

Spring 2020

CLIS

Christians in
Library and
Information
Services



CHRISTIAN LIBRARIAN

IN THIS ISSUE

•LONDON CONFERENCE: SATURDAY 25 APRIL 2020

•FREE GRACE

•WHAT ABOUT FAITH AND HOPE?

• LEWIS, MACDONALD AND PULLMAN

•WHAT VISION FOR 2020?

•BACK FROM THE MIDDLE EAST

•DEVELOPING ROBOTS WITH MORAL COMPETENCE

EVENTS AT A GLANCE

●**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: pp. 8-10.

WALKING TOUR OF WESTMINSTER with Ben Virgo of Christian Heritage London. Wednesday 20 May 2020, from 2.00. p.m. Details: p. 11.

●**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 conference, the walking tour of Westminster and the annual public lecture in York.**

●**Suitable candidates willing to serve in the various committee posts that may become vacant at our annual general meeting in April. Please pray, also, for the executive committee as they start to plan the work of CLIS in 2021.**

●**Current library assistance projects including the Biblical Creation Library and the Salisbury Reformed Seminary.**

●**The Christian Book Promotion Trust and its Speaking Volumes scheme and, in particular, for the Biking for Books sponsored cycle ride planned for later this year.**

●**The Christian book trade and the continued ministry of Christian bookshops at a difficult time for high street retailers.**

●**Library and information services especially those that may be faced with budget cuts, staff redundancies and other setbacks.**



FOUNDED IN 1976 AS THE LIBRARIANS' CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP

Affiliated to: Evangelical Alliance; Transform Work UK; Universities' & Colleges' Christian Fellowship. Web Site: www.christianlis.org.uk

CHRISTIAN LIBRARIAN: NEWSLETTER AND JOURNAL OF CHRISTIANS IN LIBRARY AND INFORMATION SERVICES (ISSN 0309-4170) No. 85, Spring 2020.

Secretary and Publications Editor: Graham Hedges, *MCLIP, Hon. FCLIP*, Address: 34 Thurlestone Avenue, Ilford, Essex, IG3 9DU, England. Tel +44. (0)20 8599 1310. Mobile 07465 429996. E-mail secretary@christianlis.org.uk

Printing: Concisely Supplies 4 Business, Chelmsford, Essex. CLIS Logo Design: Megan Andersen. .

Views expressed in this journal are those of the contributors and not necessarily those of CLIS as a whole.

CLIS minimum subscription for 2020: £30.00 Reduced rate for student, retired and unemployed members/subscribers: £20.00.

© Christians in Library and Information Services and contributors, February 2020.

SELECTED CONTENTS

04: Richard Waller: Free Grace

06: Robert Foster: What About Faith and Hope?

17: Reviews: Lewis, MacDonald and Pullman

24: Louise Manners: Back from the Middle East

27: Graham Hedges: What Vision for 2020?

30: Graham Hedges: Home Sweet Home

34: Nigel Crook: Developing Robots with Moral Competence

THE FIRST WORD

RICHARD WALLER takes issue with a well known novelist on the subject of forgiveness

FREE GRACE

Norma and I were away visiting her family for Christmas and on the following Sunday the Pastor of the church in Narberth was bringing his Christmas series to an eloquent conclusion by extolling the grace of God seen in the coming of Christ and in his constant offer of the forgiveness we need.

Part of what he had to say put me in mind of Dick Francis, whose horse racing based thrillers occupy part of my bookshelves. He had a rather different view of forgiveness. It surfaces most prominently in one of his novels whose hero has an alcoholic brother who is both unable and unwilling to help himself (1) It is of course basically true that an alcoholic can only be helped when they decide they want to fight the addiction and it is tremendously difficult for the families of those thus afflicted. Over my thirty plus years as church secretary I have seen it quite clearly and Dick Francis' portrayal of the problems rings all too true.

But back to the subject of forgiveness. In the novel the hero has come to the conclusion that help is one thing but freely offered forgiveness is psychologically and emotionally damaging as it undermines the will of the person who is forgiven. The way he puts it is that '*constant forgiveness corrodes the soul*'. This is one of those half-truths that do a lot of damage when offered by a very able, enjoyable and widely admired author. Yes, openly expressed forgiveness can be unwise when there is no determination to change. It would be unwise of God to simply

overlook wrong behaviour. He demands change, repentance is the Bible word. But God's forgiveness does not do damage to the soul. The sheer scale of our sinfulness when measured against God's perfection means that he constantly has to offer us forgiveness and we have to continually come to him for it. Any Christian who is no longer aware of their need for pardon is on very shaky ground indeed. The Bible clearly says that the Lord offers a new start, blotting out our transgressions and forgetting what we did to offend him. This is not only once for all but is a constant in our lives.

Tonight we are off to a New Year's Eve party. Quite often New Year is seen as a time for a new start and you get talk about New Year resolutions. I suppose someone, somewhere, must have kept their resolutions, I have not met them yet! But God's offer in Christ is not like that. It does not destroy the will of the forgiven. The criticism that it does this is not new, it surfaces in the book of Romans where Paul indignantly refutes the suggestion that his teaching about the grace of God means that we don't have to care about what the Lord thinks and we can do as we please without moral concern.

But the thought that really came to me as I listened to the pastor in Narberth was not the dangerous part-truth Dick Francis had hold of, which leads to the conclusion that we need to earn our salvation. It is as well that we don't have to because we can't. What I thought of was the wonderful truth that with the Lord Jesus there is always the opportunity for a new start and it is wonderful that this is true. And that's a good thought to take into 2020. May God bless us all in this coming year.

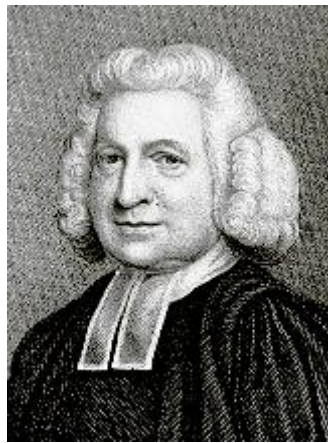
(1) ***Knock Down***, published 1974

Richard M. Waller, BD, is the President of *Christians in Library and Information Services*,

THE SECOND WORD

ROBERT FOSTER recalls a conference presentation on the mental health of students and finds inspiration in the words of a hymn by Charles Wesley

WHAT ABOUT FAITH AND HOPE?



When we come to the Apostle Paul's statement about faith, hope and love, we are used to reading his sublime reflection on love next. But what of faith and hope? There are other Bible passages to help us with these precepts, of course. Even so, one wishes Paul had given us a bit more on faith and hope.

Without faith and hope - in any general sense - things can unravel. Last year I went to a seminar for higher education librarians where our programme included a presentation on mental health awareness for students. On the one hand it was somewhat shocking how problems such as debt, loneliness and expectation can affect students, but it also heartening to see that libraries are often spaces where they can go and stop, have a non-judgmental conversation, read something helpful,

and hopefully see some friendly faces. All participants at the seminar agreed we needed to hear more about this.

Getting through a crisis is one thing, but finding faith and hope seems to me a step further. One person who wrote a lot about faith and hope - and love - was Charles Wesley. One could probably take any verse of any of his hymns at random. Here is one:

Jesus my all in all thou art
My rest in toil, my ease in pain
The medicine of my broken heart
In war my peace, in loss my gain
My smile beneath the tyrant's frown
In shame my glory and my crown.

