

Autumn 2019

**CLIS** Christians *in*  
Library *and*  
Information  
Services



# ***CHRISTIAN LIBRARIAN***

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**• THE AGE OF ARROGANCE**

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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: pp. 9 – 11.

●**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. 12.

●**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. 12.

## ***PLEASE PRAY FOR***

●**Forthcoming CLIS activities including the annual lecture on 19 October 2019 and 2020 and our planned events in 2020.**

●**The work of Bob Hartman as a writer and storyteller and for others working in similar ways to bring Bible stories alive for children and adults alike.**

●**Gavin Calver as he takes up his new role as Chief Executive Officer of the Evangelical Alliance. Give thanks for the distinguished service of his predecessor Steve Clifford over the past ten years.**

●**Christian organisations mentioned in this issue including Instant Apostle, Evangelical Alliance, Evangelical Library, Premier Christian Radio, Theos, Scottish Bible Society, and Ethos Media.**

●**The work of professional associations serving the library and information professions and especially CILIP and its specialist and regional groups.**



## **FOUNDED IN 1976 AS THE LIBRARIANS' CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP**

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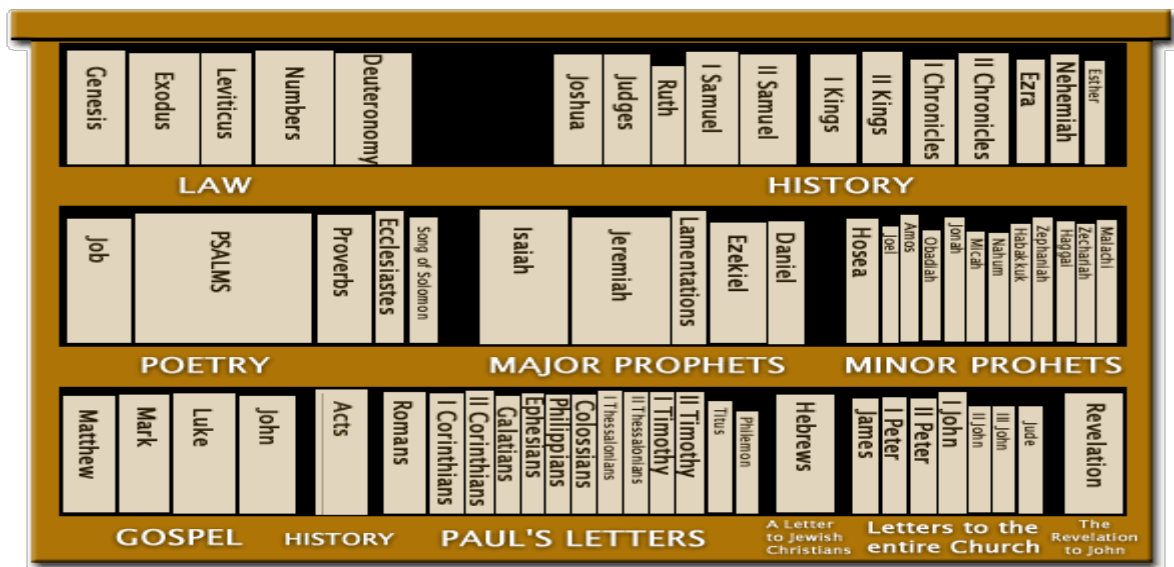
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## THE FIRST WORD

RICHARD WALLER emphasises the value of storytelling in a post-modern culture and points out that the biblical library is a collection of narratives as well as doctrines

# ***THE IMPORTANCE OF STORY***



A little while ago I was preaching in my church and used the hoary illustration of the Bible being a library with the children. I enlivened it with pictures of my own two thousand plus book library and some photos off the web of various very large libraries such as the *Library of Congress* and the *British Library*. While this is an old simile for the Bible, it has a lot going for it, for the Bible is very definitely a collection of books

by a great many different authors.

Like any public library, and what public library is more important than the Bible, it has an extensive story section. The first fifteen books of the Old Testament and the first five of the New Testament are in narrative form and cast in the style of stories even as they teach truth, not the fiction that most public library story books contain.

Stories are important. I think I have said this before in my contributions to ***Christian Librarian*** over the years, but it bears repeating: stories are an important part of how God deals with us and reveals himself to us. There is an old hymn we used to sing in Sunday school when I was young:

*God has given us a book full of stories,  
Which was made for his people of old,  
It begins with the tale of a garden, And ends with the city of  
gold. (1)*

This contains an important truth that is unfortunately obscured by the fact that it was used as a children's hymn.

In many of our churches today (and my own group of churches are particular offenders in this) you would never suspect the existence of a large story section in God's word. For them stories are for Sunday school children, the Bible is a book full of theology and their version of the hymn should go something like:

*God has given us a book full of doctrines,  
That was made for his people of old...*

I couldn't think of a way to make 'And it starts with the book of Romans' scan. My poetic skills are not great. However, when my hymn-loving wife Norma proof-read this, she came up with:

*It begins with Paul's letter to Romans,  
And ends with John's city of gold.*

Which does scan! Now right belief is essential and without doctrine we can't know what it is. I love nothing more than a good sermon full of Bible truth, but the Bible is also a book of stories. They are not there for the sole entertainment of children; it is not the divine children's library and the rest the adult library.

Now if your church is not like that, good, I am pleased to hear it, for there is a realisation breaking in at last that cultural shift has meant that today folk love stories and you can reach people by stories where you wouldn't by preaching doctrines at them. Rationalism has broken down in today's world, a new era has dawned, and we need to change with it. Not changing the message but changing the approach to take account of the mental world in which the majority of our society is actually living.

So we as Christian communicators need to make sure we have this firmly in our minds and hearts. Many years ago at an Annual Conference, whose theme was the importance of story (2), it struck me how important this is and nothing has changed

my mind since but rather strengthened it. We are visiting this idea again in the autumn at our annual lecture in Bath where the speaker, Bob Hartman, is a very superior storyteller indeed. I would urge you to be there, the full details are elsewhere in this magazine, come and hear about stories, how to tell them and why they are important.

People want stories and we have the best story of all. Let's make sure we are telling it.

## **References**

(1) Matilda Maria Penstone, 1859-1910

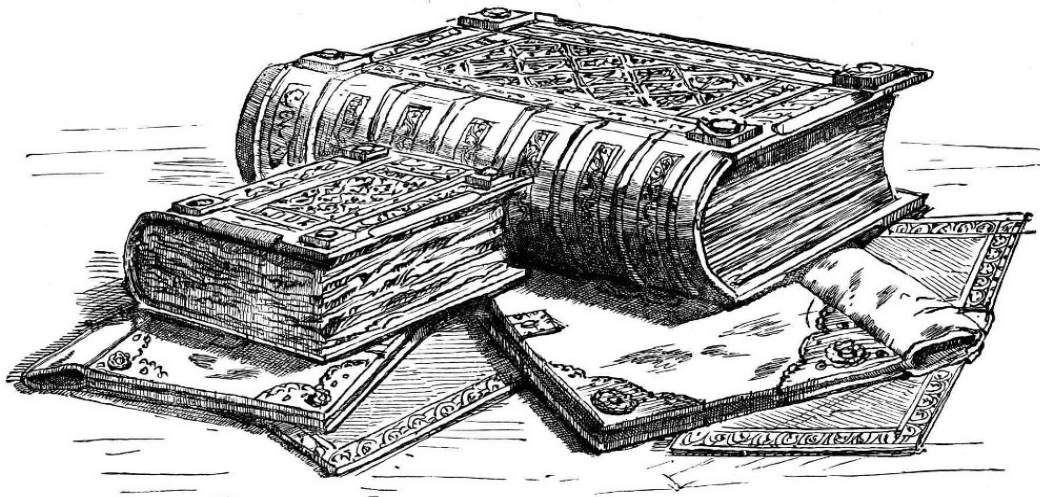
(2) Richard Johnson, "*Storytelling and the Mission of the Church*". In ***Christian Librarian***, Autumn 2007, pp. 20 – 32. An address to the *Librarians' Christian Fellowship* Conference "*This is My Story, This is My Song*" held in Birmingham on 21 April 2007.

**Richard M. Waller, BD**, was elected as the President of *Christians in Library and Information Services* at the annual general meeting on Saturday 14 April 2018. Until his retirement he worked for the public library service in the *Metropolitan Borough of Wigan*.

## THE SECOND WORD

**ROBERT FOSTER** celebrates the value of reading works from earlier generations and reminds us of some wise advice from C. S. Lewis

# ***OLD BOOKS***



I expect most of us have an old book (or books) at home, the kind that one returns to again and again, and which we are especially fond of. When I say '*old book*' it could be old in terms of being an old copy owned for a long time ; it could be '*old school*' in the way it was printed or bound ; or perhaps you possess an early printed item; and then there are those ancient texts which are perpetually in print, such as the Bible. What is it that makes these items special to us?



When I was a student, my grandmother passed on to me a Greek New Testament, published in 1837. Unsurprisingly, I needed to use a modern edition when it came to studying a little New Testament Greek. However, I'm still quite attached to what must be my oldest book, even though the binding is now very brittle. It feels like it has given good service to a number of people, including a preacher or two.

