (2007)

(4) ***Flag in Exile*** (1995), book 7 of the *Honor Harrington* series.

(5) ***Through fiery trials*** (2019)

(6) ***Till we have faces*** (1956) for instance.

(7) e.g. *The War God* series.

Richard M. Waller, BD, is the President of *Christians in Library and Information Services* and until his retirement worked for the public library service in the *Metropolitan Borough of Wigan*.

ROBERT FOSTER visits his public library to look for books on a technique which is associated with Buddhism but also has Christian proponents

MINDFULNESS



Mindfulness has been talked about a lot in the last few years. It has gained recognition in the area of clinical psychology, particularly for cognitive behavioural therapy (1). There is even a page about its benefits on the NHS website. But the interest isn't just related to medical practice. In the latest issue of *Pianist* magazine I found the word mentioned three times. Mindfulness, it seems, isn't just something to make you better, it's for improved effectiveness. My current workplace runs a weekly meditation session – a related activity - for anyone who wants to join. It's also practised as an aid to staying calm.

Although it has links to Buddhism, there are Christian proponents of mindfulness. The expert mentioned and quoted on the NHS website is Professor J. Mark G. Williams, an honorary Canon at *Oxford Cathedral*. There is also an SPCK publication by Tim Stead entitled ***Mindfulness and Christian Spirituality***. In an early chapter he describes how the practice has helped some people with chronic pain. It is hard not to be moved by this.

It is not for everyone, however. An article in *The Guardian* (2) indicated that negative impacts had been experienced by some who used

mindfulness to find a peaceful state of mind. The authors concluded that there were other more straightforward relaxation therapies to be tried such as reading or spending time with friends, if you couldn't get on with mindfulness.

Trying to get a good overall picture of the subject is challenging. However, going to my nearest public library, I was reminded just how good libraries can be at the selection of material. Mindfulness is sometimes classified at 158, and I found there a selection of books on different aspects of applied psychology. There was a Christian book amongst them too (Rob Parsons' *The Wisdom House*). As it turned out there were no books with mindfulness in the title – perhaps they were out at the time. Nevertheless I was fairly reassured that I was looking at relevant topics.

But should the prevalence of mindfulness and meditation matter to us? Sometimes I think that the term '*meditation*' is used loosely as a shorthand for simply stopping and being still, something which many people, including Christians, have done profitably for a very long time. I don't think that is a problem. And the clinical psychologists may be able to help us further. But I also wonder if mindfulness is practised by some as a replacement for hope, being driven by stress and despair. The major current news stories go on seemingly without an end, and the way this can affect people should concern us. But whatever we may feel, God never gives up on anyone.

References

- (1) Alvin Powell, '*When science meets mindfulness*'. In **Harvard Gazette**, April 2019.
- (2) Dawn Foster '*Is mindfulness making us ill?*' In **The Guardian**, 23 January 2016.

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CLIS NEWSLETTER



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ANNUAL PUBLIC LECTURE

Our annual public lecture will return on **Saturday afternoon 19 October 2019** when we will be meeting in the **Manvers Street Baptist Church** in Bath and our speaker will be the well known children's writer and master storyteller **Bob Hartman**, author of such books as ***The Lion Storyteller Bible*** (Lion, RRP £15.99, ISBN 978-0745984331) and ***Bob Hartman's Rhyming Bible*** (SPCK, RRP £14.99, ISBN 978-0281077946).

Bob's lecture is to be entitled *Telling the Story – Again and Again* and will explore what is involved in re-telling Bible stories both on the printed page and in live situations. More details will follow but please book the date now and plan to attend.

When we last met in Bath a number of our members chose to spend a weekend in this historic city where places of interest include the

Roman baths, the eighteenth century Pump Room, and the Jane Austen Centre. Some members may wish to spend a similar weekend in Bath this October. Will we see you there?

EVENTS FOR 2020

Next year's Annual Conference is to be held on **Saturday 25 April 2020** in the Princes Street Room at the Salvation Army's *Regent Hall*, 275 Oxford Street, London, W1C 2DJ, from 10.30. a.m. The theme for the conference is *2020 Vision: Communications in a Digital Age* and our speakers are the Rev. **Mark Woods**, former editor of the ***Baptist Times*** and the ***Christian Today*** on-line newspaper, and now working in an editorial role at the *Bible Society*, and Alexandra Davis, Projects and Digital Content Lead at the *Evangelical Alliance*.

Next year's Annual Lecture is to be held on **Saturday 10 October 2020** at the *Belfrey Hall*, 52A Stonegate, York, YO1 8AS, from 2.30.p.m., and our guest speaker is to be **Paul Burbridge**, Artistic Director of the *Riding Lights Theatre Company*.

Further details will be published as they become available but please book these dates and plan to attend.

OUTSIDE EVENTS

Non-CLIS events likely to be of interest to Christian librarians include the national *Christian Resources Exhibition* and the *Premier Radio Digital Conference*.

This year's *Christian Resources Exhibition* takes place at the *Sandown Park* exhibition centre, Esher, Surrey, from **Tuesday 15 – Thursday 17 October 2019** and will be officially opened by Paul Jones, singer in the 1960s pop band Manfred Mann, and his actress wife Fiona Hendley.

The exhibition will feature its usual varied selection of resources for the Christian community and the organisations and publishers taking

part include the *Bible Reading Fellowship*, *CLC Bookshops*, *Day One Publishers*, the *Evangelical Alliance*, the *Hymns Ancient and Modern* group, *Lion Hudson*, *SPCK*, and the *Wycliffe Bible Translators*. Further information will be released nearer the time but in the meantime you can find more information on the web site www.creonline.co.uk

This year's *Premier Radio Digital Conference* takes place on **Saturday 2 November 2019** at *The Brewery*, Chiswell Street, London, EC1Y 4SD, and you can find more details as they are released, including speakers, at <https://www.premier-digital.info/conference>

MEMBERSHIP DIRECTORY

Our **Membership Directory** for 2019 was compiled in late May and e-mailed to members of CLIS who are on our e-mailing list. However if you would like to receive a printed copy of the list please contact our Membership Secretary, Janice Paine, 22 Queensgate Gardens, 396 Upper Richmond Road, Putney, London, SW15 6JN. Telephone 020 8785 2174.

If you have e-mail facilities but are not currently receiving our **E-Newsletter** and other e-mails we would encourage you to sign up as this makes it easier for us to circulate information to you at short notice. To join the list please contact John Wckenden, 13 Fernhill Close, Hawley, Blackwater, Camberley, Surrey, GU17 9HD/ E mail wickenden@outlook.com

PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL NEWS

- My book reviews continue to appear on the web site of the *Evangelical Alliance* and my recent reviews have included Lysa Terkeurst's book ***It's Not Supposed To Be This Way*** (Thomas Nelson, RRP £10.99, ISBN 978-1400210978) which gives advice on living with disappointments. You can read my verdict on this book at

<https://www.eauk.org/news-and-views/book-review-its-not-supposed-to-be-this-way>

- Our committee member **Andrew Parker** played the part of a member of the Sanhedrin in the *New Malden Passion Play* performed in the *Blagdon Road Recreation Ground*, New Malden, Surrey, on Saturday 13 April 2019. The play was sponsored by *Churches Together in New Malden*.
- **Ben Virgo** and **Melvyn Bragg** took part in a discussion on the Bible translator William Tyndale on *Premier Christian Radio's Unbelievable* programme on Saturday 30 March 2019. This looked at the spiritual results of Tyndale's work and his influence on English language and literature which, according to Melvyn Bragg, was even greater than that of William Shakespeare. Ben Virgo has led walking tours for CLIS members on behalf of *Christian Heritage London* while Melvyn Bragg is a well known writer and broadcaster and the author of ***William Tyndale: a Very Brief History*** (SPCK, RRP £12.99, ISBN 978-0281077137).

SPEAKING VOLUMES

Regular readers of ***Christian Librarian*** will be familiar with the *Christian Book Promotion Trust* and its *Speaking Volumes* library scheme. The CLIS executive committee recently sent a donation of £100 to support the work of *Speaking Volumes* and the following letter of thanks has been received from the scheme's Director, **Paula Renouf**.

"We at Speaking Volumes, want to say a heartfelt thank you for your kind donation of £100 toward our grant scheme enabling libraries and schools to purchase Christian books and stock them in their library for their clients to read.

Within a year of offering 100% grant funding, demand for the grants exceeded the amount we could offer, meaning that any further

funding we can provide through donations like yours is quite literally a God-send!