It's powerful stuff. It also reminds us that Wesley had his own struggles. His younger son, the musical genius Samuel, was a source of regular upset. Samuel may have been bipolar, but in any event it was a strained relationship. Yet, Charles' last words to Samuel were "*I shall bless God to all eternity that ever you were born. I am persuaded I shall*". His words were later remembered by Samuel for a musical tribute (1). Charles Wesley possessed something golden within him, and a gift which would inspire thousands. We might reflect that Christian writing and its other expressions can help people find those things they need to find their way and beyond that.

1. Philip Olleson. *Samuel Wesley : the man and his music*. Boydell Press, 2003. p. 37

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 CONFERENCE

2020 VISION: COMMUNICATIONS IN A DIGITAL AGE

Members of *Christians in Library and Information Services* will be holding their annual conference on **Saturday 25 April 2020** in the **First Floor Room** at the *Salvation Army's Regent Hall, 275 Oxford Street, London, W1C 2DJ* from 10.30. - 4.45. p.m. The conference is entitled **2020 Vision: Communications in a Digital Age** and the speakers will be the Rev. **Mark Woods** (Editor, *Bible Society*) and **Alexandra Davis** (Director of Marketing and Communications, *Pilgrims Friend Society*).

SPEAKERS AND THEMES

Mark Woods will be speaking on the subject **Religious Media and the Digital Revolution**. He will argue that religious media have suffered the shocks of the digital revolution as well as every other form of journalism. Some traditional media have gone to the wall, others limp on, others are in reasonable health, while new players are entering the market. Mark will ask: how are the Church's stories to be told in future, and by whom, and who will pay for it?

Mark is a Baptist minister who has worked in religious journalism for nearly two decades. He has been editor of the *Baptist Times*, consulting editor of the *Methodist Recorder*, editor of the *Christian Today* on-line newspaper, and is currently an editor at the *Bible Society*. He is the author of *Does the Bible Really Say That? Challengng our assumptions in the light of Scripture* (Lion).

Alexandra Davis will be speaking on the subject **Managing Social Media in the Digital Age**. She will consider how Christian communicators can navigate the advantages and the challenges of

social media. She will ask: what does it look like to be distinctively Christian in the ways that we use social media to tell our stories and gather support for our projects? How can we think about the ways that we use data?

Alexandra has been at the *Pilgrim's Friend Society* as Director of Marketing and Communications since September 2019. Previously she was part of the communications team at the *Evangelical Alliance* having worked for *Release International* in the supporter relations team. Alexandra spent time with the *Baptist Missionary Society* in Kosovo and is part of the leadership team at her church.

CONFERENCE BOOKING

The booking fee for the Conference, including lunch and refreshments, is £30.00 with a reduced rate of £25.00 for unwaged delegates. Non-members are welcome. Cheques should be made payable to *Christians in Library and Information Services* and payment can also be made via *PayPal* from the CLIS web site at www.chrstianlis.org.uk Please send your bookings to the Treasurer, **Diana Guthrie, 5 Arden Mead, 4 Staveley Road, Eastbourne, East Ssex, BN20 7LH.**

Travel directions and a conference programme will be sent to registered delegates nearer the time but please note that access to the First Floor at the *Regent Hall* is only via Princes Street, a turning off Regent Street.

The *Regent Hall* ("the only church on Oxford Street") should prove a convenient venue located as it is in the heart of London's West End and close to Oxford Circus underground station (Bakerloo, Central and Victoria Limes).

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

This year's **Annual General Meeting** is to take place on **Saturday 25 April 2020**, from 11.20. a.m., as part of the annual conference proceedings at the *Salvation Army's Regent Hall, 275 Oxford Street, London, W1C 2DJ*. Please let The Secretary have committee nominations and details of any motions for discussion at least four weeks before the date of the meeting. An agenda for the meeting will be circulated to all members of CLIS, either by post or e-mail, not less than two weeks before the meeting date.

Nominations are invited for the following executive committee positions: Publications Editor, Membership Secretary, Recruitment Secretary, and Members Without Portfolio (two positions). Each nomination requires a proposer and seconder and the candidate also needs to confirm in writing that he or she is willing to serve in this role. Some of our present committee members may be willing to stand for re-election but we are always pleased to hear from others who are willing to consider serving on the committee.

Please send all correspondence on Annual General Meeting business to : **Graham Hedges, Secretary, 34 Thurlestone Avenue, Ilford, Essex, IG3 9DU. E mail secretary@christianlis.org.uk**

SEE YOU AT THE REGENT HALL?

Please join us for a day of inspiring speakers, worship, and opportunities to meet and enjoy fellowship with other Christians from a library and information background.

The Conference provides an opportunity to bring the existence of CLIS to library and information colleagues who are not yet members and may be unaware of our existence. Please help us to publicise the organisation and conference to your contacts.

CLIS NEWSLETTER



From Graham Hedges, *MCLIP, Hon. FCLIP*, Secretary and Publications Editor, 34 Thurlestone Avenue, Ilford, Essex, IG3 9DU. Tel. + 44 (0)20 8599 1310. Mobile 07465 429996. Web site www.christianlis.org.uk E mail secretary@christianlis.org.uk

WESTMINSTER WALKING TOUR

Following our earlier walking tour of the City of London, and guided tour of the *British Museum*, we have arranged a walking tour of Westminster for **Wednesday 20 May 2020**. This will visit sites with connections with such well known Christian figures as Martyn Lloyd-Jones, John Wesley, William Wilberforce, and Lord Shaftesbury. The tour will again be led by our friend Ben Virgo from *Christian Heritage London*. The tour should commence at 2.00. p.m. but we anticipate that those who can arrive in time will have lunch together in the basement cafe at *Westminster Central Hall* from 12.30. p.m.

The cost per person will be £15.00 and cheques should be made payable to *Christians in Library and Information Services*. If you would like to book a place or place on the tour please send your booking to our Treasurer: Diana Guthrie, 5 Arden Mead, 4 Staveley Road, Eastbourne, East Sussex, BN20 7LH and indicate whether you plan to join the lunch party.

ANNUAL PUBLIC LECTURE

This 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 this date and plan to attend.

DISTINGUISHED SERVICE

We were sorry to receive news of the passing of our member **Jean M. Plaister** on 3 December 2019. Jean was for many years the Director of LASER (*London and South Eastern Library Region*) and served as President of the *Library Association* in 1988. She later became a member of LCF/CLIS and attended several of the services that we arranged during *Library Association* conferences and several of our own London conferences.

Jean's funeral took place on 2 January 2020 at *St. Andrew's Church*, Alexandra Park, London, where she had been a member of the congregation for many years and had served as PCC Secretary, Churchwarden, and Development Campaign Co-ordinator. Donations to the *Alzheimer's Society* in memory of Jean are invited via the *Jean Plaister Celebration Fund* at <https://jean-plaister1.muchloved.com> Readers will want to give thanks for Jean's life and distinguished service to librarianship and the local church.

FORTY YEAR MILESTONE

This year's Conference will mark my fortieth anniversary as Secretary of the *Librarians' Christian Fellowship* and *Christians in Library and Information Services*. This Spring will also be my forty-second anniversary as Editor of the LCF/CLIS publications.

Being involved in LCF/CLIS has been a memorable experience but health problems have made my participation more difficult during the past few years. My current term of office as Secretary comes to an end in April 2021. My appointment as Publications Editor comes to an end this April but I am planning to stand for re-election.

Sooner or later I will have to step down as Secretary and I would be interested in expressions of interest from members who might consider serving in this role. In the past we have considered splitting the role into two, namely a Committee Secretary (who would be responsible for general correspondence, agendas, minutes etc.) and an Events Secretary (who would organise major events such as the annual conference and lecture). Would you be interested in serving in one or both of these roles? Please get in touch if you might be interested. .