To genuine antiquarians, though, 1837 isn't so very old. I can remember going to an exhibition of Bibles at the *British Library* and gazing at **Codex Sinaiticus**, that remarkable complete New Testament, discovered around the time my printed edition was published, but dating from the fourth century. I was also moved to see a Persian New Testament which had been buried in the sand in around AD 800 by escaping Christians, hoping to come back and find it again. The history attached to these two items was obviously very considerable indeed.

Private book-collecting of rare items can take a lifetime. In a recent article in the journal **The Private Library** a collector of Stanbrook Abbey Press publications reflected on his pleasure at tracking down over many years these beautifully produced private press books, manufactured in a time-honored way. The article reproduced several of the Christian images, illustrations and engravings. I'm sure that author wouldn't be the only one to find the care and devotion in the work of the Stanbrook Abbey nuns inspiring.

In his introduction to a section of St. Athanasius' ***Incarnation of the Word*** ' (Mowbrays, 1943), C. S. Lewis says that we should read old books as well as new ones. He meant on this occasion '*old texts*'. As a tutor he invariably found that his students would prefer a modern commentary on a text, than to read the original text. I'm sure I tended to do this as a student

too. His reason for taking time with the actual old texts - one for every three new books, he suggested - is that you gain perspective. He says: *"Every age has its outlook. It is specially good at seeing certain truths and specially liable to make certain mistakes. We will therefore need the books that will correct the characteristic mistakes of our own period"*.

Part of the problem seems to be that we are too quick to caricature an age or generation. Someone close to me decided to open a small book of readings by John Owen (1616-1683), after leaving it on the shelf for years, believing it would confirm their worst ideas of seventeenth century Puritanism. Instead they found in it a world of joyous hope. Having a balance of old and new is part of what many libraries are known for. Striking the balance of contemporary and classic for ourselves can do us a power of good.



**Robert Foster**, BA, DipIM, MCLIP, is Chair of *Christians in Library and Information Services* and works as an Assistant Librarian at the *Royal College of Music*.

## **ANNUAL PUBLIC LECTURE**

# ***BOB HARTMAN ON “TELLING THE STORY - AGAIN AND AGAIN”***



Popular children’s writer and master storyteller **Bob Hartman** will be giving the annual public lecture for *Christians in Library and Information Services* on **Saturday 19 October 2019** at the **Manvers Street Baptist Church, Manvers Street, Bath, BA1 1JW**, beginning 2.30. p.m.

Bob’s theme will be “**Telling the Story – Again and Again**” and he will be talking about what is involved in re-telling a Bible story, why he does it, and how he manages to re-tell the same story in different ways, over and over again. This will give him the opportunity to do a bit of storytelling, talk about the structure that is

key to every kind of story, and give a bit of insight into the process he uses. The lecture should have a literary focus for librarians, and also a biblical focus for the wider Christian community.

Although the lecture has a particular significance for librarians, attendance is *not* restricted to librarians and the organisers are looking forward to welcoming a wider audience. Admission is free and there is no need to book in advance. Bob is a very entertaining and informative speaker, for adults as well as children, so we hope that the lecture will be well supported by members of CLIS, whether or not they work in children's library services.

**Bob Hartman** is the author of many books among them *The Lion Storyteller Bible* (Lion Hudson) and *Bob Hartman's Rhyming Bible* (SPCK). He was also commissioned to write *A World of Difference* (CWR) to mark the fiftieth anniversary of the *Christian Book Promotion Trust* in 2017. This told the story of many notable Christians of the past and copies were sent free of charge to every primary school in the United Kingdom.

Bob originally trained as a minister but discovered that he had a real passion for re-telling Bible stories. He was encouraged by a member of his congregation to try and get some of them published which he did. At about the same time he began telling stories, along with his brother, for the *Pittsburgh Children's Museum*. The writing and the storytelling grew side by side complementing each other. Bob's interests include reading, films, music, cars and exploring the countryside with his grandchildren.

## **LUNCH ARRANGEMENTS**

If you would like to join other members and friends of CLIS for lunch prior to the afternoon lecture, please join us in the restaurant of the *Royal Hotel*, Manvers Street, Bath, BA1 1JP, from 12.00. noon. The restaurant staff will almost certainly want our menu choices in good time before the booking, so please let The Secretary know as soon as possible if you would like to reserve a place or places in order to avoid disappointment.

## **WELCOME TO BATH**

Apart from lunch we have not arranged an official “*morning activity*” before the lecture this year. However, Bath has many attractions for visitors including the *Roman Baths*, the eighteenth century *Pump Room*, and the *Jane Austen Centre*. The main part of *Bath Abbey* may still be closed for refurbishment but tours of the tower may be available. When we last met in Bath several members chose to spend a weekend in this historic city, Others may wish to do the same this year.

Bath should prove to be a convenient location for many members and friends of CLIS. Rail services to Bath Spa station are available from London Paddington and also from Bristol Temple Meads, Cardiff Central, Cheltenham, Exeter, Plymouth, Salisbury, Southampton, Brighton and Portsmouth. For road travellers Bath is approximately eleven miles from Bristol and “*park and ride*” facilities for motorists are available on the outskirts of the city. The *Manvers Street Baptist Church*, and the *Royal Hotel*, are both

located a very short distance from Bath Spa station.

Further details of the lecture, and the wider work of the Christians in Library and Information Services, can be obtained from The Secretary, Graham Hedges, 34 Thurlestone Avenue, Ilford, Essex, IG3 9DU. Telephone 020 8599 1310, Mobile 07465 429996. E mail [secretary@christianlis.org.uk](mailto:secretary@christianlis.org.uk) Web site [www.christianlis.org.uk](http://www.christianlis.org.uk)

## **MEMBERSHIP MATTERS**

From our Membership Secretary, Janice Paine, comes the following list of those who have renewed their membership since May 2019. We would greatly appreciate it if payment could be sent before the end of April each year. If you have changed address, job or e-mail, please let Janice know as soon as possible. You can contact Janice at 22 Queensgate Gardens, 396 Upper Richmond Road, Putney, London, SW15 6JN. Telephone 020 8785 2174.

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# CLIS NEWSLETTER



From **Graham Hedges, MCLIP, Hon. FCLIP,**  
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## 2020 VISIONS

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.

## ***EIGHTY YEARS AND COUNTING***

Congratulations to our Life Vice-President, **Dr. Donald G. Davis, Jr.**, Emeritus Professor in the School of Information at the *University of Texas at Austin*, who celebrated his eightieth birthday on 15 August 2019. Donald and a companion have recently returned home from a world cruise on the *Oceania Cruises* ship, the *Insignia*. During the voyage Donald preached four times at shipboard worship services. He sends his greetings to the CLIS community and thanks those members who signed his birthday card during our recent annual conference.

## ***CHANGE OF ADDRESS***

We were concerned, earlier in the year, when we heard that our Life Vice-President, **Philip Hayworth**, had suffered a fall and was temporarily recovering in a local nursing home. We are pleased to report that Philip is now living in a warden controlled flat and is able to go out with supervision from members of staff. He can be contacted at 3 Rushey Fold Court, Rushey Fold Lane, Bolton, BL1 3JS and we are sure that he would be pleased to hear from CLIS members. Philip worked until his retirement as the Chief Cataloguer for the public library service in Bolton and served for many years as the northern regional representative for the *Librarians' Christian Fellowship* (as we were).



## **JESUS IN TOWN**

During his talk at our conference back in April our speaker Manoj Raithatha mentioned Elizabeth Mednick's book ***Jesus in Town*** (Instant Apostle, RRP £8.99, ISBN 978-1912726078) which tells the story of various social action projects undertaken on a united basis by the churches in the *London Borough of Barking and Dagenham*.

Readers may be interested to know that I recently interviewed the author and her husband for the *Evangelical Alliance* and wrote a review of the book.

You can read these two articles on the Alliance's web site at <https://www.eauk.org/news-and-views/barking-churches-unite-taking-faith-onto-the-streets> and <https://www.eauk.org/news-and-views/book-review-jesus-in-town>

## **AMAZING GRACE**

We have received news from our friends at *Ethos Media* about a great opportunity for local groups (such as churches) to host showings of the film ***Amazing Grace*** in their local cinemas. ***Amazing Grace*** is a filmed record of a classic live gospel concert by soul music superstar Aretha Franklin and *Ethos Media* have arranged with the distributors that groups can host their own outreach showings of the film in their local cinemas at a time and date of their own choosing. If they do they will each receive a £100 gift that can be used towards the screenings or towards their churches or charities. More details can be found at <http://ethosmedia.org/amazinggrace>

This does not immediately have anything to do with libraries but ***Amazing Grace*** has received positive reviews and I would hope that it would eventually be issued on DVD and Blu-Ray and be included in library stocks.

## **EVANGELICAL LIBRARY LECTURES**

Our friends at the *Evangelical Library* are planning a series of lunchtime lectures to be held during the autumn of 2019. The topics to be considered are *George Whitefield: the prince of preachers* (Stan Evers), *John Wycliffe: Reformation morning star* (Rob Childs), and *Thomas Treanor: "sky pilot"* (Norman Hopkins) on Mondays 16 September, 14 October and 2 December 2019 respectively. The lectures are to be held in the Library premises at 5/6 Gateway Mews, Ringway, Bounds Green, London, N11 2UT between 1.00. - 2.00. on each occasion. All and welcome at the lectures and you can obtain more information from the Librarian, Steve Taylor, at [elenquire@gmail.com](mailto:elenquire@gmail.com)

## **PERFORMING ARTS LIBRARY**

If you read the March 2019 edition of our ***E-Newsletter*** you may remember that we included a news item about the *Surrey Performing Arts Library* which had been temporarily transferred to the *Ewell Library* after the closure of its earlier premises.