Teachers have told us how our books improve children's knowledge of Bible stories and their excitement as the books bring those stories to life. We've heard several stories of how the books helped bereaved children too.

In some instances, such as in a women and children's refuge, it was the first time children had the opportunity to read Bible stories. For some young offenders it was the first time they had been permitted by the borstal authorities to have any books.

Most of our grants (more than 70%) go to primary schools but we would love to provide more to public libraries and prisons. If you're able to facilitate a grant of books to either of these places, please do take advantage of the grant scheme and make an application. Anyone can make the application so long as they have permission to do so from the recipient library.

We truly value your support, not just shown by your donation but in all you do to encourage us. Thank you for your friendship. "

SPEAKING UP IN THE WORKPLACE

Representatives of several Christian professional groups linked to *Transform Work UK* took part in a telephone conference call on Monday 13 May 2019.

Mark Bainbridge, Executive Director of the *Lawyers' Christian Fellowship*, introduced the ***Speak Up*** booklet produced by the *Lawyers' Christian Fellowship* and the *Evangelical Alliance*. This addresses the problem of Christians losing confidence in their freedom to share the gospel, in working life and other areas. The publication highlights the freedom of religion and belief enshrined in UK law and gives advice on sensitively sharing the gospel at work and in other situations. ***Speak Up*** is available as a printed booklet and can also be downloaded from the *Lawyers' Christian Fellowship* and EA web sites.

Speak Up has been followed by a second booklet **Christianity in the Workplace** advising employers about the Christian faith, the law relating to religious liberty issues and guidance for cultivating an inclusive workplace. There are plans for regional **Speak Up** events for Christians in various parts of the country followed by separate seminars for employers.

COMMUNITY OUTREACH

One of the recent books mentioned by Manoj Raithatha during his conference talk on 6 April 2019 was Elizabeth Mednick's **Jesus in Town** (Instant Apostle, RRP £8.99, ISBN 978-1912726078) which tells the 'remarkable story' of what happened when the churches of Barking and Dagenham came together in a various ministries to serve the local community. These include *The Source*, an advice and information centre based in a major shopping precinct in Barking, and a night shelter for homeless people housed in local church premises. I have a certain interest in this book as the author is a former member of my own church and it was at my suggestion that she approached *Instant Apostle* as a possible publisher for her book.

In a development too recent to be mentioned in the **Jesus in Town** book the public library service in the *London Borough of Barking and Dagenham*, has approached the organisers of *The Source* and invited them to provide *Source*-style advice and information sessions in the Central Library on several afternoons a week.

Barking Churches Unite is the local network of churches that sponsors the work of *The Source*, the night shelter and other ministries and you can find more information on the web site www.bc-unite.co.uk

Such community initiatives, of course, are not restricted to Barking and Dagenham and **The Test Room** by Alex Gyasi (CreateSpace, RRP £10.00, ISBN 978-1500544782) tells the story of a shelter for homeless people provided by the *Highway of Holiness Church* in the Tottenham area of London. You can read my recent review of this 2014 publication on the *Evangelical Alliance* web site at <https://www.eauk.org/news-and-views/the-test-room-a-real-life-story-of-passing-the-test-of-love>

LIBRARIES IN A DIGITAL WORLD

Libraries Week is a celebration of the nation's libraries. 2018 focused on well being with thousands of libraries across the country showcasing how they bring communities together, combat loneliness, provide a space for reading and creativity, and support people with their mental health.

Libraries Week 2019 will take place from **7-12 October 2019** and will celebrate the role of libraries in the digital age, exploring how libraries are engaging communities through technology, building digital skills and confidence, encouraging digital participation and inclusion, supporting health, well being and education and supporting local business and enterprise.

Library staff and supporters can register to take part on the web site www.librariesweek.org.uk How will **you** be supporting *Libraries Week* this year, whether in your library, community or local church? Perhaps you could write a short article on libraries for your church newsletter or contribute a brief '*library spot*' to a Sunday or mid-week meeting . This might include a prayer of thanksgiving for our rich heritage of books, libraries, and digital materials, or an encouragement to use libraries as a source of Christian publications.

NARRATIVE BIBLE

Some of our readers will remember our 2003 annual lecture, held in Bath, at which our guest speaker, **Keith White**, spoke on William Tyndale and Bible translations.

Keith, who heads up the *Mill Grove* family centre in Woodford, Essex, has recently published a second edition of ***The Bible (Narrative)***. This combines an Anglicised text of the ***New International Readers' Version*** with striking full colour illustrations and helpful marginal notes. This version of the Bible makes full use of contemporary principles of layout and design and uses short words and

sentences which can be easily understood by everyone including people who know English as a second language. The end result is suitable for distribution to people with little or no prior knowledge of the Scriptures.

This edition of the Bible is available in flexiback and paperback editions and is available at the introductory prices of £12.99 and £10.99 respectively with discounts available for multiple copies. A free full colour electronic version is also available with every purchase. You can order copies from <https://www.10ofthose.com/uk/> or by 'phoning 0330 22 33 423.

PLAY WRITING COMPETITION

The *Arts Centre Group*, an association of Christians working professionally in the arts, media, and entertainment, is organising a playwriting competition with prizes offered for writers under twenty-one and for writers of any age.

The organisers are looking for scripts for one-act plays of thirty minutes duration inspired by verses from Ecclesiastes 3: 1-6. The closing date is 14 September 2019 and the winners will be announced at a prestigious event in London during the autumn. Perhaps we have budding playwrights within the CLIS membership or, alternatively, members may know potential entrants in their libraries or churches who could be encouraged to take part. You can find more information about the competition, and the wider work of the ACG, on their web site www.artscentregroup.org.uk

LIMITED EDITION NARNIA

A number of newspapers and web sites have reported that award winning writer Francis Spufford has written a new addition to C. S. Lewis' ***Chronicles of Narnia*** series but is unable to publish it unless he is able to obtain permission from the Lewis estate.

Spufford's book is entitled ***The Stone Table*** and features a return visit to Narnia by Lewis' characters Digory and Polly. The narrative fills in some of the gaps between ***The Magician's Nephew*** and ***The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*** and explains the origins of the stone table and the four thrones of Cair Paravel featured in the series.

The Stone Table was originally written for the author's young daughter but a limited edition of seventy-five copies has been distributed to the writer's friends and fellow writers. The book has received lavish praise from those who have read it and there are hopes that it will be possible to publish it before the copyright in Lewis' works expires in 2033.

CURRENT AWARENESS

- Libby Purves' article *Great Book Characters Demand a New Chapter* looks at the popular demand for literary sequels and points out that authors whose works have inspired '*continuation novels*' by later writers include Conan Doyle, Dorothy L. Sayers, Ian Fleming, Daphne Du Maurier, Agatha Christie, P. G. Wodehouse and A. A. Milne.

Turning to ***The Stone Table***, Francis Spufford's unpublished addition to the ***Chronicles of Narnia***, Purves says that she would '*trust Spufford more than most with [C. S.] Lewis, not least because of his spirited, thoughtful and undogmatic book **Unapologetic.***' She suggests that '*it takes a believer to tune into Aslan's world of sin and redemption.*' The article appears in ***The Times*** for 18 March 2019, p. 29

- Our past speaker Colin Duriez commemorates the release of the feature film ***Tolkien***, shown in cinemas recently, with an article on the roots of J. R. R. Tolkien's stories of Middle Earth which were inspired by a '*medieval Christian world-view and the northern paganism that it absorbed.*'

Tolkien's Catholic faith was central to his writing and, as a young undergraduate studying in an Oxford library, he had been excited by the

eighth century poem **Christ** by Cynewulf with its reference to 'Earendel, the brightest angel sent over middle-earth to mankind'. Earendel became the name of a character in **The Silmarillion** and provided much of the inspiration for Tolkien's imaginary world and lifelong reflections on the nature of language and mythology. This article appears in the **Church Times** for 3 May 2019, p. 17.

- Colin Blakeley's article *Grantcheser Mystery Revealed* is based on an interview with the novelist James Runcie and explains the background to this writer's series of Sidney Chambers detective novels which inspired the television series **Grantchester**.

James Runcie's latest book is **The Road to Grantchester** (Bloomsbury, RRP £14.99, ISBN 978-140886854) and unlike the previous six books in the series, is not a detective story but an account of the early life of the Rev. Sidney Chambers, his military service during the Second World War, and his progress towards ordination in the *Church of England*. The narrative explores Chambers' Christian faith in much greater detail than was possible in the earlier detective stories.

Runcie discusses some of the themes in the book and the extent to which the portrayal of the Rev. Sidney Chambers is based on his own father, Robert Runcie, a past Archbishop of Canterbury.