MIDDLE EARTH SCHOLAR

Admirers of the *Inklings*, the Oxford-based group of Christian writers, will be sorry to hear of the recent death of Christopher Tolkien, at the age of ninety-five.

Christopher Tolkien, born in Leeds in 1924, was the third and youngest son of the celebrated fantasy writer J. R. R. Tolkien. He drew many of the original maps of Middle Earth included in his father's ***Lord of the Rings*** when it was published in the 1950s. After his father's death in 1973 he edited and published ***The Silmarillion*** and many other volumes of material that had previously remained unpublished. Announcing Christopher's death in January 2020 the *Tolkien Society* paid tribute to him as "*the first Middle Earth scholar*".

LIBRARY ASSISTANCE PROJECT

We have been approached by Pastor Simon Green who, in addition to serving as one of the ministers of *Emmanuel Church* in Salisbury, is also a trustee in what has become the *Salisbury Reformed Seminary*. He has been given the task of trying to organise and catalogue the

seminary's growing library and he would be grateful if any members of CLIS were willing to assist with this project.

The library is split across two rooms and contains somewhere in the region of five to six thousand books some of which are antiquarian. Pastor Simon is aware of a number of duplicate volumes which would need to be removed from the library due to space restrictions and given away to the students. Can anyone help? If you are interested, or need more information, please contact Rachel Johnson, our Library Assistance Manager, at wanderinglibrarian56@gmail.com or telephone 01353 968564. You can find more information about the *Salisbury Reformed Seminary* at www.salisburyseminary.org

BIKING FOR BOOKS

Most of our readers will be familiar with the Christian Book Promotion Trust's *Speaking Volumes* scheme which provides grants to buy Christian books for libraries of all kinds. Some of our members will recall meeting the scheme's Director, Paula Renouf, when she spoke at our Birmingham conference a few years ago.

Paula is planning a sponsored cycle ride during which she will visit many of this country's Christian bookshops. This will take place in June 2020 to coincide with *National Independent Bookshops Week* and will highlight the important role that Christian bookshops play in making Christian literature and other materials available to the public. The participating bookshops will also be encouraged to use the visits as an opportunity to raise funds for *Speaking Volumes*.

At the time of writing Paula has a commitment from twelve bookshops willing to take part. The furthest north is in Stornoway and the furthest south is in Plymouth, a mere eight hundred and fifty miles apart. It is hoped that a few more bookshops will decide to sign up raising the total to fifteen and that the venture will be able to raise a total of £25,000

The organisers of *Christian Resources Together*, the annual book trade conference, are supporting the venture by offering two free places at their 2020 event for the bookshop that raises the most money.

Interest in the cycle ride has also been expressed by *Premier Christian Radio* and a number of Christian publishers.

This initiative comes at a difficult time for Christian bookshops, and the high street generally, and a total of eight Christian shops are said to have closed in January 2020 alone. If your local Christian bookshop is planning to host a visit by Paula, you might like to visit the shop to meet Paula and express your support for the bookshop and the *Speaking Volumes* project. Even if you are unable to visit a bookshop you might like to send a donation towards the hoped for £25,000. You can obtain more information from *Speaking Volumes*, 1 Bar Lane Cottages, Newton Road, Whittlesford, Cambridge, CB22 4PE. Tel. 0791 430 1481, E-mail paula@speakingvolumes.org.uk

CONTEMPORARY CHRISTIAN MUSIC

Derek Walker's article *The Rise and Fall of Christian Music* traces the fifty year history of contemporary Christian music (CCM).

Walker traces the history of CCM back to 1969 when Larry Norman, "a denim-clad hippie with shoulder length blond hair", released his album ***Upon this Rock***. Norman's work encouraged others to combine Christian lyrics with various styles of pop and rock music though many musicians were aware of a tension between the new music and the Church,

In the 1970s Christian music made a rare appearance in the national charts when the folk trio Parchment reached the lower end of the top forty with *Light Up the Fire*. Bob Dylan shocked many of his fans when he embraced the Christian faith and released a trilogy of gospel albums beginning with ***Slow Train Coming***.

Contemporary Christian music continued to make progress during the 1980s and 1990s but the success of CCM ultimately led to its demise. Record companies had to continue signing new artists just to keep the machinery of business going and the result was a decline in quality. As time passed the success of the contemporary worship movement led to songwriters and musicians concentrating on songs for Sunday worship rather than material that might have communicated with the wider culture.

Although the glory days of CCM are over, God is still at work in the music world with mainstream artists like Justin Bieber and Kanye West professing the Christian faith. Stormzy's performance of *Blinded By Your Grace* was a major event at last year's *Glastonbury Festival*. The article appears in **Premier Christianity**, December 2019, pp. 40 – 53.

THOMAS BECKET REMEMBERED

The *British Museum* will host the first UK exhibition on the life and death of Thomas Becket as part of a programme marking the eight hundred and fiftieth anniversary of his martyrdom in *Canterbury Cathedral*. **Becket 2020** will see venues around the country host a range of events to commemorate the death of the former Archbishop of Canterbury through performances, pageants, talks, film screenings and religious services culminating in the exhibition at the *British Museum*. The wider programme will include a new production of T. S. Eliot's *Murder in the Cathedral* to be staged in *Canterbury Cathedral*.

Thomas Becket will be at the *British Museum* from **Thursday 15 October 2020 – Sunday 14 February 2021** and you can find more information, and sign up to receive updates as they become available, at <https://www.britishmuseum.org/exhibitions/thomas-becket> You can find information about the wider **Becket 2020** programme at <https://becket2020.com>

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

RACHEL JOHNSON welcomes a new anthology by C. S. Lewis likely to appeal to librarians and other book lovers plus a new volume of essays on George MacDonald. **KAREN HANS** reviews the latest Philip Pullman title and **ROBERT FOSTER** considers ten questions for digital Christians

LEWIS, MACDONALD AND PULLMAN

THE READING LIFE: THE JOY OF SEEING NEW WORLDS THROUGH OTHER'S EYES

C. S. Lewis.

Edited by David C. Downing and Michael G. Maudin

William Collins, 2019, RRP £12.99, Hardback, xvi, 171p., ISBN 978-0008307110

This book is a quiet moment if one is feeling a bit lazy and relishing having so many excerpts from Lewis brought to one on a plate without having to go to the original sources. At the time of reading, I was in this position. It is a small hardback, nicely produced, contains a clear typeface and a simple attractive dust jacket. Essentially an anthology, this collection of excerpts from Lewis's writing about reading is gleaned from across his work. Altogether the volume contains fifty-two excerpts, arranged into two parts.

The editors note Lewis's comment on how much his world view and sensibility were shaped by the books he read and the place of reading in his life in their Preface, and clearly set out the parameters for excerpts included in the book. Their criteria for choice of excerpt include '*entertainment and edification for the true reader*' (p.xvi) and exclude Lewis's academic writing and comments on Christian or devotional reading.

The first part, entitled '*On the Art and Joy of Reading*', ranges from '*Why we read*', through '*The case for reading old books*'; '*Why*

children's books are not just for children' to 'On Two ways of travelling and two ways of reading'.

The second part is simply headed '*Short Readings on Reading*', and contains, as it suggests, short extracts, largely from correspondence but also from other work.

The final three pages, (Appendix), provide nine questions as a framework for the reader to begin reflecting on his or her '*reading life*'. Whilst this may be helpful for some readers, I personally found its earnestness dampened the lightness and serendipitous enjoyment of this anthology.