We noted in our report that *Surrey County Council* had agreed that the running of the library should be delegated to a new charitable body *NewSPAL*. Victoria Taylor has since been appointed as the Transfer Project Manager. Victoria comes with nine years' experience in arts management with the *Northern College of Music* and other organisations.

Some of the charity's trustees are receiving training in using the library management system and there are plans for moving into new premises in Woking in early 2020. Fundraising is taking place and volunteers are being sought to help with various projects. If you would like to receive monthly updates you can sign up at [www.newspal.org.uk/contact.html](http://www.newspal.org.uk/contact.html)

## **LIBRARIES WEEK 2019**

*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.

I hope that CLIS members will support *Libraries Week* in their libraries and also in their churches. Members could write short articles on libraries for their church newsletters or contribute brief '*library spots*' to Sunday or mid-week meetings. These might include prayers of thanksgiving for our rich heritage of books, libraries, and digital materials, or encouragement to use libraries as a source of Christian books. You can find more information about *Libraries Week* at [www.librariesweek.org.uk](http://www.librariesweek.org.uk)

## **DIGITAL CONFERENCE**

*Premier Christian Radio* have announced an impressive line-up of speakers and participants at this year's *Premier Digital Conference* to be held on **Saturday 2 November 2019** at **The Brewery, Chiswell Street, London, EC1V 4SD**. These include Nona Jones, Head of Global Faith-Based Partnerships at *Facebook*, Amaris Cole, Digital Communications Manager at the *Church of England*, Glen Scrivener, evangelist, author and minister, and Richard Morton, Senior Accessibility Specialist with the *Government Digital Service*.

If you use computers and digital media in your library, your church, or at home, you might like to check out further details of the Conference at <https://www.premierdigital.info>

## **TOGETHER MAKING JESUS KNOWN**

As a long standing member society of the *Evangelical Alliance* we were pleased to hear that **Gavin Calver** is to be the new Chief Executive Officer when **Steve Clifford** steps down from the role later this year. Gavin has served as the EA's head of mission since 2015 and follows in the footsteps of his father and grandfather, Clive Calver and Gilbert Kirby, who also served as chief officers of the Alliance. We send our congratulations to Gavin as he takes up his new responsibilities and best wishes to Steve as he begins a new chapter in his life after ten distinguished years as the General Director. You can find more information about the Alliance at [www.eauk.org](http://www.eauk.org)

## **SCIENCE AND RELIGION**

Our past speaker **Nick Spencer** presented a three part series *The Secret History of Science and Religion* on *BBC Radio Four* beginning on Friday 21 June 2019. The series explored the history of the relationship between science and religion taking in such matters as the persecution of Galileo, the Scopes monkey trial in the United States, and the apparent polarisation between religion and scientists in Britain today. Nick questioned the received wisdom that religion and science have always been in conflict and argued that the main debate has not been about the existence of God, or the age of the Earth, but about how we understand ourselves as human beings.

Nick Spencer works for the think tank Theos as their Senior Fellow and was a speaker at our fortieth anniversary conference in April 2016. You can obtain more information about Theos from 77 Great Peter Street, London, SW1P 2EZ, or from their web site [www.theosthinktank.co.uk](http://www.theosthinktank.co.uk)

## **ANYONE FOR GREECE?**

We have recently received an appeal for help from the *Greek Bible College*, based in Pikermi, Greece. It may be that somebody in the CLIS membership is attracted to the idea of a working holiday in Greece but failing that, there is another option to help the Library from the comfort of your own home .

The Library at the *Greek Bible College* is undertaking a major project to re-c-classify the library from *Dewey* to *Library of Congress* Anyone who is able to offer help with this project will be provided with accommodation, and meals. However there is another strand to the project, which is, to assist the (unqualified) librarian with the identification of subjects for items she is unsure how to classify. Much of this work could be done remotely, by searching catalogues from libraries in which *Library of Congress* is already used, or even, by locating the book itself, in a conveniently located British library.

If you are interested in becoming involved in this project in any capacity, or would like more information, please contact our committee member, Rachel Johnson, e-mail [wanderinglibrarian56@gmail.com](mailto:wanderinglibrarian56@gmail.com) or telephone 01353 968564, or e-mail

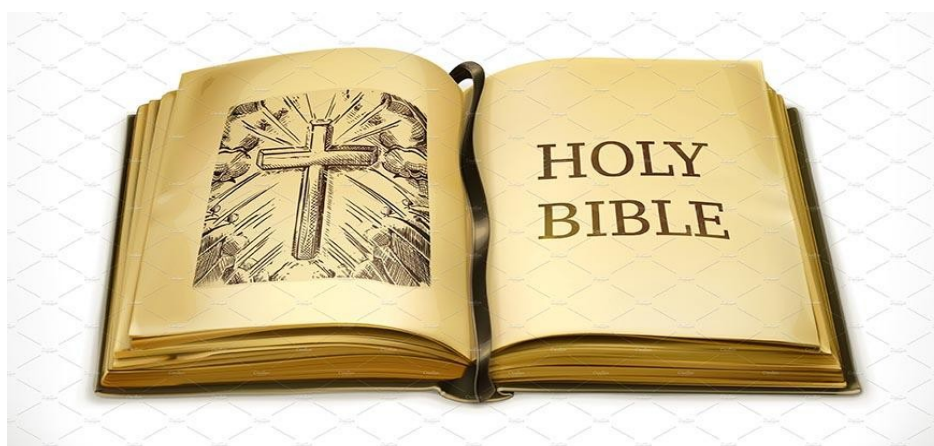
## **EBSCO PUBLISHING**

*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.

## REVIEWS

Some readers regard the Bible as a list of instructions or as a statement of doctrines while others find Bible study flat and unexciting. MARY WOOD engages with a new book from “*God’s most dangerous writer*” while RICHARD KIMBER and RACHEL JOHNSON look at recent books that bring the Bible to life for contemporary readers

# ***BACK TO THE BIBLE***



## **THE BADLY BEHAVED BIBLE: THINKING AGAIN ABOUT THE STORY OF SCRIPTURE**

**Nick Page**

**Hodder and Stoughton, 2019, Hardback, 272p., RRP**

**£16.00,**

**ISBN 978-1473686199**

If you're up for an interesting and thought-provoking read, this is the book for you. The title alone alerts us to expect a provocative approach from the author, one of our past speakers, who, by the way, has been labelled '*God's most dangerous writer*'. Written primarily for Christians who struggle with contradictions, anomalies

and obscure and impenetrable passages in the Bible, those who find traditional Bible study methods flat and unexciting and those who think reading the Bible is a waste of time, this book offers a fresh approach.

The author's main thesis is that we have been misinformed about the Bible and encouraged to see it as something it is not: a rulebook for life, a set of regulations and instructions, a systematic statement of theological doctrine. He goes into a fair bit of detail about how the books we call 'the Bible' were written, the way they have been put together, translated and handed down, emphasising that as always God has chosen to work with and through imperfect human beings. The Israelites' evolving understanding of God and his nature and character is explored, although in my view there was a surprising failure to say anything much about the differences between the old and new covenants.

A lot of what he says makes sense to me, although I can't claim to have examined his arguments in detail. Doubtless evangelicals who adopt a strongly literal interpretation of the Bible will feel that the book undermines what they see as 'the authority of the Scriptures. That however, is not the writer's intention. He is eager for people to read the Bible and engage with it, rather than write it off as an irrelevant work of fiction. Reading the Bible he suggests, 'is one of the most important, rewarding, transformational experiences that any human can do.' 'The Bible burns with the presence of God.' However, he wants people to be free to ask honest questions, express doubts and use their creativity and imagination when reading it. His harshest words are for those who seek to use the Bible to back up their own theological positions and condemn those who see things somewhat differently.

The book is written in an accessible and down to earth style with copious references to popular culture and literature, and while this does makes it eminently readable. I did find the humorous asides a little overdone and irritating at times, however. A timeline of significant events in Bible history and a bibliography are included.

What I liked best about this book was its emphasis on the Bible as a place where we can encounter God. What is important is not just increasing our knowledge and understanding but for us to encounter God. 'The Bible exists to invite us into life, life in all its fullness.'

**Mary E. Wood**, BA, MStInfStud, lives in Leicester and is a former member of the executive committee of *Christians in Library and Information Services*.

**COME AND SEE: AN INVITATION TO JOURNEY WITH JESUS  
AND HIS BELOVED DISCIPLE JOHN**

**Roy Miller**

**Instant Apostle, 2019, Pbk., 445p., RRP £12.00,  
ISBN 978-1912726073**

D A. Carson, in his 1990 commentary on John's Gospel, apologised for adding to the already large literature on that book and, in so doing, raised the bar for others. In ***Come and See***, Roy Millar follows events in the life of Jesus of Nazareth as chronicled by John. We are given insight into the backgrounds of people Jesus met and situations he faced. So it has more of the character of biography – a biography of Jesus. The word '*journey*' in the subtitle is apt.