The article appears in the **Church of England Newspaper** for 22 March 2019, pp. 16-17.

EBSCO PUBLISHING

Christians in Library and Information Services has an electronic licensing relationship with *EBSCO Publishing*, "the world's most prolific aggregator of full text journals, magazines and other sources". The full texts of our two main publications - the **E-Newsletter** and **Christian Librarian** - are available on *EBSCO Publishing's* databases. Subscribers are able to retrieve articles from our publications and CLIS will receive a small commission for each article.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Minutes of the meeting held on Saturday 6 April 2019 at UCCF, Blue Boar House, Blue Boar Street, Oxford, OX1 4EE.

Present

The meeting was chaired by our President, Richard Waller, and the other members and guests present were Susan Bates, Robert Foster, Diana Guthrie, Gordon Harris, Graham Hedges, Rachel and Terry Johnson, Derek Jowett, Richard Knight, Asterid Nordfell, Janice Paine, Norma Waller, John Wickenden, Suzanne Wilson-Higgins, Arabella Wood, and Mary Wood.

Apologies for absence were received from: Sylvia Allaway, Christine Gagan, Karen Hans, Kirsty Robinson and Anne MacRitchie. It was noted, with concern, that our Life Vice-President, Philip Hayworth, had recently suffered a fall and was currently living in a care home in the Bolton area. Members were encouraged to pray for Philip.

Minutes

The minutes of the annual general meeting held on Saturday 14 April 2018 at the Salvation Army's Regent Hall, Oxford Street, London, were approved as a correct record, and signed by the President, with no matters arising..

Annual Report from the Chair and Secretary

Robert Foster, Chair of the Executive Committee, reported that major events during 2018 had included the annual conference on the theme 'Freedom and Truth' with guest speakers Mark Jones, chair of the

Lawyers' Christian Fellowship, and Malcolm Martin, Deputy Leader of the *Christian Peoples' Alliance*. There had not been a public lecture in 2018 but visits had been arranged to the *Bible Society Library* at the *University of Cambridge Library* and *The Kilns*, former home of C. S. Lewis, near Oxford. Members had also taken part in a walking tour of places of Christian historical interest in the City of London led on our behalf by Ben Virgo of *Christian Heritage London*.

Ninety-nine members had paid their annual subscriptions to date while other members still needed to renew their membership. In addition to our full members we had an additional six subscribers to *Christian Librarian*. One hundred members currently received the E-Newsletter and there were seventy-seven members of the CLIS Facebook group. The report was followed by prayer for Philip Hayworth and a prayer of thanksgiving for our departed members Margaret Keeling (former President) and Derek Fawcett.

Annual Accounts and Treasurer's Report

The report was presented by our Treasurer, Diana Guthrie, and . copies of the 2018 accounts' and accompanying notes had been printed for all present. Total income during the year had been £4416.05 and total expenditure £4574.37. CLIS had, therefore, made a loss of £158.32 in 2018, but this was less than the 2017 deficit of £995.70. Reserves remained high and our total assets at 31 December 2018 had been £9241.24.

Election of Officers

Since there was only one candidate for each of the available vacancies, a formal election was not held, but the President read out the names of the various candidates and declared them to be elected.

President: Candidate: **Richard Waller**

Proposed by Executive Committee

Secretary: Candidate: **Graham Hedges**

Proposed by: Janet Danels and Mary Wood

Treasurer: Candidate: **Diana Guthrie**

Proposed by: Annabel Haycraft and Kirsty Robinson

Library Assistance Manager: Candidate: Rachel Johnson

Proposed by: Karen Hans and Andrew Parker.

Webmaster: Candidate: John Wickenden

Proposed by: Mary Wood and Rachel Johnson

Overseas Secretary: Candidate: **Eleanor Neil**

Proposed by: Rachel Johnson and Karen Hans

Member Without Portfolio: Candidate: **Andrew Parker**

Proposed by Janice Paine and Rachel Johnson

Any Other Business

Graham Hedges, Secretary of the Executive Committee, announced future activities including a guided tour of the *British Museum* on Wednesday 15 May 2019 and the annual lecture in Bath on Saturday 19 October 2019 with guest speaker, Bob Hartman.

Rachel Johnson, Library Assistance Manager, mentioned a possible future volunteering opportunity in the library of the Greek Bible College and invited anyone interested to get in touch with her. Janice Paine, Membership Secretary, invited members who had not paid their subscriptions for 2019 to do so during the course of the day. Bookings were still being accepted for the *British Museum* tour.

There was no further business and the annual general meeting was brought to a close.

DIANA GUTHRIE reports on our Annual Conference held on Saturday 6 April 2019 in the Oxford headquarters of the *Universities' and Colleges' Christian Fellowship*

PUBLISHERS AND ROBOTS

A group of CLIS members plus guests gathered in the comfortable surroundings of UCCF's headquarters in Blue Boar House in the centre of Oxford for the Annual Conference.

We began as usual with a brief time of worship led by Richard Waller, CLIS President, which included a reading of Psalm 96 and a passage from the first chapter of Hebrews; two well-loved hymns (*Immortal, invisible, God only wise* and *Christ is made the sure foundation*) were sung to a digitised accompaniment.

This was followed by the Annual General Meeting (see the separate Minutes).

The first speaker was **Manoj Raithatha**, who amongst other responsibilities runs the publishing house *Instant Apostle*. The first thing he said was that when he sat down to prepare this talk he felt he should talk not about publishing but about '*Vision*' – how we see our role in God's over-arching plan for his world - so that was the theme of his talk.

What is the purpose of our lives? Taking passages in St. Paul's Letters to the Ephesians and to the Colossians, Manoj spoke about our identity as God's beloved children, and our need to respond by pursuing holiness and reflecting God's love to others.

A second theme of the talk was working for unity between God and his creation. When Christians work together, they become very effective at bringing people into God's family, thus carrying out the Great Commission found at the end of St. Matthew's Gospel. And together we should be working to become a holy temple, God's dwelling-place on earth.

Turning to his work with *Instant Apostle*, Manoj described the genesis of the publishing house and his gratitude for the support of *Lion Hudson*. Because *Instant Apostle* is small, the staff can be nimble on their feet and get books published within months. They've never needed to search for books to publish and are now exporting publishing rights to Europe. Christian fiction isn't easy to sell in the UK, but it has become the core of their output and seems to be bought by non-Christians as well as Christians.

In reply to a query about the name from one of his listeners, Manoj replied that Bridget Adams, who'd encouraged him to set up the publishing house, had found the name in an answer to prayer.

After a bounteous buffet lunch, **Nigel Crook** gave the afternoon talk, illustrated with slides and short video clips (and a robot!). Nigel researches artificial intelligence and robotics at *Oxford Brookes University* and is also an active Christian, so his talk dealt with the possibilities of developing robots with moral competence.

As robots come to look more and more like humans (and amazing human likenesses can be achieved), the more we may expect them to act like humans with their own set of morals, especially when they are embedded in society. The science of artificial intelligence has brought into being a whole new field of ethics.

Humans develop their ethos through training and experience (Christians would also acknowledge the action of the Holy Spirit). But how does that translate into training a robot? Who would it learn from? Who's setting the standard? Would one encode a set of rules within a robot, or teach it to learn by experience?

Can robots become moral agents? Nigel thinks not, because the heart, will and spirit are unique to humans. If a robot isn't free to choose, it can't be a moral agent, and morals can't be '*bolted on*'. Nigel concluded that full moral agency isn't possible in robots, however sophisticated. Ultimately, it is the humans who have developed them who must be held accountable.

He'd brought along a small human-shaped robot, which was then persuaded to give us a *Tai Chi* demonstration to music!

There was some lively discussion afterwards:

Can artificial intelligence be used as a weapon? Yes – the autonomous weapon is an example, and someone in the audience added that the Royal Navy is already experimenting.

Could robots be used to fake miracles? Materialists may believe that humans can be replicated.

Artificial intelligence, like many other things, can be exceptionally helpful, but also have great potential for evil.

If only professionals were doing the coding, would this result in a single world-view?

At the end of the Conference Robert Foster, Chair of CLIS, gave the vote of thanks to the two speakers and to the many people who'd done so much work to make the day a success.

Diana Guthrie, MA, serves as Treasurer on the Executive Committee of *Christians in Library and Information Services*.