As we anticipate when reading Lewis, the excerpts are full of philosophical allusions, graphic illustrations to clarify a point and an original angle on the subject about which he writes. I was sorry not to find a full bibliography of works from which the excerpts are taken, although details of sources may be found using the basic details included at the foot of each inclusion. If there is one irritating characteristic of this book it is the intrusion of large print, single sentence extracts from the excerpt which disrupt the flow of the passage. On the other hand, they may be perceived as a taster if a potential interested reader were scanning through the book and so may serve a positive purpose.

This book would make an ideal gift and serve to encourage a potential Lewis reader to explore the works from which the excerpts are taken, if he or she does not already know them.

Reviewed by: **Rachel E. Johnson**

**GEORGE MACDONALD IN THE AGE OF MIRACLES:
INCARNATION, DOUBT AND RE-ENCHANTMENT**

Timothy Larsen

**Downers Grove, Illinois, IVP Academic, 2018, RRP £10.99, Pbk.,
142p., ISBN 978-0830853731**

Consisting of three lectures by Timothy Larsen, with responses, this volume begins with a full introduction by Walter Hansen, the initiator of

the Hansen lectureship. This insightful introduction explains the origin of the lecture series and its foundation in the authors represented in the *Marion E. Wade Collection* located at *Wheaton College*, namely C. S. Lewis, J. R. R. Tolkien, Charles Williams, Owen Barfield, Dorothy L. Sayers, George MacDonald and G. K. Chesterton. Hansen constructs his explanation around a short exposition of T. S. Eliot's poem '*Little Gidding*', which demonstrates the power of the poem to transcend and transform immediate circumstance, leading seamlessly into the three lectures on the work of George MacDonald whose work Larsen presents as transfiguring everyday life, with the same power. Each lecture is followed by a response from one of Larsen's fellow academics at, or connected with, *Wheaton College*.

In the first lecture, '*George MacDonald in the Age of the Incarnation*', the title is taken from Boyd Hilton's designation of the second half of the nineteenth century as '*The Age of the Incarnation*', emphasising the love and Fatherhood of God as revealed in the incarnation of Christ and contrasting it with the revivalist emphasis on the Atonement in the first half of the nineteenth century. Larsen cites figures instrumental in this '*shift*' (p. 17) in theological position, of which George MacDonald is one. His contextualisation of the arguments for atonement versus incarnation is clearly presented although by placing the two halves of the nineteenth century in opposition in their theological stance, the importance of the wholeness of the gospel of love and sacrifice has been somewhat subsumed. In terms of cultural construct, the key position of Prince Albert in the creation of what is perceived to be a '*traditional English*' Christmas is omitted, as is its knock-on effect on, for example, the publication of new titles at Christmas as a practical sales initiative rather than a theological stance to emphasise the incarnation.

In the second lecture, '*George MacDonald and the Crisis of Doubt*', Larsen turns the epithet of the Victorian age as '*The Age of Doubt*' upside down, referring to it rather as the '*Age of Faith*', basing his argument on a misunderstanding of 'the import of the word "*doubt*"' (p. 50). Larsen cites many of MacDonald's novels featuring a key character, often a clergyman, but always a sincere seeker-after-truth, who questions his or her faith, drawing out the benefits of questioning and emphasising the closeness of the questioner, or doubter, to God and to faith in God, as opposed to the position of the mocking sceptic.

Finally, the third lecture, '*George MacDonald and the Re-*

enchantment of the World', begins with MacDonald's image of the fire of roses as a metaphor for purification. This image is found in ***The Princess and Curdie***. (After holding his hands in the fire of roses, Curdie is cleansed and able to discern character through the touch of hands.) In this lecture Larsen advances a theory for MacDonald's departure from his first pastorate which goes against all the evidence available from contemporary sources.¹ Continuing his argument on the importance of purification in the work of MacDonald, Larsen discusses the quest for holiness evident in MacDonald's work and the necessity of a '*purgatorial*' cleansing. He closes with observations on the need to re-enchant the world with belief.

I mentioned in the introductory paragraph that each lecture was followed by a response. The respondents: James Edward Beitler III (Lecture 1), Richard Hughes Gibson (Lecture 2) and Jill Peláez Baumgaertner (Lecture 3), helpfully extend, extrapolate and offer further insight into the subject of each lecture.

Overall I would recommend this book to readers who are already familiar with the work of George MacDonald, including his novels and sermons, and with a knowledge of his life and context.

Rachel E. Johnson, MA, PhD, is the author of . ***A Complete Identity: the youthful hero in the works of G.A. Henty and George MacDonald*** (Pickwick Books, ISBN 978-165642387). Rachel serves on the executive committee of *Christians in Library and Information Services* as our Library Assistance Manager.

THE SECRET COMMONWEALTH: THE BOOK OF DUST VOL. 2.

Philip Pullman

Penguin and David Fickling Books, 2019, Hardback, RRP £20.00, 704p., ISBN 978-024373 930

The Secret Commonwealth by Philip Pullman is the second title in the ***Book of Dust*** trilogy. The first, ***The Belle Sauvage***, was a prequel to

¹ Given the brevity of this review, I refer readers to the documented evidence clearly presented in the 'Wingfold Summer Special Edition: Issue Number 107' pgs 18-21. My thanks to Barbara Amell for her incomparable work in discovering and presenting material contemporary with MacDonald.

the *His Dark Materials* trilogy, whereas this continues Lyra's story beyond *His Dark Materials*: Lyra is now a young woman. The book begins by showing Lyra back in Oxford, at *Jordan College* in the holidays and *St. Sophia's College* for her education. We learn that things at Jordan are becoming dangerous and soon Lyra understands more about those who have been instrumental in protecting her since she was a baby and begins to form relationships with them as an adult. At the same time Lyra and her daemon, Pantalaimon are developing a very strained relationship. This worsens as Lyra becomes seduced by works of fiction and non-fiction that question the reality of daemons themselves and the whole "*secret commonwealth*" of phantoms etc.

Rationality is pitted against imagination in her chosen reading matter, which is the popular material of the time, and Lyra is attracted by the former, as the authors she reads have themselves been. Thus Pullman himself repeatedly encourages his readers to consider the claims of each. Pan of course is part of the latter, so the division between human and daemon, begun in a physical and unavoidable way in the former trilogy, now becomes an emotional and philosophical condition and the main plot driver. Pan abandons Lyra in order to go in search of her '*stolen*' imagination and Lyra then goes in search of him.

As the reader I felt that this was too contrived and, though I enjoyed the early mystery of a murder witnessed by Pan, I found it difficult to follow the plot at times from quite early on in the book. There were a multitude of characters and the middle chapters moved around across Europe and the Middle East in following Pan, Lyra, Malcolm and Bonneville (the younger), all of whom were on quests and in different ways interacted with the Magisterium. At one point Lyra herself comments on the strangeness of a plot turn in which her interaction with other people can only be explained as predestined and Pullman's sovereignty as author seems exposed. As a reader I was here less able to suspend my disbelief than in the rest of the tome, which I generally enjoyed very much.

Lyra's quest to find Pan is intertwined with a growing understanding by many of the characters (and hence the reader) of a situation regarding rose oil from the east. Fanatics are being used by the Magisterium to destroy crops in the name of purity of religion, though in fact it seems that the Magisterium wants to exert economic and spiritual control over everyone with the oil. The language Pullman employs by and about these destroyers include "*paradise*" "*brotherhood*"

and "submit" and, along with the placing of these in the Middle East, it is altogether very resonant of ISIS. Later on in the book, having been sexually assaulted, Lyra has to adopt the Niqab. The violent scene of the assault means that I am minded to place the book in the "Young Adult" section of our school library, so that the trilogy will be divided, the first volume being in the children's fiction. (This has happened before when the main protagonist(s) has transitioned from child to adult during a series.)