But I must state my own interest in ***Come and See***. I have known Roy for many years and, as a friend and retired librarian, advised him throughout the writing project. So this review is going to be 'positive' but because I saw the action, I can also write positively of the publishers, *Instant Apostle*. They were speedy, helpful and thoroughly professional.

Roy is a retired surgeon, a godly man with a gift for Bible teaching. Writing from a reformed-evangelical-charismatic background and



with a special interest in the Jewish and Old Testament context of John's Gospel, his book brings a different perspective to his subject. Neither 'scholarly' nor 'introductory', not an 'easy read' yet not 'heavy', **Come and See** occupies a middle ground. Pastors and preachers will find new and helpful material here; serious learners already committed to faith in the Messiah and those with either a secular stance or with a background in another faith will gain help and inspiration.

Look for vivid and sympathetic pen-portraits of familiar characters: the patrician Pharisee Nicodemus who, in time, comes to a real faith; and the Samaritan lady from Sychar (the one Jesus met by the well) who may not so much have been a 'sinner' but simply had had a complicated matrimonial life. I warmed afresh to the man who was able to disperse an excited crowd of self-righteous accusatory men without a word (the writing-in-the sand incident) and, looking him straight in the eye, tell Caesar's representative in Jerusalem exactly where the source of true power and authority lies.

***Come and See*** is different and well worth reading.

**Richard Kimber** is a retired librarian now living in Cambridge

**FINDING OUR VOICE: UNSUNG LIVES FROM THE BIBLE  
RESONATING WITH STORIES FROM TODAY**

**Jeannie Kendall**

**Authentic Media, 2019, Pbk., 192p., RRP £9.99**

**ISBN 978-1788830376**

In ***Finding our Voice*** Jeannie Kendall affirms her long-standing and ongoing fascination with the unnamed women and men in the Bible, those whom history may have passed over but who have had an impact disproportionate to their anonymity, in short, potentially, you or I, or anyone.

Kendall's book contains two parts, eleven chapters with each chapter divided into three sections. The first section of each chapter presents Kendall's creative retelling of one person's story from the Bible. The second introduces the Bible passage (New Revised Standard Version or English Standard Version UK) together with a short explanation.

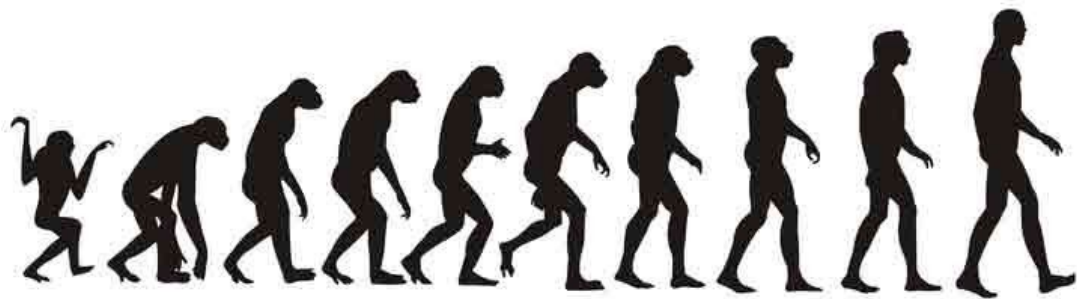
The third section offers the anonymous, true, personal story of an individual in a contemporary situation akin to the unnamed person in the Bible. The suffering and hope in these stories invite the reader to find their own voice as they contemplate their own story. Kendall's book would be an ideal candidate for study and discussion in a home group context, marrying, as it does, a Bible passage with a difficult contemporary life situation which any person might unexpectedly face and enabling a greater understanding of such situations to those whose lives may not be so challenging.

The book deals with lives in the raw, for example, Living with Depression; The impact of Forgiveness; Losing a Child; Confronting Death; give a taste of the chapter headings. Above all, Kendall's book is a book of hope, hope in circumstances in which hope may so easily slip away. By capturing the immediacy of hurt in the human condition timelessly, the intervening centuries between the Bible story and the equivalent contemporary story dissolve. That hope can be found in such places opens up the possibility of finding hope in any person's life situation, as the reader meets the forces of pain and destruction in collision with the great and powerful forces of faith, hope and love.

**Rachel E. Johnson, MA, PhD**, is an Associate Researcher for the *International Forum for Research into Children's Literature* and works as a volunteer at *Tyndale House*, the biblical research library in Cambridge. She serves on the executive committee of *Christians in Library and Information Services* as our Library Assistance Manager.

**ANTHONY PARKER acknowledges the achievements of human history but believes that the challenges facing us in the twenty first century require co-operation between nations, individual self-discipline - or the return of Jesus Christ**

## ***THE AGE OF ARROGANCE***



Whatever one believes about the origin of the human race (Homo sapiens), there can be no doubt that it has had a far greater impact on our planet than any other species.

Humans have explored more of the planet, have climbed higher and dug deeper, have discovered more about the universe of which we are a part, have travelled farther and faster, have extracted more resources more effectively and found better and faster methods of communication than any other species.

History often follows a cyclical pattern, something which is

clearly demonstrated in the history of the Hebrew race, the descendants of Abraham through Isaac and Jacob, as recorded in the Old Testament: the people break their covenant with God, disaster follows (slavery, subjection, exile) until they eventually cry out in repentance to Yahweh, the God whom they have not entirely forgotten. God responds, often by sending faithful leaders (Moses, Gideon, Deborah, David etc) who restore the Hebrew kingdom to its rightful place.

The cycle of which we are a part is a large one which, although commencing in Western Europe, encompasses the entire globe. It began at the end of the fifteenth century when the voyages of discovery made by the Portuguese and Spanish Navigators opened the eyes of Europeans to the riches of South America, Africa and South Asia. They were soon exploited by power-hungry national leaders and individuals in search of wealth.

This led in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries to a flowering of intellectual activity in art, music, literature and natural science, the so-called '*Age of Enlightenment*'. New thinking in philosophy, economics and politics spread rapidly through books and pamphlets, giving rise to much debate in coffee houses and elsewhere.

The fruits of scientific discovery led to the growth of new industries and the mechanisation of old ones: the Industrial Revolution. This made possible many of the achievements listed at the beginning of this article. Humans saw themselves as masters of their own destiny, so belief in God became irrelevant and was no longer part of many Europeans' lives. So began an '*Age of Arrogance*'.

But the cycle does not end here. In achieving so much, the human race has also created more waste (some with extremely long decay periods), learnt how to destroy members of its own and other species more efficiently and in greater numbers, often chosen to damage their own health in pursuit of 'pleasure' (tobacco, alcohol, drugs) and, most serious of all, destroyed more of the delicately balanced eco-system on which all life depends, than any other species. This has already shown itself in climate change.

Some people believe that technology, which has created many of these problems, can also solve them. But they are global problems requiring global solutions, co-operation between nations and individual self-discipline, both of which are scarce in a world of rising nationalism (America First, Brexit, Russia, China) and educational systems geared to selfish individual achievement.

So how will it end? In many food-producing regions of the world becoming deserts, leading to widespread famine? In nuclear war? Or will we repent and cry out to God as the Hebrews did? Will the historian Lord Acton be proved wrong when he said *'The one thing man learns from history is that man learns nothing from history'*? God's offer in 2 Chronicles 7:14 is always open. Or will Jesus return to judge the world?

**Anthony Parker** is the father of our committee member Andrew Parker. Now aged ninety-four he has been a Christian for many years.

WINETTE FIELD revisits her research on leadership, as reported in the last edition of *Christian Librarian*, and applies some of her conclusions to the library and information professions

## ***LEADERSHIP AS DISOBEDIENCE PART TWO***



**Recap:** A group of participants in the British Black Women’s Movement were found to demonstrate non-conformity in their leadership practice. I related their practice to Paul’s writing in Romans 12:1-2 and the outworking of disobedient leadership identified in the behaviour of Shiphrah and Puah (Exodus 1).

**Discussion:** In the past the use of experience has been very much a feminist /womanist approach and thus dismissed. But in an era that values “*story*” LIS professionals, such as Hong-Anh Nguyen, wish to mainstream it.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Rob Green ‘Diversity and inclusion it’s up to all of us’ *Information Professional*, April/ May (2019), 16-19, (p.17).

Analysis revealed that while the sample did not express faith, in an orthodox fashion, they did hold values which acted as the authority by which they wished to be judged. In many cases a causative link was found between intelligent disobedience and earlier experiences.

Modigliani and Rochat<sup>2</sup> summarise the tussle between individuals as '*divergence reduction or amplification*'. In this circumstance at the crucial moment of decision either a compromise takes place internally, leading to external obedience, or a clear refusal is vocalised; in which case a clear distinction exists between the values of the parties. If this is correct then it is an argument in favour of experience.

By this I mean that experience becomes a decisive factor in knowing when and when not to be disobedient; when to not comply with an instruction automatically but to question what is being asked.

Yet it is not just down to experience. There appears to be something unnameable which kicks into play and the earlier that occurs, in a decision making context, the earlier that refusal to comply is likely to stick. On the basis of my study it appears to be a galvanisation of conscience, values and self-identity which impact action.