DEREK JOWETT discovers that museum exhibits from the ancient world can throw light on the narratives of the Old and New Testaments

VISIT TO THE BRITISH MUSEUM

On a beautiful day in May, Wednesday 15th, eighteen members and friends of CLIS met at the *British Museum* in London, some having already enjoyed lunch together at *Truckles* Restaurant just across the road. We were going to see a number of items in the Museum which relate directly to incidents related in the Bible, and our guide for the tour was Ben Virgo, who is a church planter and also Director of *Christian Heritage London*; CLIS has benefited previously from his excellent guided tour of the City of London.

Ben's degree is in classical studies including archaeology, and he started by telling us that his work in that field had revealed many monuments to the great and powerful all of which proclaimed the same message of pride in their power, riches and expectation of immortality through worship of their gods. Of the sixteen million items in the British Museum, of which seventeen thousand are on display, we would be concentrating on about a dozen. All of these are in a way memorials and are attached to stories, directly or indirectly to Bible stories, in fact to *the* Bible story which has a very different message to that of those monuments. Explicitly stated by Jacob, then Moses, the message is that worship should be given only to the Lord God, and that reliance on foreign gods should be put away: if you worship gods of other nations, God will give you over to those nations. That message continues through Joshua and Samuel, and on to the kings, very few of whom led their people to follow God wholeheartedly, and as a consequence God did indeed give them over to captivity and exile among those nations.

Jesus came preaching the same message of reconciliation and obedience to God. This is summed up in Romans chapter 1: humans will find satisfaction in what God has made, or in Him; we worship either the

Creator, or what He has created. In the items we were to see, we would find evidence of those who put their faith in the Lord, or in idols.

Item No 1: the *Rosetta Stone*. Found in Egypt at the beginning of the nineteenth century, this is important as an image of explanation. It bears an inscription in three languages: Egyptian hieroglyphs, which up until then no-one could decipher, Demotic, which was partially known, and Greek, which all scholars could read. So now Egyptian hieroglyphs could be deciphered and many secrets of the ancient world could now be unlocked.

Item No 2: the *Black Obelisk of Shalmaneser III* from 828 to 824 B.C. Shalmaneser was the Assyrian king known for his brutality who conquered several other kingdoms including Israel. The obelisk shows him receiving tribute from King Jehu of Israel, the only known portrayal of a Hebrew king. Jehu, finally anointed by a disciple of Elisha, had been first revealed to Elijah some years before by God, the one who would replace the idolatrous house of Ahab.

Item No 3: the *Lion Reliefs* from the Assyrian royal palace. These are extraordinarily detailed depictions of King Ashurbanipal hunting lions (experts still do not know how they were executed). This king, also extremely brutal but revered as a scholar and always depicted with a stylus in his belt, was extremely rich but always wanting more. He conquered King Manasseh of Judah.

Item No 4: *Reliefs showing the Assyrian armies of Sennacherib* besieging the town of Lachish in Judah, using slingshot, some of the stones of which were actually found and are on display nearby. These could reach a speed of sixty mph over a distance of a quarter of a mile. The Assyrians then went on to attack Jerusalem. The Assyrian general, the Rabshekah, called on the inhabitants to surrender, and sent a letter demanding submission to King Hezekiah. Hezekiah was one of the few 'good' kings; he took the letter to the temple and 'spread it before the Lord'. The prophet Isaiah assured him that the attack would fail: 185,000 of the besieging troops were 'slain by an angel of the Lord, and Sennacherib went home, only to be assassinated by his sons. All this is related in 2 Kings 18, 2 Chronicles 32 and Isaiah 36 and 37.

Item No 5: *Excavations at Ur of the Chaldees*. Ur was an extremely sophisticated city. Findings include an exquisitely carved ornament, probably a table leg, popularly known as *'the ram in the thicket'*. It is more probably a goat, but reminds us of one inhabitant, Abraham, who left the comfort of that city to find one, as the Letter to the Hebrews puts it, whose foundations were God.

Item No 6: *Depiction of the 'Immortals'*, the guards at the palace of King Artaxerxes or Ahasuerus, husband of Queen Esther, an unlikely hero, but who nevertheless was placed there, as her cousin Mordecai put it, *'for such a time as this'*, and was the instrument of saving her people.

Item No 7: the *Cyrus Cylinder* of 539 B.C. This is perhaps the most momentous item in the collection: it is the actual proclamation of King Cyrus of Persia that subject peoples, including the Jews, should be allowed to return from exile to their own country, as recorded in 2 Chronicles 36 and Ezra 1, and prophesied by Isaiah. A copy of this is in the *United Nations* building where it is described as the first human rights charter, but it is a clear testimony to prophecy.

Item No 8: *The Bowls of Artaxerxes*. These are serving bowls found in the palace of King Artaxerxes of Persia. As cupbearer to the king, it is just possible that these could have been borne by Nehemiah, who served God first, and because of his prayer, obtained the king's permission and support to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem.

Item No 9: The *'Elgin Marbles'*, sculptures and reliefs from the Parthenon in Athens, which the Apostle Paul would have seen when, in Acts 17, he urged the people of Athens to turn from their idols and worship the *'unknown God'*, who does not *'live in shrines made by men'*.

As Ben said at the beginning of the tour, we had celebrated those whom we commemorate, not like those great monuments for the powerful who do great deeds, but for their faith and obedience to God's word.

Derek Jowett, BA, is a retired librarian from Stroud, Gloucestershire who has worked in public and school library services.

LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE

WILLIAM TYNDALE: A VERY BRIEF HISTORY

Melvyn Bragg

SPCK, 2017, RRP £12.99... Hardback, 144p., ISBN 978-0281077134

This book is from a series of ten books which are intended to be short introductions to people, ideas and movements. The subjects of other books in the series include Jesus, Paul, Julian of Norwich, and Florence Nightingale.

The author clearly sets out Tyndale's background, education, and life history. The book starts with a chronology of Tyndale's life, then each chapter of the first part of the book gives more detail and fills in the context to the religious and political climate in which Tyndale lived. The second part of the book covers the legacy of Tyndale's work.

Although I knew of William Tyndale and his influence as a translator of the Bible into English, I did not realise how much harassment and intimidation he had been subjected to as a consequence. I learnt from this book that in his short life (Tyndale was born 1496 and died 1536), he mastered eight languages and knew more. He taught himself Hebrew so that he could translate the Old Testament from the original language, and, that he considered his life's purpose had been set when as a boy he read that King Athelstan had ordered parts of the Bible to be translated into English. Interestingly although there was no vernacular Bible in England, much of Europe had their own vernacular Bibles.

Tyndale's linguistic skills have given us many memorable phrases that we now take for granted, and his translation is quoted as being the "*foundational patterns of what can be called modern English*". In fact, Tyndale's translation forms the basis of the later **King James Bible** which it quoted. 93% of the New Testament and 85% of the first five books of the Old Testament are essentially Tyndale's translation.

The author quotes a number of phrases from Tyndale that we still use and for which I had never considered the origin such as "see *the*

writing on the wall", "from strength to strength", "broken-hearted", and many more. I was shocked to learn that Tyndale was pursued across Europe by agents of King Henry VIII, the Holy Roman Emperor, and of the Pope! He was ultimately betrayed and executed in 1536 as a heretic. I enjoyed the pace of the author's writing and felt empathy for Tyndale. It is sad to realise that for centuries Tyndale's work was not acknowledged. This concise book will help to raise Tyndale's profile

Susan Bates , BSc (Hons), MSc, MCLIP, works as a Senior Patent Analyst for *Shell International Ltd.*

HAUNTED BY CHRIST: MODERN WRITERS AND THE STRUGGLE FOR FAITH

Richard Harries,

SPCK, 2018, RRP £19.99, Hardback, 325p., ISBN 978-0281079339

Some of our members will remember the outstanding lecture on Christianity and Literature given to us by Richard Harries, then the Bishop of Oxford, in 1993 and later published in *Christian Librarian*. This book reveals that literature is still a major interest for Lord Harries, as he now is, and that he is particularly drawn to writers who have wrestled with the Christian faith, whether or not they would regard themselves as practising Christians.

The playwright Samuel Becket, for example, is described as a 'secular mystic' and as a 'Christ haunted man'. Self-confessed Christians whose works are explored include T. S. Eliot, R. S. Thomas, W. H. Auden, Gerard Manley Hopkins and Elizabeth Jennings.

Another chapter compares the children's novels of C. S. Lewis and Philip Pullman and the book concludes with a chapter on Marilynne Robinson, author of *Gilead*, whose books illustrate the challenge of writing about Christian themes in a secular culture.

Graham Hedges, MCLIP, Hon. FCLIP, is Secretary and Publications Editor of *Christians in Library and Information Services*.