One character is introduced right at the end, a girl who leads Lyra by the hand. She is named Nur Huda el-Wahabi in memory of one of the victims who lost their lives in the Grenfell Tower tragedy. Like the political resonance of the ISIS-like terrorists, Pullman introduces other recent references such as "second-hand water cannon" which Britain may lend the Magisterium and which will immediately evoke Boris Johnson's mayoralty in the minds of Londoners. It was clear as I reached the last hundred or so pages of the near seven hundred that there was no chance of the story being resolved. We are left very much in the midst of a complicated tale with as yet no date for the final volume!

Karen Hans, BSc, MA, FCLIP, works as Librarian at the *Forest Hill School* in London and serves on the executive committee of *Christians in Library and Information Services* as Prayer Secretary.

**TOO MUCH INFORMATION? TEN ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS FOR
DIGITAL CHRISTIANS**

Andrew Graystone

Canterbury Press, 2019, Pbk., RRP £12.99, 154p., ISBN 978-1786221599

When reading a book about the digital world there is a dilemma. On the one hand, you feel you need to know about it. On the other hand, you are not sure how long the information will be relevant, such is the speed with which things move. However, I sense that the issues that it covers will be with us for a little while yet, and much interesting and illuminating material is contained in this book.

The book is suitable for the non-specialist. It is written in an easy, quite chatty style. The author does mention researchers in the field in the text, but there are no references to literature, or further reading. Thankfully, from my perspective, the author avoids becoming too technical. At one point, when comparing the way past generations handled information, he mentions Melvil Dewey. I was aware at this point that he was simplifying things, but there was nothing very misleading about it, and I did not find myself losing confidence. He is clearly a student of his subject, not simply a writer on it.

There are serious topics covered - artificial intelligence, fake news, social media, information poverty and so on. Some of the best features about this book for me are the illustrations he uses. Examples of fake news are entertaining but equally thought-provoking are those where robots are given a gender. The reader is asked to consider how important is an original painting, document or anything. Is the digital world going to make what we once considered authentic, redundant? The author makes a very perceptive analysis of how we use social media, and how this can impact the way we make relationships. One of his major concerns is how easy it is to be anonymous on the web - something he counsels Christians against - and how easy it is to pass harmful comment without being traced.

Some of the writing can make you feel quite concerned for the future, but there is more to this book than just a lot of alarmist futurology. This is a book which gives one plenty to think about, and with enough concrete examples and pieces of information to retain interest. Although the subtitle refers to '*ten questions*' I don't think they are the kind of questions which would work for a study group. They are more chapter headings than discussion topics. That's not to say that the book couldn't be used in group study, but it's not ready made. It's more a helpful and user-friendly starter to the subject. With the librarian's hat on, I would have liked an index, especially as there is a glossary of some of the buzz-words and technical terms. Otherwise it comes with a recommendation.

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*.

LOUISE MANNERS shares her thoughts on returning to the United Kingdom from Saudi Arabia after five years

BACK FROM THE MIDDLE EAST



I went out to Saudi Arabia in September 2014. King Abdullah I was on the throne. His reign saw a great expansion in higher education opportunities for Saudi nationals. Government scholarships permitted study in the US, Canada, the UK or in Saudi Arabia and were taken up by men and women.

King Abdullah died in 2015 and was succeeded by his half-brother King Salman I. King Salman intervened in the Yemeni civil war, launched *Vision 2030* (preparing the economy for when the oil will run out, utilising information technology, artificial intelligence and opening up Saudi Arabia to tourism) and gave women permission to drive. Before then women could own cars but were not permitted to drive them. He also blockaded Qatar and had a diplomatic disagreement with Canada. The existing government scholarships continued, but were severely curtailed. King Salman's heir Prince Mohammad Bin Salman, (MbS), became minister of defence in 2015, Crown Prince in 2017 and deputy prime minister in 2017.

With regards to continuing professional development there is Arab-language librarianship and English-language librarianship. The *SLA Arabian Gulf Chapter* (SLA-AGC) caters for both Arab and English language librarianship. It holds an annual conference. The system of publishing the proceedings has broken down. I presented at a SLA-AGC conference in March 2018 in Muscat, Oman, and signed a form to the effect that I would not publish the article elsewhere. SLA-AGC did not publish the paper. Another expat librarian presented at a SLA-AGC conference in March 2019 in Abu Dhabi, UAE. SLA-AGC did not publish her paper either.

There is a lot of professional development activity in Qatar, mainly centred around the *Qatar National Library* and *University College London Qatar* library school, both in Doha. There are associations of school librarians in Qatar and UAE.

The *Middle East Librarians Association* (MELA) is English-language librarianship and holds an annual conference in the USA. *KAUST University Library* in Jeddah hosts annual regional meetings of university librarians. Publishers participate in the *Kingdom of Saudi Arabia Association of Language Teachers* (KSAALT TESOL) national conference and chapter mini-conferences and meetings.

The *Information Literacy Network* of the Gulf Region is English language and I cannot praise it too highly. The attendance fee for the conference in April 2019 in Abu Dhabi was just fifteen US dollars. The organisers could not have been more helpful, assisting me with getting taxis at the end of each day, suggestions of places to visit and directions to the *Abu Dhabi Louvre*.

It could be argued that Saudi Arabia has an ancient Christian heritage. A church dating back to the fourth century near Jubail, Eastern Province, was found in 1986. It originally

belonged to the *Assyrian Church of the East*, formerly known as the Nestorian Christians. There are numerous other church ruins, including on Tarout Island in Qatif, outside Riyadh and in Jeddah. The excavation of the one on Tarout Island was finished four and a half years ago and the church has a divider down the centre. Christian monuments from the fifth and sixth centuries have been discovered in Najran.

Further reading:

Dale Gavlak, *Arabian Peninsula has ancient Christian heritage*. CRUX, 2nd February 2019.

Patricia Holton, *Mother without a mask: a Westerner's story of her Arab family*. Kyle Cathie Ltd., 2004.

Hilary Mantel, *Eight months on Ghazzah Street: a novel*. Picador, 2003.

Nadav Samin, *Of sand or soil: genealogy and tribal belonging in Saudi Arabia*. Princeton Studies in Muslim Politics 39. Princeton University Press, 2015.

Louise Manners, BA (Hons), DipLib, MA, MCLIP is a former Chair of *Christians in Library and Information Services*. While she was in Saudi Arabia Louise worked as the Librarian at a private university, but is writing here in a personal capacity. At the time of writing there is a blockade of Qatar. Due to the blockade librarians in Saudi Arabia are not permitted to communicate with librarians in Qatar, but were allowed to do so in the past, of course.

GRAHAM HEDGES looks back at the challenges of 2019 most of which have carried over into the present year

WHAT VISION FOR 2020?

The past year has been a time of challenges and many of these have carried over into the new year. 2019 is likely to be remembered as the year of Brexit, or rather, as the year when Brexit didn't happen. Two Prime Ministers failed to get their deals with the *European Union* through the *House of Commons*. Consequently, many were surprised when Boris Johnson's Conservatives won the December General Election with a significant majority. The newly constituted *House of Commons* finally backed Boris' deal and began a process to "get Brexit done" by the end of January. Negotiations with the EU are likely to continue for many months and years to come, however, and those of us (on both sides of the argument) who are already weary of the Brexit saga are likely to feel even more weary before the necessary negotiations are concluded.