## Examples

1. Professor Dame Elizabeth N. Anionwu, *DBE CBE FRCN FQNI PhD*- as a student she was asked to gather figures on New Commonwealth patients. Uncomfortable with this she asked who this group were. The answers were varied and she found that in theory the figures gathered could be used to gain funds to help fund services for them. The funding would come from the local authority. She experienced pressure not to ask questions, but did, and as a consequence of a supportive community of senior medical staff did not fail her placement.
2. Linda Bellos – like a number of feminists was labelled angry.

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<sup>2</sup> Andre Modigliani and Francois Rochat 'The role of interaction sequences and the timing of resistance in shaping obedience and defiance to authority' *Journal of Social Issues* , 52:3 (1995), 107 -123.

Rather than apologising she embraced the term<sup>3</sup> as a means of summing up her feelings regarding the degradation of human beings. A situation she sought to address.

3. Mama Elousie Edwards , *MBE*<sup>4</sup> - found herself being asked by migrants how they could deal with their problems in Manchester. As a result the *West Indian Organizations Coordinating Committee* was developed leading to Saturday schools, Easter projects and summer events. Taking matters into their own hands Mrs. Edwards, and others, set up the *African Caribbean Mental Health* project to support struggling young people.

## The cost

All, of my sample, stressed the fun they had within the women's movement and yet there was a price to pay. Despite being supportive of each other the collective approach to leadership was emotionally painful as they debated meaning; ideology; undertook interviews as a group; wrote pieces together; wrangled over identity issues and grieved for friends.

One person described such leadership as jazz offering a positive vision of ideas from various people interweaving to form a way forward that belongs to the whole not to one individual. Indeed collective leadership allowed protection for participants not just in times of hostility but also in terms of the effort needed to get their work done.

In the more traditionally structured groups tensions arose from project failure, poor administration, personality clashes and differing philosophies. Many organizational firsts were not built upon by those who followed<sup>5</sup>, but this generational shift also impacted mission focus leading to some taking local government finance to provide services. Another area of dispute lay between those who wanted a global focus

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<sup>3</sup> Linda Bellos *Interview for Rainbow Jews* 15 October 2013 by Stuart Khan transcribed by Alison Turner [Online] <http://www.rainbowjews.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/08/RJ2013LindaBellos-transcript.pdf> accessed 11<sup>th</sup> June 2019

<sup>4</sup> Mama Elouise Edwards MBE Interview for Nana Bonsu Oral History Project [ Online] <http://nanabonsu.com/media-archive/elouise-edwards/> accessed 26<sup>th</sup> June 2019

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid* accessed 29<sup>th</sup> June 20019



and those who desired a more local one.

Externally pressure arose from those who wanted to fit the women into particular boxes. This was exerted by men, other women, and society in general. One person spoke of physical intimidation of group members not to attend meetings but on this was not a major factor of their experiences as a whole. However the very act of holding meetings on a Sunday afternoon was, for some, seen as rebellious eating into family time.

Turning to our own profession Luthmann records that LIS staff are seen positively in society, often as heroes; but that within our professional literature stereotypes abound<sup>6</sup>. She highlights in particular the white middle aged single woman; yet CILIP's own workforce mapping indicates this is not too far from the truth. For the majority are, or at least of those who took part in their exercise, white, female, heterosexual, with some form of health condition.<sup>7</sup>

Liz Jolly is on record as believing that diversity is the biggest issue facing within our profession<sup>8</sup>. Perhaps she is right but diversity must mean more than simply ethnicity and include the freedom to be more than the sum of our parts. How much more so if one is pigeon holed as the middle aged Christian woman?

Without underestimating the enormous capacity of this "white, female, heterosexual" workforce to get the job done, and flourish, there is a cost to being creative, critical and intelligently disobedient particularly so at a time when life is exerting so many other pressures. For all three disobedient strands may impact organizational behavioural norms which offer no space for dealing with negative emotions<sup>9</sup>. Yet if they can be the esprit de corps how much more can be achieved?<sup>10</sup>

<sup>6</sup> Abigail Luthmann 'Librarians, Professionalism and image: stereotype and reality' *Library Review*, 56 : 9 (2007), 773 -780.

<sup>7</sup> Sarah Arkle 'Somewhat saddened, but not particularly surprised: Investigating CILIP's workforce mapping survey results, Librarians responses to it, and perceptions of diversity in the Library and Information sector' (MA dissertation, University of Sheffield, 2016) [Online] [https://dagda.shef.ac.uk/dispub/dissertations/2015-16/External/Sarah\\_Arkle.pdf](https://dagda.shef.ac.uk/dispub/dissertations/2015-16/External/Sarah_Arkle.pdf) accessed 23<sup>rd</sup> April 2019

<sup>8</sup> Rob McKinley 'The profession's biggest problem: diversity' *Information Professional*, June (2019), 17-19, (p.19).

<sup>9</sup> Miriam L. Matteson, Sharon Chittock, David Mease 'In their own words: stories of emotional labor from the Library workforce' *Library Quarterly*, 85:1 (2015), 85-105 [Online] <https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/79c4/9db04a2946fe0da9a13c5f9967c6ad4ac5c0.pdf> accessed 23<sup>rd</sup> April 2019

<sup>10</sup> Lloyd Clark 'The Intelligently Disobedient Soldier' *Leadership Insight*, 1 (March 2017) [Online]

## Tools of formation:

So how can we create this approach in ourselves and others for the betterment of our services, lives and witness? These ideas have come from my reading and thought process as I've tried to link them to our profession something I did not do in my study.

*Opportunities* - Job rotation, non-prescriptive tasks, chances for people to speak beyond the confines of a role. Make it happen for others and take the initiative for your own development. One current example is the new professional post on CILIPs board of trustees.

*Dramatic engagement* – Opportunities to actively question within a group frame work is one of the options advocated by Anthony Reddie. He suggests the use of drama<sup>11</sup>. Eve Poole takes the view that you need to get your heart going in order to really learn<sup>12</sup> but LIS staff might want to take up the practice of either a community of practice or conscience-raising sessions. Opportunities to discuss what is happening and why within their context with fellow professionals in a safe space.

*Pay forward* – Virginia Woolf<sup>13</sup> embraced the concept of women having a space prepared for them by previous generations; so that on a very basic level the wheel of opening doors was not reinvented. CILIP and the specialist groups often offer funding for attendance at conferences / courses. Perhaps groups of LIS staff do the same as alumni of various institutions? Or maybe take up the baton of offering an apprenticeship post?

*Tell the story* – In effect tell the story of victories and accomplishments in order to normalise patterns of possible behaviour<sup>14</sup>. Professor Anionwu<sup>15</sup> for example discusses the

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<https://www.army.mod.uk/media/2800/centre-for-army-leadership-leadership-insight-no-1.pdf> accessed 29<sup>th</sup> June 2019

<sup>11</sup> Anthony Reddie *Acting in solidarity* (London: SCM, 2012)

<sup>12</sup> Eve Poole 'Leadersmithing : an apprenticeship approach inspires the development of leaders' *Developing Leaders* , 26 (Spring 2017) [Online] <https://iedp.cld.bz/Developing-Leaders-issue-26-Spring-2017/22#zoom=z> accessed 1<sup>st</sup> July 2019

<sup>13</sup> Virginia Woolf *A room of one's own and Three guineas* (London: Vintage Classics, 2016), p. 21.

<sup>14</sup> There are many books high-lighting women's achievements at present. This is a good thing. But one must ask who is being left out of the selections and why.

<sup>15</sup> Elizabeth Nneka Anionwu 'Nursing Times Award Winner 2016: Chief Nursing Officers Award for

meaning of gaining the Nursing Times award for her profession. What about writing about your research for CLIS publications or presenting your research to fellow LIS staff beyond your organization?

*Critical questions of self, and relationships* - These can assist in establishing ownership of views and personal authority. Reflection is an important part of practice. It need not involve a diary or even as modelled in Exodus 1 two people facing the same dilemma and sharing the same concern. It is however a frame of mind and an act of the imagination; particularly if one is not an external processor or the information is sensitive.

*Surround yourself with things that bolster your values*<sup>16</sup> - this helps keep one on a firm footing. "Things" "might take the form of music, pictures on a wall / desk top, or books feeding both the soul and acting as a form of self-care. There is an obvious caveat not to forget to read / engage with things which challenge as well but one needs to be rooted too.

*Join with others* - Mixing with "regular people"<sup>17</sup> has to be a way of breaking down the horizon barriers creating room for mediation of meaning, empathy and collaboration. Being part of a diverse congregation, participating in a secular activity outside of work, mixing up teams so differing departments work together on organizational wide projects.

*Harness local knowledge* - <sup>18</sup> sometimes one finds oneself being in possession of the technical skills to do a job / role but not the long term knowledge of the organisation or a geographic area. It is important to harness the local knowledge of others to make the theory workable. Ask questions. I recently read of, and tried, reverse library tours. Here a few of my users showed me around so I got to see the space through their eyes identifying what was important, and what terms they used. Yes it's left me which a few more summer jobs but it has been beneficial.