KIM WALKER describes how she is using her skills and experience as a librarian in a new context

DAY(S) IN THE LIFE



When I was asked to write a 'day in the life' type article for ***Christian Librarian*** I immediately said yes but then started to think do I have a typical day as I have such a weird job that combines lots of different things?

My job title is *Compliance and Quality Officer* which is one of the weird job titles that means when I meet people they say to me so what do you *actually* do!

So here are some of the favourite aspects of my job that I have put together to make an example of a 'day'

I usually get dropped off right at the front door of the *YMCA Downslink* HQ by my husband who works in a church that's located just two hundred yards along the road. I'm one of the first to arrive and love having a quick chat with the other early starters before we disappear into our respective offices. The people I work with are an amazing collection of dedicated enthusiastic workers who all believe young people deserve to have opportunities to fulfil their potential irrespective of what

has happened to them in the past.

I share an office with three people but I often have the office to myself for the first hour of the day so I usually put some music on so that I can start the day singing (quietly so colleagues in the other offices don't hear me!). I always start by looking at e-mails, at the moment I'm busy booking dates with local project managers to visit their hostels to do IT asset audits as one of my jobs is to co-ordinate IT across the whole group and I'm waiting for e-mails to confirm when I can visit them.

I love being able to get out of the office and drive around the Sussex countryside, it reminds me of a former job when I was the Principal Librarian – Information Services with *West Sussex County Library* when I had to drive around to do stock work and training. When I visit sites now I am really doing just the same, advising staff, answering their queries and helping them to sort out material that really needs to be thrown away. The only difference is that it's not books now but paper records that need to be archived or securely destroyed.

I get a regular stream of enquiries relating to data protection, sometimes it may be a member of the leadership team who wants me to have a look at a contract for a new project to see if it fits with our data protection policies and at other times it may be a colleague who is organising an event and wants help designing a form to collect participants' contact details so that it's compliant with data protection law.

Once I've dealt with e-mails and answered queries I get on with the administrative tasks that I have to do. I do lots of work on spreadsheets preparing reports that help us keep a check that we are being compliant with legal requirements in the way we look after our buildings, for example ensuring fire, gas and water safety checks are made so that all of the young people who live in our properties have safe homes. We have six

hundred and thirty four units of accommodation so the spreadsheet is very big!

I also have various meetings to contribute to, I like the small practical task and finish meetings most where we can agree solutions straight away. I've had the opportunity to learn how to design on-line forms using *Wordpress* that are made available via our intranet and I've just had a meeting with a colleague who wants to improve the process of recruitment. We agreed the design of the form and all I need to do now is to make it work and then communicate to staff around the organisation how to use the new form.

My IT work keeps me busy too and will probably take me through to the end of the day. I work with our IT contractors to ensure we have the right equipment in the right locations and everyone has what they need to work effectively. I am also constantly looking forward and planning with our brilliant contractors how we are going to do upgrades and improvements to our IT network. This year we are planning a big upgrade to our operating systems which involves visiting all of our locations and manually upgrading hundreds of PCs .We are also planning changes to security protocols for remote workers and also for users of work mobile 'phones. The mobile 'phone change will be a big task as we have over two hundred users of work issued 'phones and we will need to ensure they all get informed about the changes.

I hope I've given you the feel for what a librarian does when they aren't a librarian but still want to use all of those skills they have developed over the years.

Kim Walker, BA, MCLIP, works as Compliance and Quality Officer at the *YMCA Downslink* based in Hove.

WINETTE FIELD presents the findings of her research into leadership and draws lessons from passages in Exodus and Romans

LEADERSHIP AS DISOBEDIENCE PART ONE



Project:

My MA dissertation is a study of leadership as disobedience with a particular focus on non-conformity in the leadership of participants in Black British feminism.

Rationale:

I think the practices of these women have something to say to our profession. We live in a world which is increasingly procedural and, as Ruwan Weerasekera¹ was keen to note, legal threats to personal values are frequent in corporate life. Yet, paradoxically, the literature shows

¹ Sandra Sucher and Mathew Preble 'Follow dubious orders or speak up', *Harvard Business Review*, July/August (2017), 139-143, (p. 143).

employers are keen to elevate creative skills, as a means of boosting productivity². Yet the UN is focused on accountability³ which has led to a ripple effect as the language crossed over into other areas of life. One outworking has been the redrafting of CILIPs ethical policy⁴ for the modern era.

Obviously accountability, procedures and ethical statements do not always lead to a loss of creativity, pro-activeness or intelligent disobedience but these more rigid approaches can form a type of secular legalism; with positive values becoming contorted and any inherit underlying good perverted. Jesus confronted the religious authorities on this issue.⁵

Method:

Interviews with five Black British participants of the Heart of the Race oral history project⁶ were examined and re-transcribed. I used grounded work theory to ascertain what their cognitive practices of non-conformity were.

For example how did they come to challenge the status quo? What form did disobedient leadership take? What actions did they undertake? As individuals what values spurred them and how did they see themselves? A final aspect of the research was to identify from whence pressure to conform came.

As I was writing within the context of a Christian Approaches to Leadership⁷ course my study also involved looking at Biblical examples

2 Francesca Gino 'The Most Important Trait for Rebel Talent: Curiosity', *HBR*, 25 October 2016 [Online] <<https://hbr.org/2016/10/146326>> accessed 9 March 2018

3 UNDP Accountability [Online] <https://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/accountability.html>

4 accessed 16 May 2019
4 CILIP Ethical Framework [Online] <https://www.cilip.org.uk/page/ethics> accessed 16 May 2019

5 Luke 14:5

6 Black Cultural Archive *The Heart of the Race: Oral histories of the Black Women's Movement* (London: BCA, 2010) [Online] <http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/documents/archives/the-heart-of-the-race.pdf> accessed 18 September 2017

7 "Sarum College's MA in Christian Approaches Leadership offers an opportunity to study leadership in some depth from historical, theological and contemporary perspectives and to research and develop practical skill in exercising leadership as a known person of faith." See

with a particular focus on Exodus 1 and Romans 12: 1-2.

Results:

I found a shared sequence of stages which led the sample to be active in the feminist movement. Each demonstrated a shift from simple consciousness to action. They were then sustained by personal value systems under written by a sense of their own identity.

Taken as a whole, a picture was crafted of women who recognised the fallibility of those in authority. In so doing they became people who accepted a need to be responsible for themselves and others. This required them to be proactive and vocal.

The fallibility of leaders:

The sample demonstrated that awareness can be developed both through lived experience and by exposure to third party influences. They were not allowed the privilege of ignorance concerning the world in which they lived or the part they were expected to play.

My analysis identified the arts; sport and politics as important to most. These were accessed primarily through the means of television, music, books, newspapers and film. Together these resulted in widening the women's horizons. However early life experience helped them recognise that those in authority could be wrong and the vulnerability of their own parents.

The oral testimony exposed youthful experiences that would have been aging. Not just in terms of racial hostility; but experiences of parental expectation, life change events and conversations held. The outcome was the creation of a more serious aspect to their thinking and behaviour - a consciousness. Notably this was grounded in life not divorced from it.

<https://www.sarum.ac.uk/learning/leadership-ministry/postgraduate-study>

Time and time again the Hebrews scriptures note a people reminded to, not just listen to their God's instructions but to, ensure they impress upon following generations what God had done since their time in Egypt.⁸ It is thus significant that there is explicit mention that a new, unnamed, monarch was unaware of Joseph's actions in Egypt⁹. Such ignorance was an indictment of the record keepers' failure to intervene and provide relevant information. For the biblical writer's suggestion is that historical knowledge can provide opportunities for different courses of action¹⁰.

Biblical connections:

The Midwives Shiphrah and Puah are an example of Romans 12: 1-2 in action. Their nationality, possibly Hebrew, might imply self-interest but this is unimportant since their relationship with God transformed their other relationships and ways of being.

"Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will."¹¹

Beginning in verse 1, with the word *"therefore"*, the passage connects doctrine with lifestyle. The appeal is personal with verse 1 an insistent request while verse 2 is an after effect of a particular type of behaviour; in this case being *"a living sacrifice"* arising from the Romans' relationship with God. The bond is founded on the death and resurrection of Jesus; the gift of the Spirit and the hope to come as heirs of God.

Shiphrah and Puah's relationship was, of course, based on a respect which, echoing Proverbs 9:10, was the beginning of wisdom. But Paul's call for non-conformity was an appeal for resistance to something deemed to be an obstruction. This blockage was formed by the power of social groups, cultural norms, institutions and even traditions¹². Thus

8 Deuteronomy 6:21 - 25

9 Exodus 1

10 Exodus 1: 8-22

11 Romans 12:2 NIV

12 James D. G. Dunn *Romans 9 -16 Word Biblical Commentary 38b* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1988), p.712.