Although environmental issues have been around for many years, climate change and global warming became major concerns during 2019. When a Swedish teenager, Greta Thunberg, skipped school to launch her own one-person environmental crusade, this sparked off major protests and demonstrations in countries around the world. In Britain, *Extinction Rebellion* arranged demonstrations and acts of civil disobedience in central London with the Christian group, *Christian Climate Action*, playing a major part in these actions.

Television programmes helped to fuel public concern about environmental problems, such as the amount of plastic in the world's oceans. The *Inter-Governmental Panel on Climate Change* stressed the necessity of urgent action over the next ten years if environmental catastrophe is to be avoided. Many climate activists were disappointed, however, when the *COP25* conference in Madrid failed to come to an

agreement on two major agenda items. Environmental fears are likely to continue during 2020 and many would cite the recent bush fires in Australia as evidence that all is not well with our climate.

As we enter 2020, continued conflict in the Middle East seems a real possibility following the assassination of the Iranian military leader Qasem Soleimani, apparently authorised by President Donald Trump.

Thousands of Christians took offence at the television series **Good Omens**, a spoof on the Book of Revelation based on the novel by Neil Gaiman and Terry Pratchett, and signed a petition to this effect. Unfortunately the organisers made the mistake of sending the petition to *Netflix*, when the programme was actually shown on *Amazon Prime*! At the time of writing the series is being repeated on BBC2 and, no doubt, there will be further protests from Christians who are offended by the programme's tongue in cheek interpretation of the final book of the New Testament.

The first series based on Philip Pullman's fantasy epic, **His Dark Materials**, made its debut on BBC1 before Christmas. Pullman's well known antagonism to religion was fairly muted in this first series but it will be interesting to see how the programme makers portray some later features of the books, including the "death of God" sequence in the final novel.

2020 has been earmarked as a *Year of Evangelism* although those of a more sceptical nature have pointed out that earlier decades of evangelism did little to reverse the decline in church attendance. An article in the January 2020 issue of **Premier Christianity** magazine lists several initiatives for training Christians in evangelism. These include the Message Trust's *Advance 2020* project and the Church of England's *Motivating the Million* programme. More localised projects by individual churches are also likely to take place and *Holy Trinity Brompton* have produced thousands of cards which churches can use to invite people to their *Alpha* courses. High profile evangelistic events, such as Michael Youssef's *Uncompromising Truth* tour, are also planned for the year.

For many Christians the nationwide preaching tour by Franklin Graham, son of the evangelist Billy Graham, is likely to be a major event. Franklin Graham, however, seems to be a more controversial figure than his late father and his outspoken comments on Islam and same-sex marriage led to calls for him to be banned from entering the country prior to earlier visits. Franklin has also had his critics within Christian and evangelical circles, with the Bishop of Sheffield claiming that the Graham event in his city runs the risk of undermining “*social cohesion*”. Perhaps as Christians we should pray that God will overrule any adverse publicity surrounding the Graham tour and that many will make a commitment to Christ as a result of Franklin’s ministry.

What should our vision for 2020 be as we move into this new year? As Christians we should take an interest in issues like Brexit, climate change and peace in the Middle East, take part in relevant debates, and try to use our influence to affect society in a positive way. Ultimately, however, our hope is not in political programmes, or even in evangelistic campaigns, but in our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ, and what he has done for us in his death and resurrection and continues to do through the work of the Holy Spirit.

The future may sometimes seem uncertain but Jesus has promised “*Lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age*”. (Matthew 28:28). Speaking of his followers in the fourth gospel Jesus says “*And I give unto them eternal life, and they will never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand*” (John 10:28) And, in the final analysis, the Christian hope is in the promise of a renewed heaven and earth. As the Book of Revelation puts it “*God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes, and there will be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain for the former things are passed away*”. (Revelation 21:4.) Amen – and a happy new year!

Graham Hedges, MCLIP, Hon. FCLIP, is the Secretary and Publications Editor of *Christians in Library and Information Services* and worked until his retirement in government and public library services.

GRAHAM HEDGES welcomes a current book from a “*third culture kid*” who has struggled to feel at home in different countries, cultures and working environments

HOME SWEET HOME

HOME: THE QUEST TO BELONG

Jo Swinney

Hodder and Stoughton, 2017, RRP £9.99, Pbk., 240 p.,

ISBN 978-1473648661

Where is Home? Jo Swinney’s book *Home: the quest to belong* is an interesting mixture described by its author as “a kind of hybrid memoir, biblical theology and pop psychology”. The author is the writer of several books and married to an Anglican clergyman, originally from the United States. She has lived in the United Kingdom for more than fifteen years now, but during her earlier life lived in a lot of different places in five countries and three continents. During her lifetime she has lived in around thirty different houses. She says that moving house is something that she knows how to do.

Jo describes herself as a “*third culture kid*”, someone whose parents came from one culture but who was brought up in another and does not immediately feel at home in any one culture. She records that feeling at home in any one place has been a painful thing but that she has made the most of being a citizen of the world, detached and uncommitted. She recalls that she had to make her own peace with this lack of roots in her early twenties. Her book, however, provides an account of the author’s struggles to feel a sense of belonging in the various situations in which she has found herself.

In a recent interview Jo explained that “‘It’s not necessarily that I need to

*stay forever in one place, but I've come to understand home. It now consists of people and significant objects. Bricks and mortar are important as this allows you to sleep without worrying and invite people in, but it's not the only thing. Being in a job that I love [is also important]. My book **Home** came of me wrestling with this idea. A lot of people also feel that they don't know where home is".*

Jo explains that developing a sense of belonging is a crucial issue for many people, not least the children of military personnel, missionary kids, and the children of oil executives. She notes that *"there's a vast cultural mixing pot in the UK and I think people want to feel they have a place where they are understood and their roots are valued and acknowledged. A whole lot of people are wondering whether they belong here"*. She argues that the recent controversies over Brexit have brought these concerns to the surface and she remembers a conversation with a Polish boy, the son of a friend, on the day the referendum result was announced who asked *"why don't they want us anymore?"*

Jo's parents were the founders of the Christian environmental group *A Rocha*, creators of a wildlife sanctuary in Portugal, and she recalls spending some of her formative years *"in a community which had a lot of birds and animals"*. A period spent in a boarding school back in England was not altogether a happy experience and was followed by a gap year spent teaching in African schools. University followed, and then studies for a master's degree in theology in Canada during which time she met her husband Shawn whose dysfunctional family background was very different from her own happy family circumstances.

Jo proceeds to discuss a number of contexts in which people may find themselves at home and successive chapters touch on marriage and the family, culture, the local community, the church and the workplace. Much of what she writes is based on her own life experiences, but she also examines biblical narratives and, in particular, the story of King David, tracing his varied experiences in childhood and as an adult. Jo

points out that David's early life included time living in Saul's palace, followed by years in the wilderness, living in caves, before he eventually became King of Israel. At that stage he had a palace built for him and became settled while building a city, family and nation.

Jo explains that *"I chose to feature David's story for a couple of reasons. As well as getting the narrative of his inner life through the Psalms his story offers an intimate look into how he talked to God about the things he was experiencing. I have always felt an affinity with him; his story mirrored mine. There's so much texture to his story and we have so much detail about it."*

Jo writes very much as a Christian but she explains that *"I had in mind the desire for my book to be accessible regardless of readers' beliefs. I'm not making an argument that you can only find home in heaven. I've opened it up and hope it's helpful"*.