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Lifetime Achievement'[Online] <http://www.elizabethanionwu.co.uk/about-me/> accessed 28<sup>th</sup> June 2019

<sup>16</sup> That includes doing the traditional things of reading your bible , taking time to pray, participating in worship and serving.

<sup>17</sup> Alice Walker *In search of our mothers' gardens: womanist prose* (London: Phoenix, 2005) p.83.

<sup>18</sup> Linda Bellos says there is no excuse for ignorance see *Interview for Rainbow Jews* 15 October 2013 by Stuart Khan transcribed by Alison Turner [Online] <http://www.rainbowjews.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/08/RJ2013LindaBellos-transcript.pdf> accessed 11<sup>th</sup> June 2019

*Don't be afraid to be firm* - Eddo-Lodge<sup>19</sup> felt the label angry said more about the need to silence black women than about any particular attitude of the women themselves. Ira Chaleff suggests a very physical response is needed to break the power of someone over you and to give yourself an opportunity to think. Jesus did this when he drew in the sand while considering the question of the Pharisees and the woman (John 8:6). How many times do we smile when delivering a no?

*Have confidence in your professional abilities* - Both basic needs and cognitive evaluation theories include competence as key elements. In these cases it embraces self-perception of the ability to do something or control a situation. Trust your training and keep learning.

*Learn to say no* – Sarah Ahmed advocates knowing your snapping point and not being afraid to walk away. She is an advocate for the word no. A word deemed to be “the work you have to do in order not to reproduce an inheritance”<sup>20</sup>. Both are costly for nonconformity is hard. Ahmed has spent a considerable amount of her working life on diversity within academia. She is a feminist and embraces the term killjoy as means of recognizing the impact of not laughing at the sexist joke and calling out bad behaviour when she sees it. If you prefer consider this as Walter Brueggemann’s call to justice<sup>21</sup>.

*Take your professional development into your own hands* - There are free resources everywhere from [Futurelearn](#) courses to [free e-books](#). Be radical give up that holiday and take a course; invest in your lifelong learning and actively make the connections between what you are learning. Don't dismiss non-LIS courses.

*Practice being creative* – or maybe that should be do things you don't normally do. If you eat the same food every day for lunch try something different; if you have never done the flowers at church

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<sup>19</sup> Reni Eddo-Lodge *Why I no longer speak about race with my white friends* (London: Bloomsbury Circus, 2017), p. 186.

<sup>20</sup> Sarah Ahmed ‘[Refusal, Resignation and Complaint](#)’ *feministkilljoys*, June 28 2018 [Online] <https://feministkilljoys.com/2018/06/28/refusal-resignation-and-complaint/> accessed 1<sup>st</sup> July 2019

<sup>21</sup> Walter Brueggemann *Interrupting Silence : God's command to speak out* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2018)

volunteer. Why? The experience will impact your wider working life.

*Know yourself* – Myers-Briggs and Belbin<sup>22</sup> are just a couple of ways to understand yourself and how you function. They have their flaws but are useful as a means of assessing areas to develop further and in finding your strengths. Belbin's future vision was of a less hierarchical structure and more of a trapezium leadership style consisting of motivated groups led by operational managers.

## **Invitation**

There is much that could be said, which these two articles don't leave room for. Instead they are an attempt to link my dissertation theme to the LIS profession.

If anyone wants to explore further I'm happy to facilitate a knowledge café. We might even be able to get David Gurteen to participate. Contact the editor, Graham Hedges and perhaps we can work to set something up either in London or on a more regional level.

## **Conclusion**

Who silences you; how and why? Do you do it to others?

I chose to use leaders in the British Black Women's Movement as research sample because I think British Black history is often neglected; too often confined to slavery and, since the recent human rights issues, Windrush. More generally it can be said that by constantly referring to North American Black History we in effect deny our own heritage.

Out of the five women selected three were born in the UK and two overseas. One came here as an adult and the other as a child. They are all black British and were all heavily influenced by British, especially English, culture. Over time there was evidence of increasing identification with Africa, even by those with no African parent, leading to

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<sup>22</sup> Meredith Belbin *Team roles at work* (Oxford: Elsevier, 2003)

self-identification as part of its wider diaspora. That in itself raises questions which were beyond my remit of exploration.

The sample was small and it would be good to compare the findings with later groups. None the less their opportunity arose from: context; consciousness, conviction, action, values and identity. It led to participation in creative and innovative leadership, in effect contributing in a radical non-governmental sector. One which often initially worked for the good of black women but eventually widened out to include all.

For me disobedient leadership is not anarchy. It is not even about whistleblowing or survival, although it might involve these. It is a critical thinking skill a “knowing [of] when and how to obey or disobey authority”<sup>23</sup> and how to disobey “the barriers, we ourselves erect, to discovering ways to do what is needed in a situation”<sup>24</sup>.

That is the spirit of Romans 12:2 and the effect will be a replication of Matthew 45: 40 in our services, life and world:

<sup>40</sup> *“The King will reply, ‘Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.’*

**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.

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<sup>23</sup> Ira Chaleff *Intelligent Disobedience: Doing Right When You’re Told to Do Wrong* (Oakland: Berrett-Koehler Publishers, Inc., 2015) p. 1.

<sup>24</sup> Chaleff p. 174.

**MANOJ RAITHATHA** reminds us of our identity in Christ and considers the mission of Christians in the world today

## ***GOD'S VISION FOR US***



*An address to the Christians in Library and Information Services Conference "Publishers and Robots" held on Saturday 6 April 2019 at UCCF, Blue Boar House, Blue Boar Street, Oxford, OX1 4EE and transcribed and edited for Christian Librarian by John Wickenden and Janice Paine.*

### **INTRODUCTION**

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I'm going to disappoint you because the title that you've got listed in your programme is not what I'm going to talk about. I'm really sorry about that but I have been prayerfully reflecting on what to share. You may know that Graham Hedges and I go to the same church and Graham suggested my initial title - *Christian Publishing for the Twenty-First Century* - before I'd spent time praying about what I was going to bring. .

Yes, we do need to consider what God is doing at this particular moment in our time. I will touch on it. We need to discern what God is doing through books at the moment. But I felt that I should bring something else to you and I want to be obedient to what I think the Lord wants me to share. I believe that the Lord wants me to speak to you about vision, about God's overarching plan and your particular role in God's overarching plan.

You're going to be saying to yourself: "*but I already know God's overarching plan*". It's to reconcile humanity to God, and I know my particular role in that, which is in the area of the ministry of reconciliation, which is to play my part in drawing people into the loving arms of Jesus Christ. However it is important to look again at the richness of God's vision, for a number of reasons. The obvious reason is that we are busy people. I know some of you might be retired but actually our mobile 'phones make us busy, don't they? We've got so much information that is coming at us each and every day and we need to take time just to reflect - to sit back - know what is God is doing in the world and what is my particular role in relation to God's vision. A second reason we need to visit God's vision is because it's the place that we get refuelled, re-energised, to get galvanised. We get inspired for the work that God is calling us to. And so my hope today is that you'll be empowered by God's vision.

My hope is that today God will speak to you about your particular calling, and I know that some of you are retired, but you all know that we're still involved in the work of God - and I'm sure that most of you have very busy lives.

My hope is that God will speak to you about his utter delight, as people in information services and libraries, that you are standing up for the truth of the Gospel. When people read books they are bombarded with so many different world views. But you have your positions and places and I'm sure there are people that you know in libraries that are Christians, so you have an influence, don't you. You are influencing even if it's through your prayers; you are influencing what people read in those libraries. And it's powerful stuff.

Before I get onto my talk, two very quick stories about the paramount importance of what you're doing. I was raised a Hindu, and I first heard the Christian message in Kenya at my primary school.



As I left the school the headmaster gave me a biography of George Whitefield the great evangelist. I was probably about twelve years old. I carried this book with me literally for the next twenty years. I became a Christian and then I saw this book on my bookshelf. Wow! George Whitfield, the great evangelist - I must read it! And then I suddenly realised that I was working for the *Evangelical Alliance* which was based in Kennington back then, and their HQ was named after George Whitefield, it was called *Whitfield House*. Extraordinary! I had kept very few things from my time in Kenya, but there was a book on George Whitefield as well as a Bible and the ***Book of Common Prayer***. Everything else from my childhood days I'd given away or left behind as I came back to the UK. I became a Christian in 2008 when I was thirty-six years old and for some twenty years I was carrying these books.

Another really important story to share with you is how I became a Christian. I became a Christian when Christians prayed for my sickly son. He was incubated and in *St. Thomas's Hospital*. He stopped breathing and was on a life support machine. Christians prayed for him, we received those prayers and he was miraculously healed on the fourth day, despite what the consultant said when she did the ward round. My son sat up in bed, though he was fully drugged up so he couldn't just suddenly sit up in bed. I found myself going to church and engaging with this Christian couple that had prayed for my son and we used to find ourselves going to their house for lunch and dinner and we talked about a book, ***The Case for Christ***, round the table. My heart was being opened around the table - good opportunities are there when we eat together. Then my heart became opened. I read the book, I asked questions, I went to church and I gave my life to Jesus Christ. ***The Case for Christ*** had a huge impact on my faith journey.