Paul was not calling for an escape from the world but a confrontation of all stumbling blocks, even if they appeared within the Church.¹³

In this context the Midwives' role can be seen as one of mild collaboration with the temptation of a new community, and identity, rooted in the King's request. In this case following the pattern of the world does not fit with following the ways of God.

Another way of describing this is to regard following the pattern of this world as accepting what is forced upon one. In fact some commentators give the passage a notion of time; suggesting that it refers to not conforming to "*this age*"¹⁴ that being the moment between Christ's ascension and his return.

Paul proposes a change achieved through mental awakening. Here *mind* can relate to thinking and discerning,¹⁵ which, although morally neutral, can bring about a moral renewal. Another Pauline letter, 2 Corinthians 3:18, uses the word *transformed* in the same way.

Whilst Dunn agrees with this possibility, according to Hiebert¹⁶ the English word *transformation* links to the Greek term *metamorphosis*, raising connotations of lepidoptery. Dunn does not accept this as being an influence on Paul, presenting it instead as the culmination of the Jewish eschatological hope¹⁷.

Such deep change is not brought about by personal application; none the less the present imperative indicates that some form of human choice is involved in deciding which voices to listen to¹⁸. Thus despite the Holy Spirit progressively altering the Christian's understanding, and awareness, to create a new consciousness, it involves no force.

Taking this into consideration one can easily see Shiphrah and Puah had a real choice to make - forced neither by God, or man, to take a particular course of action.

13 Dunn p.173.

14 D. Edmond Hiebert 'Presentation and transformation: an exposition of Romans 12:1-2', *Bibliotheca Sacra*, 151 (July – September 1994), 309 – 324, (p. 320).

15 Brendan Byrne *Romans Sacra Pagina* volume 6 (Minnesota: The Liturgical Press College, 1996), p. 364.

16 Hiebert p.321.

17 Dunn p.713.

18 Dunn p.172.

Decision-making connects with theologian James H. Cone's ¹⁹ opinion that every generation of Christians has to ensure social analysis of the church in relation to the local congregation and its theology to its sociology. As a liberation theologian the emphasis is holistic with ecclesial confession being firmly joined to practical activity which, in itself, is linked to concrete challenging of anything causing human misery²⁰.

This is an explicit reinterpretation of Paul's thoughts on working out of a new path amidst enmity; for the nature of the activity in Romans suggests constant evolution. Byrne concurs mentioning the challenge which STEM industries bring to the table ethically²¹.

Various Christian denominations have used these ideas to embrace the concept of being a distinct people²² embracing asceticism as a form of piety. Yet Jesus's teaching criticised forms of legalism which detracted from a true outliving of the relationship with God.²³ None the less the Judaeo-Christian tradition is one in which every minute involves a conscious choosing of God's way over that of man.

End of part 1

Part 2 will look more closely at the implications of this for leaders in LIS and the skills / tools required to be able to be a person who exercises intelligent disobedience.

Winette E. Field, BA (Hons), MA, MCLIP is a long standing member of the *Librarians' Christian Fellowship* and *Christians in Library and Information Services*, a former member of the executive committee and has worked in school and college libraries in London.

19 James H. Cone *Speaking the truth: ecumenism, liberation and Black theology* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1999), p.112.

20 Cone p.113 -114.

21 Byrne p.365.

22 1 Peter 2:9

23 Luke 14:1-5

MALCOLM MARTIN examines the rise of fake news, ancient and modern, and comments on the role of librarians as the guardians of truth

WHAT IS TRUTH? AND HOW DO WE KNOW IT?

*An Address to the Christians in Library and Information Services Conference 'Freedom and Truth' held on Saturday 14 April 2018 in the Princes Street Room at the Salvation Army's Regent Hall, 275 Oxford Street, London, W1C 2DJ and edited for **Christian Librarian** by John Wickenden and Janice Paine.*

Since accepting the invitation to speak at your conference the subject of fake news has changed rapidly. Back then I thought it was simply interesting, but things have moved on, and not just month by month or week by week, but sometimes day by day. Over the past couple of weeks, fake news has been a theme which has regularly cropped up in the media. Please note, however, that the views expressed in this talk are mine and may not necessarily represent the views of the *Christian People's Alliance*.

Let me start with Scripture because in there we have the earliest history of fake news. Genesis chapter 3 says: '*Now the serpent was more crafty than any of wild animals that the Lord God made. He said to the woman "Did God really say you must not eat from any tree in the garden?"*'. The woman said to the serpent "*We may eat fruit from the trees in the garden but God did say 'You must not eat fruit from the tree that is the middle of the garden, and you must not touch it or you will die'*". "*You will not certainly die!*" the serpent said to the woman, "*God knows that when you eat it your eyes will be opened. And you will be*

like God knowing good and evil.” When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for gaining wisdom she took some and ate it. The beginning of fake news.

I am going to suggest that there are three aspects to fake news. The first is a sense of credibility. Here in the story about Adam and Eve, Eve has only known two people: God and Adam. Then the talking serpent comes along - how does she know whether to believe him? She's got no other reference point to judge as to whether he is also trustworthy. As far as she is concerned, God tells the truth and Adam tells the truth. Why not accept what seems to be a third credible source coming into play?

The second element is gullibility. With fake news you also need a predisposition of the audience to believe what they actually want to believe. In the case of Eve, she wanted to believe the serpent, she wanted to believe what he was telling her was good. So she looked and she saw it was good.

Thirdly, and together with credibility and a predisposition to believe, is amplification. In other words, having feedback from others which confirms the story. In fairness, there's very little amplification to speak of in the Adam and Eve story. But the concept of the amplification by others is very much a current topic of debate, particularly with regard to *Facebook*. There is a wonderful paper ***Echo Chambers on Facebook***, by Walter Quattrociocchi, Antonio Scala, and Cass R. Sunstein, in which they say:

“We provide empirical evidence that because they focus on their preferred narratives, [*Facebook*] users tend to assimilate only confirming claims and to ignore apparent refutations” (*Harvard Discussion Paper no. 877*).

What they are saying is that, if you're on *Facebook*, you will normally interact with people who interact with you, creating a homogeneous group rather than a heterogeneous group. It is the group talking to itself which produces that which is termed an ‘*echo chamber*’,

where a story or idea - true or false - gains strength. (My advice with social media, such as *Facebook* and *Twitter*, is to follow people one does not agree with, thereby not ending up in the bubble of an echo chamber.)

Once we have these three elements interacting with each other, a further '*feedback process*' takes place: amplification by others can lend further credibility to the source; and that feeds back into one's predisposition to believe. The result is an effect. It can be an effect on the individual, or it can be an effect on society. This effect could be good or bad. It may be that the stories that are being passed around are good stories and credible stories; the audience likes to believe them and they are amplified by others they have a good effect on you. However, with fake news it's normally a bad effect.

How do we calculate the impact of this kind of effect? The method I use is taken from the world of health and safety, where the idea is to calculate the risk of something happening and the effect of that occurrence. For example, you might want to assess your church building's fire risk, which hopefully is fairly low. The effect of a fire, however, could be very serious if you had packed congregation, say for '*Carols by Candlelight*' and there were lots of children to keep control of. To get a meaningful assessment we need to multiply the respective risk factors to calculate the effect.

Using this concept, I suggest here is that it is helpful to take these three things: the credibility; the gullibility and the amplification by others. I will use a scale of 0 to 5 for each category. So if the story is not credible at all that would be a zero – end of story. If we take a credibility of 1 on all three factors, $1 \times 1 \times 1$ equals 1, which is a negligible effect. But with some stories, which we will look at, it's actually 5 by 5 by 5 making 125. My point is that the effect of a story doesn't here go up from 1 to 5 – but the actual effect goes up from 1 to 125. With some of the fake news going around at present the effect is indeed negligible, but others the effect is really quite significant. (We should also note that the effect may be different for the individual to that on society.)

I am going to be looking at moral matters, which I believe are serious issues for society.