Despite this she recognises that *"there's a theology around belonging and commitment to God's real, present earth. Culturally we've gone in an independent direction, which has resulted in loneliness and isolation ... people are realising what we've lost along the way"*. Although she does not mention Tom Wright, Jo's understanding of the ultimate Christian hope of a new Heaven and Earth, rather than a disembodied existence in heaven, echoes the thinking of the noted New Testament scholar.

Jo's book is refreshing in that it acknowledges the struggles that she has undergone in her attempts to feel at home in various settings. Although she made a Christian commitment at an early age, she admits that she kicked over the traces during her African gap year, getting drunk as often as possible and smoking a brand of cigarettes with a high nicotine content. She has also suffered with depression during her later life and acknowledges having undergone therapy in the past.

Readers of this magazine will take a special interest in the chapter in which Jo Swinney talks about feeling at home in working life.

Librarianship was a first choice of career for some librarians, but others will have chosen library work as a second or subsequent career choice. Those of us who fall into this category will identify with Jo's struggles to find a role in working life. During these years she worked as a waitress, care assistant, hospital administrator and receptionist. In time she found a role for herself as a writer and as an administrator for a Christian charity.

She tells the story of a friend who went through a similar process before taking a senior role in a Christian publishing company, and recalls the varied career of King David as shepherd boy, musician, soldier, and outlaw, before fulfilling his destiny as monarch.

I enjoyed reading Jo's book although my own experience has been very different and I have lived in the same house for more than fifty years! I have lived in East London, and attended the same church for many years, but my parents came from the very different culture of the Isle of Wight. I have lived on the borderland between two London boroughs for these five decades, and I was a commuter for most of my working life, so perhaps I am less deeply rooted in my community than others who have always lived and worked within the borders of the same local authority.

I would recommend Jo Swinney's *Home* to a wide readership, and not least to those who have shared her struggles to find a sense of belonging in our rootless contemporary world.

Graham Hedges, MCLIP, Hon. FCLIP, is Secretary and Publications Editor of *Christians in Library and Information Services*. This article was originally published on the web site of the *Evangelical Alliance* at <https://www.eauk.org/news-and-views/book-review-home-the-quest-to-belong> and includes material from an interview with Jo Swinney conducted by their Editorial Content Manager, Naomi Osinnowo.

Professor NIGEL CROOK considers some of the ethical questions raised by the development of artificial intelligence

DEVELOPING ROBOTS WITH MORAL COMPETENCE

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.

In this session I am going to try and tackle a quite difficult subject: *Developing robots with moral competence*. I want to spend a few minutes explaining why we would even want to attempt to do this. I'm going to give a general motivation for trying to do this.

Then I would like to explain my own personal motivation to give you an insight as to why I'm pursuing this line of research. And then I want to talk, very briefly, about my own perspective on moral development in humans and how that might translate into artificial intelligence. I will be speaking from a theological point of view and I'm interested in how that might translate or not into a robot context. There are quite a lot of people now interested in this subject. There is a whole area of research into ethical artificial intelligence, a very broad spectrum, and I am interested in more than the one aspect I'm going to present to

you today. There's a lot of material in the press about AI getting things wrong and the problems that it causes for people, bias and all that kind of stuff.

I am interested in these matters, and we are working in these areas, but I'm just not focusing on them in this particular talk. I'm focusing on how we could perhaps put morals or ethics on the inside of the robot itself.

Why are so many people now trying to develop robots that have moral competence? I've identified three main dimensions, if you like, three main driving forces that are pushing us in this direction. One is **autonomy**. And autonomy is a special word in the context of artificial intelligence and robotics. It doesn't necessarily mean what we normally mean by autonomy when we talk about people and we'll see an example in a little while. Basically autonomy in a robot is its apparent ability to make decisions about how it acts based on its perceptions of the environment that it finds itself in.

And the issue here is that as robots become more and more autonomous, as they make more and more decisions, the chances that some of those decisions will have moral or ethical consequences increases in my view. So that's one driving force.

The second driving force is **social embedding**. Let me introduce my own little robot, Robby. He is a commercial product and many thousands have been sold around the world. Universities use them for research but they are also used in schools to help educate children. Increasingly robots like this are becoming embedded in society. I think there is one at Heathrow Airport at terminal five - If you look lost it will come up and ask you if you're lost.

Robots are no longer confined to the factory floor where they

just do what they do and humans don't get involved. They're now mixing and mingling with people, they're engaging in tasks with people and that then pushes them into a realm where moral and ethical issues become very important.

The third dimension which is pushing us in that direction is **human likeness**. There is a drive for robots to become more human like. There is a trend, very deliberately, to make a robot look childlike and to make them appear friendly, approachable and likeable before it does anything. There's a lot of commercial benefit to developing robots with that kind of human likeness. Not too human, so they don't really have very realistic human faces, but sufficiently human so that it appears to be looking at you when you talk to it, and it has that kind of humanness about it. I think the more human-like something appears to be, the more we expect it to behave like a human and to have human-like qualities - which include **moral competence**.

We can identify different levels of moral competence. At the moment we're probably down at the low end of the scales for most AI applications, but there is a push to develop robots with something we call operational morality, and that's really about ethical design. The robot is built by the designers with ethics in mind. Can it harm people, what harm could this robot do, and all that kind of thing. That's the usual engineering understanding of ethics,

The next level up from that is what we call **functional morality**. This means that the robot is programmed to perceive situations that have moral consequences and to then adapt its behaviour accordingly. That's a kind of middle level; and then there's **full moral agency**, which is what we normally associate with people. Human beings have full moral agency to be able to reason morally. They think about and reflect on their actions.

Personally at the outset I want to say I don't think it's ever going to be possible for robots to have full moral agency. I'll give my reasons for that later and you may or may not agree. But certainly I think functional morality at some level is possible, and it is very interesting to study this from my point of view as a research topic, and it may have a value in certain applications. I am going to look at a number of situations and give you examples of **increasing autonomy**.

When you think about autonomy and robots you probably think about autonomous vehicles, cars that will drive you around without a driver.

Imagine that you are sitting in the back of a driverless car. It has sensors all around which tell the car what is going on around it. A person crosses the road and the car stops some distance from the pedestrian to allow him to cross.

Imagine how many other vehicles are on the road. And translate that into a town like Oxford and understand how difficult it is to drive through Oxford with cyclists and all that kind of stuff going on. I have no doubt that we will get to our destination but we have to trust the vehicle and the ethics and the morals of a vehicle on the road. We have to understand the other road users and what their expectations are of the autonomous vehicle. This is important and it is not really being addressed properly.

So you can see that the robot car is making decisions about when to start and stop and when to turn, what is an obstacle, and it will get it wrong. And I don't know if you've heard in the news about the *Tesla* self driving system. The *Tesla* self-driving system can be fooled. The artificial intelligence that's reading the road signs and the markings on the road can be fooled into thinking that there are three lanes when there are only two.

Just by putting a smudge of paint in the right place on the side of the road it can then suddenly think there are now three lanes, and it swerves unexpectedly out into the road.

So there's an awful lot still to be sorted out there in terms of the underlying technology. So that's increasing autonomy.

Increasing social interaction: I've got a few examples of this to show you.

There is a reason why we need ethics and morals in robots. Think of a robot in a child's bedroom detecting the child's face. It is probably internet connected, even a robot that follows you around the room. There are so many ethical issues that arise out of this, and because it's interacting with people it's socially embedded. I think there is a need for these systems to understand the sensitivities around how they're interacting with people a bit more.