Let us pray. *Heavenly Father we commit this time into your hands asking that you take full control of what is said and also of what is received. Father in your mercy please open our hearts to hear what you want to say to all of us collectively as a group but also to us individually and grant us the passion to fulfil that which you are asking us to do. May each and every one of us hear a specific word from you today and we ask this in your precious name. Amen.*

## **BIBLE READING**

As we seek to catch God's vision a passage that can help us is Ephesians 1 : 3-12.

*“Praise be to the God and Father of Our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ. For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight. In love he predestined us for adoption to sonship through Jesus Christ in accordance with his pleasure and will to the praise of his glorious Grace which he has freely given us in the one he loves.*

*In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's grace that he lavished on us with all wisdom and understanding. He made known to us the mystery of his will according to his good pleasure which he purposed in Christ to be put into effect when the times reached their fulfilment to bring unity to all things in heaven and on earth under Christ. In him we were also chosen having been predestined according to the plan of him who works out everything in conformity with the purpose of his will in order that we who were the first to put our hope in Christ might be for the praise of his glory”.*

## **OUR IDENTITY**

In this passage we can see the kind of world that God is recreating. For those of us who have encountered Jesus Christ, we're not invited to be on the sidelines but to get involved in that whole kind of re-creating that God is doing, and so we're going to be looking at God's vision in a moment and our part in that. But I'm also going to be talking a little bit about where your identity is,

We need to know where our identity is so that we can be effective in the work that God is calling us to. So let me just talk a little bit about the identity bit and then we'll go on and talk about the vision. The first

point I want to make is this, that God is the source of blessing.

This is what it says in verse 3: *“Praise be to the God and Father of Our Lord Jesus Christ who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ”*. And when we think about our identity, sometimes we are chasing our identity even in our work, or things in the world. But actually if blessing is in Jesus Christ, do we actually know how blessed we are? Spiritual blessing is knowing who Jesus Christ is. My siblings don't know Jesus Christ: my mother and my father don't know Jesus Christ, but I know Jesus Christ.

The spiritual blessing is knowing that you are forgiven by Jesus Christ - knowing that your eternity is with Jesus Christ - knowing your destiny is with Jesus Christ. Or to put it more succinctly the spiritual blessing is Christ in you the hope of glory (Colossians 1 verse 27), and Paul is indeed profoundly aware of this blessing because this is what it says in Galatians 1: *I've been set apart and Christ is in me.*

That's what he talks about - the infilling of God's holy presence in his life. That is the spiritual blessing.. I remember when I became a Christian I found myself literally just jumping up and down! I know it's a bit crazy! How blessed am I to know. I know Jesus Christ; I know where I am going. And sometimes as followers of Jesus we can forget about the joy of our salvation. We can forget that Christ is in us.

This is what it says in 1 Corinthians 6 : 19- 20. *“Do you not know that your bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit. Who is in you, whom you receive from God. You are not your own, you were bought at a price”. Christ in us. God Almighty in us.*

One verse that really helps me and encourages me is in 1 John 4: 4 which says : *“the one who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world.”* He that is in us is God Almighty. Now when you consider the whole idea of Christ in us, what does that express? If God has made his home in us, this expresses God's love for us. It's an extraordinary love that God Almighty, the one who created all things, would choose to make his home in us.

And God really emphasises this point in Ephesians 1: 4-5: *“for he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight.”* He chose us in love. This is what it says in verse

5: *"in love he predestined us for adoption into sonship through Jesus Christ in accordance with his pleasure and will"*. I find that utterly extraordinary. Before the creation of the world, God in love chose us. In pre-creation eternity. God chose you. He chose me. He set us apart as sons and daughters, so that he could reside in us. And all this has been made possible by the redeeming work of Jesus in this world. We like to say that it was by my doing that this happened, but actually this whole passage cautions us that the whole idea was because God chose us. We were only able to accept Jesus Christ because he in pre-creation eternity chose us.

And so these words about spiritual blessing and about God setting you apart just remind you of your identity. Where is your identity? So many things that I'm involved in are trying to drag me away from my identity in Christ. You may know that I am currently working as the Pastor of *Barking Baptist Church*. Is that position more important? No it isn't. What's important is Christ in me and my relationship with Jesus Christ. Of course I love work, I love mission, but we've got to be careful - we're seeking for our identity, our greatest need is to be loved, and in Christ we are.

But do we truly know the reality of that love? Which begs the question, why did God choose us? Because the phrase in this passage about being elected is reiterated in verse eleven when it says *"In him we were also chosen having been predestined"*. But why were we chosen?. It's a question I often ask because my siblings (mother, father, relatives) don't know Jesus, but I know him. And yet I'm the chief sinner and I look at my life: why did God choose me? I suppose you might be asking yourself that question as well - why did God choose you? There might be people in your family that don't know Jesus Christ. Maybe the Lord will one day answer that question; but what we do get an understanding of in this passage is that if we have been chosen by God, it's as we start to understand what we are chosen for that we get real insight into God's vision for the world that we live in.

## **CALLED TO A HOLY LIFE**

So what is God's vision? Well the first point these passages want to make is this in being called, in being chosen and being adopted, and

being selected, set aside out of love by God - *we are called to a holy life.*

This is what it says in verse 4, *“he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight”.*

The importance of holiness is something that is often neglected by many followers of Jesus and I find that God is really speaking to me about this subject matter more and more. To pursue holiness at all costs; to flee from ungodliness, to flee from personal agendas, gossip, malice and jealousy, and to pursue holiness.

Yes Jesus did die for all our wrongdoing, but that's not a licence to carry on sinning. This is what it says in Galatians 5: 13. *“You my brothers and sisters were called to be free, but do not use your freedom to indulge the flesh; rather serve one another humbly in love.”* In other words don't pursue sin but pursue the way of love. Pursue love. This is what it says in Galatians 5: 6. *The only thing that counts is faith expressing itself through love”.* And so what I've come to discover about pursuing holiness is that when we pursue holiness it reflects itself in love. Having been saved by Jesus Christ out of love - it says in love we've been chosen. We've been pre-destined and have been saved by the love of Jesus Christ.

We are now called to *reflect that love.* And that's really the first point that I want to make. Why is that important in terms of what your particular calling is, in terms of information services and library work that you're involved in? What I'm saying is that that is the place that God has stationed you to reflect his love. You know we talk about love a lot of the time, but we really need to meditate on the significance of what that word love actually means. That love means sacrificial love doesn't it. It means meditating on what Jesus Christ has done on the cross for you and saying: Can I reflect that level of love to the people around me?

If you are working in libraries, God surrounded you with people coming in. How much of your life is expressed in the love of God for each of those different people?

There's this wonderful chap that's just come to our church and he loves homeless people. How many times do we sit down next to a homeless person and have a conversation with them? He told me *“I sat down and had a conversation with this person and then I bought him a*

*McDonald's*; I just recently met this young man and I advised him to visit a place in Barking called *The Source* where they feed many homeless people. About fourteen hundred meals are being given away each month, and a lot of homeless people come in. I took him to see the great work that is happening at *The Source*, and as we walked in this homeless person spoke to me and said, *"this is the guy that bought me a McDonald's yesterday"*. It's a great story. I'm learning from this eighteen year old kid what love is all about - not to walk past people, to remember that each and every person is loved by God. Will we love them?

So my first point is from Ephesians 5 : 1-2 which says *"follow God's example therefore as dearly loved children and walk in the way of love just as Christ loved us and gave himself for us."*

Which brings me to my second and third points and I'm going to bring them together about God's vision. So the first aspect of God's vision is about our purpose in Jesus Christ and having been elected. It's about living holy lives that reflect the love of God where God has stationed us.

## **UNITY**

The second or third points we can find in verses 9 to 10 which says: *"with all wisdom and understanding. He made known to us the mystery of his will according to his good pleasure which he purposed in Christ to be put into effect when the times reached their fulfilment to bring"* (and this is the key point) *"to bring unity to all things in heaven and on earth under Christ"*. That's the big vision. That's what we are being invited to get involved in – *"to bring unity to all things in heaven and on earth under Christ"*.

What is being said in these words? The first thing is to bring unity to all things in heaven and on Earth, and secondly to do so under the authority of Jesus Christ. You could have a whole sermon on that verse, and I can't unpack it in as much detail as I'd like to; but broadly speaking the whole unity thing is talking about being reconciled to God, being unified with God. It's about our relationship with God through Jesus Christ. But it's also our relationship with other believers in Jesus Christ.

We are all aware of some of the divisions that we can have as followers of Jesus because of our church traditions and denominations. And yet you get a very different picture of what God is trying to do in the world. This is emphasised also in John 17: 22. This is when Jesus prays to the father for the believers. He says this *“I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one, I in them as you in me, so that they may be brought to complete unity, Then the world will know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me”*.

Your coming together as Christians in library and information work is of huge importance. You might not necessarily see what God is doing in the spiritual realm through your unity here, but things are happening every time you come together - you pray together, you sing worship songs together and you support one another. Things are happening because of your coming together. I know that because I've had so much experience of seeing that churches that are about unity are often churches that are very healthy and God is blessing them. I work for the *Evangelical Alliance*, part time one day a week, and we see what happens when people start to work in unity and God just pours out His blessing.