To start us off though, here is the story of Mary Toft, a story which is well documented. In 1726 it was said that Mary Toft had given birth to rabbits. The king's doctor was sent down who certified that she was indeed giving birth to rabbits. It wasn't until a second Court doctor, a surgeon, was sent to check it, that the story was questioned. He analysed the dung of one of these rabbits and found corn in it, which seemed to suggest that the rabbits were eating corn before they came out of the lady! The whole thing was shown to be a scam, but by then the news had generated. For us the story is barely credible: if you put that on *Facebook* today, the score would probably be zero. But back then it did have some credibility to it, albeit one or two on the scale of 0-5. The first doctor was clearly predisposed to believe the story. Perhaps he wanted fame and fortune himself, being the first to write about it. He amplified the case, but because another doctor successfully debunked it, the effect on society as a whole was negligible. The effect upon the doctor who believed Mary Toft was not insignificant though. He was kicked out of Court and died a pauper. On our scale, the effect on him was more like "125".

So much for 1726. We move now to a more recent story which went around, the hoax giant anaconda in the Amazon – in Africa. (Don't ask me how we get the Amazon in Africa!) Credibility is again down at the lower end of the scale, and the pictures which circulated were similarly suspect. There's one where it's being hoisted up on to trucks - military trucks, which, if you look carefully are obviously toys! The credibility is fairly low but the story has been amplified a number of times and there is a propensity for people on *Facebook* to believe it. Did it do much harm? Probably not.

The next one was different though. Alex Malarkey was said to have had a near death experience, and his father wrote it up in ***The boy who*** came back from heaven. He met Jesus, it was claimed, and the devil too apparently, although I'm not sure how he did that. The book was published by *Tyndale Press*, a Christian publishing house. I speak as a Christian to brothers and sisters, but the fact is that sometimes there is nothing more gullible than the Christian public. There was a propensity to believe the story because people have reported out of body experiences quite widely. In this case the father, Kevin, is said to have made a lot of money from the publisher, *Tyndale*, obtaining a share of the proceeds for a story that was fiction. The effects of this event have

been considerable. It had an effect on *Tyndale* with a loss of their credibility over the publication. It had an effect for the father: he's said to have made a lot of money out of it. And it has had a serious effect on the lad – he became the butt of a joke.

The next illustration is an example of how a website can be set up to deceive. You will I am sure have heard of the *Black Lives Matter* campaign in the United States. An Australian trades union official named Ian MacKay set up a fake *Black Lives Matter Facebook* profile, used all the right logos and all the right language. It solicited donations and made a lot of money. It wasn't so much a matter of fake news, but nevertheless there was an issue of credibility. What he produced was a very credible website which preyed on the propensity to believe. *Black Lives Matter* had a lot of publicity and so this fake website was amplified around the echo chambers.

Look back into ancient history and there are further examples. Firstly, the Gibeonites. They are mentioned in Joshua Chapter 9 as having arrived in worn out shoes, worn out clothing and live miles away. The amplification comes by a number of people, and the way in which they dress. The Israelites have had one battle after another so they want to believe the Gibeonites are not a threat. So they save the Gibeonites, much to God's annoyance.

Secondly, and coming forward slightly, there was the siege of Troy which lasted for ten years. The Trojans found that their besiegers had disappeared and the gods had sent them a massive wooden horse. Oh praise the gods, they said. Note again, there is nothing more gullible than believers. One person, Cassandra, tries to suggest there are Greeks inside the horse. But the others didn't want to hear it and she was told to shut up. So she runs towards it with a burning torch and it's the Trojans who stop her. Here we see the classic propensity to believe because it fits in with the belief system: I just don't want any more war; it's amplified by the crowds; and the one person who is talking truth isn't listened to.

The next example is recent. Natalie Portman, actress in the films *Black Swan* and the *Star Wars* prequels, found that images of her were being used to make an explicit video. The effect on her was obviously

extremely serious. The video had some credibility, amplified as it was passed around and shared especially by those men with a propensity to believe what they were watching.

The ability to manipulate images is now being developed into quite a political art form. In the United States an individual has used hundreds of hours of speeches and films of President Obama. He can produce a video of President Obama saying virtually anything. The result is we can have a video circulating around the internet of Putin, Trump or May or any of our political leaders talking about different forms of warfare, making various threats. The quality of the artwork makes it all very credible. Add the propensity of people to believe what they see and, together with the amplification, we can see that this is starting to get very, very dangerous.

True images are also used to create a fake news story. One of the most serious ones concerned a photograph which circulated on *Twitter* after the recent terrorist attack in Westminster. It showed Westminster Bridge in the immediate aftermath, where people are seen being tended. A Muslim lady is seen walking past one of the injured whilst looking at her 'phone. The picture was uploaded by a user called South Lone Star who called himself a proud Texan and an American patriot. The user wants us to believe that the Muslim woman has no care for any of the victims, casually walking by.

It's a particularly serious example because it appears to be from a credible source and the photograph is credible. It drew a large number of responses from those who believed the source was genuine, and was 're-tweeted', some of those responses being Islamophobic. Others though were suspicious of the story. This statement came from the woman involved:

"My thoughts at that moment were one of sadness, fear, and concern. What the image does not show is that I had talked to other witnesses to try and find out what was happening, to see if I could be of any help, even though enough people were at the scene tending to the victims. I then decided to call my family to say that I was fine and was making my way home from work, assisting a lady along the way by helping her get to

Waterloo station.”

Who do you believe? Was it a deeply traumatised woman, wanting to tell her family she was safe: the natural response of virtually everybody on that bridge at that time? Or has South Lone Star from Texas got it right? Verification comes from Jamie Lorrinan, the photographer. He confirmed there were two photographs in circulation. One of these corroborates the woman’s testimony. South Lone Star though found one he could utilise and misrepresent to put out his message - the view, apparently, of a right-wing patriot. But he wasn’t. South Lone Star turned out to be a Russian troll.

Fortunately, there were some people who saw through it and realised what was actually going on. They identified that the troll’s *raison-d’etre* was to split society and make the Westminster Bridge bombing even more of a horrific thing than it was, by saying that a moderate Muslim just passed by on the other side of the road. Added to that serious effect on society we should also bear in mind the effect of such a story upon the woman herself.

Before dealing with another current affairs story, I’d like to mention another example which demonstrates credibility, propensity to believe and amplification. FUSAG was the *First United States Army Group* in World War II. They camped out by Dover up across the straits of Calais. It began as a small group but gradually it grew. Soon it came to Hitler’s attention. Reports of FUSAG kept coming in, and Hitler became absolutely convinced that FUSAG was the spearhead of a campaign across the English Channel over the Pas de Calais area because that was the shortest and easiest space to come across [and was his original belief]. This diverted attention away from the Normandy beaches. FUSAG was credible because when German planes flew over they could see and photograph all the tanks and the men. They got back home safely and breathed great sighs of relief, not realising that the RAF actually let them fly over so they could carry out their reconnaissance.

In point of fact what was being photographed were inflatable tanks and inflatable armoured carriers – a fake force all the way across the Kent countryside. It came down to being a credible threat, which, allied to Hitler’s propensity to believe that they were coming across, was being

amplified. For FUSAG went further: [not only increasing the number of tanks etc but], knowing that the Germans could pick up their radio signals, FUSAG put more radio operators in different places and generated nonsense radio traffic. But it was military style nonsense. When it was being listened to it was indistinguishable from real military traffic, built up and amplified by this network of operators.

Let's come now to *Cambridge Analytica*. Aleksandr Kogan was really one of the key people in the *Cambridge Analytica* affair. What he did first was to get a seed sample using groups of people as online panels.

Then, secondly, he determined their personality categories by using basic psychometrics, together with some of his own devising. This very clever man then produced a personality quiz on *Facebook*. This enabled him to get a large enough dataset. All people had to do was tick the box to say they had read the terms and conditions. It was only for research purposes it said, and people were happy enough with that. All that was needed then was the relevant data from *Facebook* friends. So, if you're a *Facebook* friend of one of these people, they scraped some of your data off as well. Psychometric data was taken from the seed sample plus the *Facebook* data, and then analysed with regard to *Facebook* profile data. Based on your *Facebook* likes they sought to predict what your personality score is.

In a recent documentary on this a few months ago it was shown how a reporter's Catholic upbringing was drawn out of his *Facebook* page, despite the fact that the reporter hadn't been a practising Catholic in a very long time. So the analysis can be very accurate. In other words, this is very like having a Myers-Briggs personality profile completed, and predicting what sort of personality you have, from the way you run your *Facebook* page. The psychological, dispositional and/or attitudinal facets of *Facebook* users are, effectively, recorded and scored.

Now consider how this might attack democracy. SCL is the parent company of *Cambridge Analytica* and they obtained data on two million people. This sample gave them the personality profiles [via *Facebook* friends] of fifty million people. Political messages were then crafted based on the psychometric scores, and sent to where the relevant

people were, with the aim of persuading them to vote, or ensuring they did vote, in a particular way.