In *Instant Apostle* we have just published a great book called ***Jesus in town*** by Elizabeth Mednick. It's the story of what has been happening in Barking through unity, about this one guy and his wife who discerned what the Lord was saying to them. One of the things that they thought the Lord was saying to them was to go and see the local shopping centre where there was some empty space. They gathered the support of churches and then spoke to the shopping centre management about the homeless people in town. They told the owner of the shopping centre about their desire to help homeless people in Barking. The shopping centre owner offered them space to run their operation. And the end result was *The Source* which I mentioned earlier.

Liz Mednick and her husband Mick were the people getting this operation started. They explained to the owner of the shopping centre that they had limited funds available and they were offered the use of a shop for a nominal monthly rent. And after three years, following a change of ownership of the shopping centre they were offered the continued use of the shop without paying any rent at all. It's a great story of what was happening in Barking through churches working

together in unity. So do check that book out. We need to be people that are excited about unity.

Often in our churches we're told to go and do the great commission, to go and make disciples of all nations. In a sense this is the vision of God, but actually there is more than we realise in carrying out this vision. Some Christians in our land do not really understand what the bigger picture is - that God is inviting people into his family. The Great Commandment - is how we realise that vision, and it's only recently that I'm really starting to understand what that vision looks like. It means that all the people that I encounter, God is drawing them, wanting them, longing for them to be reconciled to God. And it also means that I need to take so seriously my relationships with other followers of Jesus. I can't just be ad hoc about these things. These are my fellow brothers and sisters; if they need help I need to be the one that helps them.

## **CALL TO MISSION**

But what does all this mean in the context of our calling where God stationed you - what does it actually mean? Well in simple terms it's a call to mission.

It's a call to mission because if that's the big picture - uniting people in Christ - then it is ultimately about mission. It's about taking the time to speak to people, to listen to people. To show compassion, gentleness, patience. If you are still working in libraries then it is an opportunity for you to make sure that the right books are stocked; that opportunities arise for you to promote Christian books, to lend Christian books to people, to buy Christian books for people.

I give so many books away. I don't worry about the finances.. I've given huge numbers away to non Christians. I've lost count. It doesn't matter. I just want to make sure that whatever I'm doing is promoting the Christian message, because a Christian message is life. And I'm starting to pray more intentionally about my family, that they might know Jesus Christ, because it's the message of life.



What does this unity look like in practice? I'm just going to give you a quick story. I have already mentioned the young man who has recently started to attend our church. He's been involved in all kinds of stuff in his life - not good stuff. He was put in foster care when he was three. He's eighteen years old now. The pastor from his home church knows him well because he'd lived with the pastor for about six to eight years when he was younger. This chap hadn't been going to church and he just ended up in Barking. His home pastor contacted me through a mutual friend and he asked me to see this young man and explained that he had been in a lot of trouble, and he just needed the love of Jesus. I agreed to meet him. I made it my priority and a few days later I met him for coffee. This is the guy who was helping the homeless people. And who I introduced to *The Source*. And he made a re-commitment to Jesus Christ as we finished our coffee.

I said look let's pray for that recommitment. You have been to church as a young person and you want to change your life. Well this is the way that you could change your life. And so in that moment of recommitting, the unity kind of vision was playing out because he was making that commitment to God, he was being reconciled to God: He told me that *"I want to turn my life around. I want to serve God"*.

This young guy spoke to the manager of *The Source* and become part of the team, the following day. He's now volunteering for *The Source*, but the unity vision still needs to be developed further because he's not yet fully connected with the church.

He's had lots and lots of issues. He's been in foster care. He doesn't know anybody in Barking. He's probably been here three or four months. He probably has a room somewhere and is on Universal Credit. And he needs our love and support. One lady in the church went and saw him and said, *"Would you like to come for Sunday lunch at my house?"* And he was like wow, you know I've got a family here.

But she said not just this Sunday, every Sunday you come to my house for Sunday lunch. I was reflecting on this. You know I've got kids and I know she's got kids, she's got a fifteen year old, and this kid has been in all kinds of trouble. And he's got a court case coming up as well and I think to myself, would I have done that? But the thing is that she *caught the vision*.

She caught the vision that this young kid needs to know Jesus Christ and he needs to become part of the family of God. That's why baptism is so important, because we're baptised in the name of the Father, Son and the Holy Spirit, but also at that moment we are being integrated into the body of Christ. And she was living out what the whole unity vision is. Friends, this is the kind of work that we're called to, and we need to catch the vision. And take every opportunity we can to be drawing people to Jesus, drawing people into the family.

And just in case you want to read some other stuff about God's vision, it's worthwhile looking at Ephesians 2 :19-22 as well because that's a development of the vision that is stated in Ephesians one but I'll just read it to you. Ephesians 2 : 19- 22. *"Consequently you are no longer foreigners and strangers."*

You're like that chap that I just talked about, He is no longer a foreigner or a stranger but a fellow citizen with God's people and also a member of his household. *"Built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone, in him the whole building is joined together and rises to become a holy temple in the Lord. In him you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his spirit."*

That's God's vision: a vision to become a part of something bigger and better; a vision where we become members of God's household; a vision where our combined unity with Christ is being built up to become a holy temple, a dwelling place for the creator of the world and the universe to inhabit by his spirit. Friends we have been called to far more than worldly pursuits. We've been elected to enjoy God's holy presence in our lives. So may we not sit on the sidelines, but get involved, become a part of what God is doing in drawing others to him.

*Let us pray: Heavenly Father. Help us to catch your vision. Help us to see more clearly, dear Lord what you are doing in this world. And our specific roles in it we just pray for discernment that each and every day. Whatever we're doing wherever we are, dear Lord, that we wouldn't just walk past people anymore but we would see the people that you want us to talk to, the people that you want us to love, to get alongside the people that you want us to draw to you and to invite them into our families, into our homes, into our churches. Lord we ask all this in your precious name . Amen.*

## INSTANT APOSTLE

I'll take just two or three minutes as I close to talk about *Instant Apostle*. I could have given you a whole talk on Christian publishing in the twenty-first century but it didn't feel right to do so. Having come here I might as well mention in a few minutes what I do in publishing,

*Instant Apostle* started in 2012. I have a huge debt of gratitude to *Lion Hudson* because they used to represent us to the trade for a number of years. So when we first started out nobody really knew us. But by *Lion Hudson* supporting us and representing us in the bookshops we've gotten known by the bookshops.

How did it come about? Unexpectedly I became a Christian in 2008. I used to be a property trader. I'd made a lot of money and lost a lot of money in the crash. I didn't want to have anything to do with business because I thought business is bad, but Bridget Adams, a business chaplain, started to mentor me and open my eyes to the importance of business as mission, using business to advance the gospel. And she felt the Lord say to her that we had to start this publishing house in 2011 and I said no. I didn't know anything about publishing, and I left her with that thought. About a month later we were having coffee and she didn't bring up the subject again, but it was in that moment that I was utterly convicted by the Holy Spirit. I said to Bridget, you're right, the Lord has said you've got to start a publishing house. We set it up very quickly.

God has been in it right from the start. We put in £2,500 each to set up a website. We've never had to put any more money into the business at all. We don't have anybody that goes and looks for books. We just pray and the books come in. We always get the required number of books we need for each cycle, which is about twenty to twenty five books. And so they're just coming in all kinds of different ways because we're a very small team with about six people.

It's run very much like a ministry. So we will publish books that don't seem commercially viable - a lot of fiction. If you ask *Lion Hudson* I'm sure that they will say the same thing, fiction is hard to sell. It's very hard but we're committed to fiction. I think God is doing a lot at the moment through fiction however hard it is. It's important because fiction

gets moved quite easily between Christian communities into non-Christian communities. So we're selling fiction through the wholesalers to the general market like *Bertrams* and *Gardners*. We're not talking large quantities, but they're more receptive to taking those kinds of books, while they won't be receptive to a lot of the other books that we stock, which are primarily going to be read by Christians.

We do a lot of non-fiction as well, but I mention fiction to emphasise what God is doing. We have grown in reputation very quickly - we won small publisher of the year at the *Christian Resources Together* conference last year. ***Found by love*** won biography of the year at CRT – we have just sold the rights of that into Denmark, Sweden, Poland and the Netherlands. I'm sure there'll be other rights sales that happen and quite a few will be fiction titles. I think three of our books have been shortlisted for the ***Woman Alive*** readers' choice awards; we haven't won, but I think we've grown a reputation as the publishing house that produces quality books and does it prayerfully.

God bless you. Thank you for having m

**Manoj Raithatha** was raised a Hindu but became a Christian in 2008. Previously he has been a secondary school teacher, a BAFTA award-winning TV writer and a successful property entrepreneur. Today Manoj heads up the *Instant Apostle* publishing house and the *South Asian Forum*, a grouping within the UK *Evangelical Alliance* and also serves as the interim pastor of the *Barking Baptist Church*.

In 2008 Manoj's professional and personal worlds were shattered. The financial crisis devastated his property business and a sudden illness threatened his son's life. Manoj found himself utterly dependent on the prayers of a Christian couple he had recently met. Following God's miraculous intervention in his son's life, Manoj committed his life to Jesus Christ and wholeheartedly serving God's plans and purposes for the world we live in. You can read Manoj's story in his autobiography ***Filthy Rich*** (Monarch, £8.99, ISBN 978-0857215901).