But fake news isn't just [major untruths like] Anaconda's snakes and breeding rabbits. Fake news can sometimes be misrepresentation or just casting doubt. Remember Eve in the Garden of Eden: Did God really say that? Some of you will have seen or heard of the buffer zone around the *Marie Stokes* clinic in Ealing. If you actually looked at the BBC News reporting of that some would consider it was harsh in the extreme. It talked about women being harassed on the way in. There was no reporting of the women who said how many have been helped by those demonstrators. Other reports I have read noted the number of women who were saying thank you for the buffer zone and the demonstrations. There was some balance on a *Newsnight* programme, for example.

So let us look further into the business of crafting messages. Consider the last US Presidential Election. The advertising made use of the colours green and red: green for people and things you would like, red for what you wouldn't like. Then provide what appears to be a source the targets can have confidence in. And, (from using those psychometric techniques we have mentioned) you know what your audience is going to be. Are they a gun-lobby type or are they going to be more concerned about foreign policy? The message can be crafted either way. Amplification then comes by putting those messages in to those areas which will act as echo chambers. If need be, you also put other people in who definitely amplify them and re-tweet them, like them, or share them on *Facebook*. The effect on the individual in society also affects society because it is leading to a particular election result.

But is this actually the subversion of democracy, or is it actually helping democracy?

There is something called the *Tuesday Letter*. This was written by on behalf of NIX, and NIX is part of SCL. In summary, what the letter says is there are clients that they have helped through the way they can use psychometric data, profiling and so on. Election clients include Argentina, Antigua, Bahamas, Bermuda, Cayman Islands, and Cyprus. It goes on to say they have worked on twenty three elections and haven't

lost one yet. And it is all to do with crafting the messages to suit the psychometric data of the people they are sending them to. They produced a debrief following Donald Trump's election victory in 2016, in which they show the cycle: they collect the data, they process it, they analyse it, they craft the message and they collect the data again. It is a dynamic process not a one off process.

Controlling the first impression here is key. Let us assume someone wants to know how Trump views the Iraq war - they do a web search. But, if you are trying to get a message through it is vital that your potential voters first see information which is going to drive them to vote a particular way.

So consider the banner campaign in the presidential election.

The Clinton campaign was convinced they were going to win, so they cancelled their advertising with *Google*. *Google* being *Google* wanted to recoup their losses so they contacted the Trump campaign and asked if they wanted the banner.

They took two banners. One showed Trump himself bidding for victory, and was posted in fiercely Republican states, creating its own echo-chamber: Trump is there to win. If you were Google searching in a more marginal or more Democratic state you saw the other banner. There was no sign of Trump on that one, just the sorts of people you respect. The idea is one of either keeping you on board; or bringing you on board.

Is this fake news?. Probably not. The picture of Trump on the banner is a true picture of Trump. Is it misleading in the way it is done? Again no. What is interesting is the way the technique can be used to feed you partial information which is misleading. You'll be aware of the British standard for a witness. "*I promise to tell the truth the whole truth and nothing but the truth*". In my job as a chartered surveyor I produce expert witness reports. I have to give a total honest opinion, not slanted one way or the other. If there is information which doesn't suit my client's case I still have to put it to the court or tribunal. Not so elsewhere.

And '*partial information*' is now being used as an important technique for the internet troll.

So how do you distinguish the troll from the one telling the truth?

First, look at the grammar and spelling. Is the word order wrong or awkward? Have they used an indefinite article when a definite article was natural?

Second, assess the narrative. Is there an attempt to sell a different narrative to that which is already happening, an attempt to create what we might call a '*big lie*'? This was written by Hitler in ***Mein Kampf*** in 1925:

“In a big lie there is always a certain force of credibility; because the broad masses of a nation are always more easily corrupted in the deeper strata of their emotional nature than consciously or voluntarily; and thus in the primitive simplicity of their minds they readily fall victims to the big lie than the small lie ... they will not believe that others could have the impudence to distort the truth so infamously.”

State-sponsored internet trolls will work on the same basis, and we see it today with Russia. It happened

- with Flight MH-17, shot down with a missile that came from Russia; or
- look at the narrative that they created concerning the annexation of Crimea. There was an account of men in green with no distinguishing marks on their uniforms, who at the time Putin said were volunteers, true patriots for Crimea.
- There are also what we might call 'false flags': we are told an operation is being run not by who you thought carried it

out. In the recent Syrian crisis, for example, it was stated by Russia that Britain was responsible for the chemical warfare there.

The technique is to say either something didn't happen at all or the 'false flag' card is played. The view is then amplified across the internet by the use of trolls or bots.

A particular trait of a suspect narrative is the outright denial technique. It can look over-the-top but it happened in the case of Sergei Skripal and it had quite an effect. Even some of our own politicians asked if we really knew if it was Russian interference. The denial of any involvement caused doubt.

The trolls will also do all they can to create conflict. In a "troll farm" they have people sitting side by side, putting out different sides to the same story, creating separate echo chambers. Conflict is created because people very often only want to see one side of the story. Listening to both sides is actually quite rare. By generating different sides of the story they amplify conflict between people. So we have trolls on both sides, and we can have the same person taking different sides.

Look out too for rapid switching of narratives. Russian journalist Andrei Soshnikov, wrote that when Boris Nemtsov was killed, the work of the Kremlin's internet bots changed: they stopped creating news stories about the Ukraine (which is their normal work) and were transferred to the murder. They immediately stated that the murder was a provocation (raising doubt), insisted the Kremlin had nothing to do with it (denial), and then put out the story that the opposition killed its own man to attract more people to the march (false flag) . (You would wonder how there were any people left in opposition if they were killing themselves.) Note that it is not just one troll that is switching. There are hundreds switching almost overnight, interacting with each other. The idea is to amplify and amplify the message again and again.

This brings us to our third way to spot suspect internet stories: analysing *Twitter* account traffic to spot 'bots'. 'Bots' in this case are automated accounts designed to pick up stories and send out a

particular message. If an account is tweeting twenty hours a day, it's almost certainly all automated because there are not people who can tweet twenty four hours a day non-stop for seven months at a time. And we can also identify them by the clock: are they using GMT or Moscow time?

Analysis shows the scale of the operation. After the U.S. presidential election, it showed that 1.4 million *Twitter* users had been interacting with known Russian trolls or automated robots. In November 2017, NATO *Strategic Communications Centre of Excellence* said that Russian-language bots create roughly 70% of all Russian messages about NATO in the Baltic States and Poland. Overall, 60% of active Russian-language accounts seem to be automated. In comparison, 39% of accounts tweeting in English are bots, and they created 52% of all English-language messages in the period that we analysed.

But what about us? In that *Tuesday Letter*, Niks specifies that one of the groups he's worked for is the UK *Conservative Party*. There are no further details as to how. And it is also possible that in the Brexit campaign *Cambridge Analytica* were used. I myself am a convinced Brexiteer but my views are not the point. The issue comes as to how these techniques are going to be used in the future, how is psychometric profiling of the population and of voter going to be used in the future? Large sums of money were spent on advertising via social media in the last election, and that is something that is likely to increase.

The question will be for us as a society is how we want our elections to be run, and that will require building in some safeguards [in particular fact checkers. Some of these on the internet are:]

Fact Checkers

Conspirador Norteño @conspirator0

James J Patrick @J_amesp

byline com @Byline_Media

The three above are useful for spotting trolls on Twitter feeds. Conspirador is particularly good on traffic analysis.

fullfact.org.uk

This website is very good at debunking the anaconda-type story. Other useful websites include:

snopes.com

opensecrets.org

TruthOrFiction.com

HoaxSlayer.com

SunlightFoundation.com

Here is a *Twitter* quote to finish with and, who knows, it may be genuine: Pope Francis (Verified Account!!) @Pontifex

“There is no such thing as harmless disinformation; trusting in falsehood can have dire consequences.”

So where do you fit in? Well. In some ways you are guardians of truth. You are the ones who have got the libraries and the computers. You're the ones the public come to and ask for information. You're the ones who need to be up to date, with how to find the Russian Troll amongst all the *Twitter* accounts. You may be in the place where people go to find whether a story is true or not.

Further Reading

“***Echo Chambers on Facebook***” (Quatrociocchi, Scala and Sunstein)

“***Fake News Machine***” (Trend Labs Research paper)

“***Bias Bullshit and Lies***” (Newman & Fletcher, Digital News Project 2017)

“***Journalism, Media and Technology Trends and Predictions 2017***” (Newman, Digital News Project 2017)

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