Imagine a robot with a bit of personality. You can see that robots have character built in, and the designers actually worked really hard to convey that, and they've taken expertise from *Disney*. I understand the manufacturers of one particular robot designed its face to express character, and it has been designed to behave and interact in a particular way, such as having a tantrum when it loses a game; they programmed in some bad behaviour to make it a lot more likeable. So that's social embedding, that's robots mixing with people and playing with people and doing things together.

But **human likeness** is also a driver, and this thing that looks like a person is not a person, it's a robot. There is a case of human likeness taken to the extreme. That's the work of a particular professor in Japan called Professor Hiroshi Shigeru. He makes robot identical twins of people. The professor has made a robot twin of himself, and often when he appears in

public engagements he'll take his robot twin with him, and sometimes he will speak through the robot twin.

The robot never ages. I presume he'll have to adjust it manually as time progresses. But in the meantime it is very realistic. This one just sat in the corner of the room, which gives you a very uneasy feeling when you go into a room, and that's what Professor Shigeru is studying: presence. What happens when you put this in a shopping mall? How will people react to it? He's interested in measuring that non-human but human-looking presence in his research. When you see robots like that you expect them to have the moral competence a human would have, and you would expect it to behave in ways that are acceptable to human beings.

I can think of another robot which is not particularly human-like, but displays a smoothness of the movement. Its gestures are very human-like in the way it moves, it has arms and it has a head and torso. This is probably where robots are the most advanced, in terms of movement and physical appearance.

So that gives you a feel for physical human likeness; but that's not the only human likeness. And in fact I think it's not the most significant human likeness. So what you're going to see now is *Google* duplex: this is a chat bot, that's something that you chat with, you probably may have done it unwittingly online. If you go online sometimes some shops and some services will have a chat bot, they say "*can I help you?*" and you just type in what you want and it will chat back. An example is a chat bot to phone the hairdressers to make an appointment for the chat bot's owner.]

That is an amazing achievement technically in understanding the voice enough to be able to recognise what the person down the line said and be able to say something sensible back. It's taken years to be able to get to that level.

Ethical issues.

First of all on my books is that the chat bot didn't say it was a Chat Bot, so there is deception involved straight away.

I don't know if you agree, but I think having even a chat bot manage your diary, which is a resource and which involves other people, has ethical consequences as well. So I think that human likeness in terms of un-embodied A.I. also requires us to think about the ethical context in which these systems are operating. That's the motivation in general why people are looking at ways of getting moral competence in robots.

I want to share with you a little bit about my own journey. It started way back with a degree in computing and philosophy which was kind of un-intentional but the right combination to study A.I. It wasn't a deliberate choice. I came down to Oxford, did a PhD in generating explanations from medical systems that diagnose conditions so giving a justification or an explanation of a diagnosis, and then moved on to other explanation facilities from different systems, looking later on at chaos in the brain, looking at the mathematics of chaos and information processing in the brain.

And then I took a career break in 2008, I gave up a perfectly good job and became a postdoc researcher here at Oxford for two and a half years and worked on a project called *Companions*, where we developed a 3D animated avatar that you could have a social conversation with about your day at work. You got home from work and she asks, "*How was your day?*", and you could tell her how your day was: "*I had this meeting with these people*" and all that kind of stuff. And she would then ask questions about how it was at the meeting. She kind of understood about what happened in the work context to a limited degree. Fairly basic by today's standards, ten years later, but at the time it had quite an impact.

The impact on me was, I suddenly connected that A.I. can have a social interaction with people and can talk to them. And I'd never thought about that before. That really set me thinking about the implications of AI from a people context. Then I went back to *Oxford Brookes* as head of department and then created a Robotics Laboratory where we were focusing on social robotics: that's robots that are designed to interact with people primarily. So that's my professional development.

But I want to say something a little bit briefly about my faith journey. Born and raised a Catholic. Became a Methodist after university. Hit a moral crisis about twenty years ago, which involved a breakup of my family, and a lot of damage done to people. I spent a lot of time reflecting on that, which was a healing process, reflecting on how a Christian of thirty years at the time could end up going through that kind of moral crisis.

I got interested in moral development and how people, Christians in particular, develop character, which wasn't obvious to me. I wasn't hearing it from sermons at the front of church very much if at all. And I began to look this out. I came across Dallas Willard. He shone a bright light on an area of darkness for me, and I began to understand the concept of Christian character development, what that means, what it looks like. I spent about ten years after that thinking about that. I developed a discipleship course around it and started using that in the local church. So that was my faith journey.

Then about two or three years ago I began to see those journeys merge because we were building social robots that interact with people. And I began to see that there were moral consequences of that. How do we know that robots will behave appropriately and know what 'appropriate' means? Which ties into my understanding and my amateur interest in moral character development. I started to look at this area, the

technical term is **autonomous moral machines**: machines that have autonomous morality embedded in them. I've been working on that ever since.

So if you are going to put morals into a robot, one of the first questions you have to ask yourself is: what kind of morals? what kind of ethics? And as you probably know, ethics has been debated for two and a half millennia. But I should say I'm not an ethicist - I'm not a theologian either for that matter, so I'm profoundly unqualified to say many of the things that I'm saying, but I will say them nevertheless!

There are three predominant types of ethics that people are trying to put into robots and A.I. systems today. First of all is **consequentialism**. Which you can take as shorthand for "*the end justifies the means*"; your ethics into deciding on what action should I take right now is evaluated by thinking about the consequences of those actions. And there's a lot of work being done on autonomous vehicles at the moment: which person should I run over? Have you heard about that discussion? It's a big issue.

That's consequentialism: thinking about what is the outcome of an impact on a person. What's the moral outcome if it's a child or an older person? So people are looking at how to embed that.

The second one is **deontology**, and that is about duty. What is the right thing to do, regardless of what the consequences are? What is the right thing to do at a given moment in time? That is Emmanuel Kant's position, and there are even logic systems called deontological logic that are being created and embedded in AI to enable them to think about what is the right acceptable thing to do in a given situation.

And then the third one is **virtue ethics**, and virtue ethics is really where we are ethically on our morality and moral behaviour. Good or bad behaviour comes from who we are or who we've become at this point in our journey. That aligns very well with the Christian perspective, I think, and that's one that I've been particularly focused on. I like this quote from Aristotle: *"we become just by doing just acts, temperate by doing temperate acts."* By repeating behaviours they become habit. We therefore form the basis of our morality, and that is an interesting perspective to take from the point of view of robots.

So how do people put this ethics in to the robot? There are two basic approaches. One is a **top down** approach where you say, Okay I'm going to write a set of rules. I think you know a set of rules for robot behaviour that's very popular: Asimov's Laws. Somebody will take Asimov's Laws and try and code them in a robot. I know a professor at Bristol who's doing exactly that and publishing papers on those laws.

Another set of rules. There's a story of a friend of mine tells when he was interviewed (he's the head of the Robotics Lab at Culham the nuclear physics facility), he was asked by somebody about Asimov's Laws, and he says well you'd be better starting with the Ten Commandments as a set of laws. Well you could think about the Ten Commandments and try and encode that, but basically the top down approach is where you think of rules, you think of commandments, and you encode those explicitly in the robot. And that's what determines its behaviour.

The **bottom up** approach is more to do with developing competence through learning. So the bottom up approach is about teaching the robot by example, what is acceptable behaviour. You undoubtedly will have heard of the concept of machine learning. Again it's one of these things this has become very popular in recent years. A lot of people including

us are looking at how machine learning can enable a robot to experience situations and learn with some direction, some guidance, how they should be behaving in these situations.

Now in reality I think you need both the top down and bottom up approaches. I think that's really the only way you can do it. Predominantly bottom up with some top down guidance is the view that we're taking.

So I'm going to try and run through very quickly a theological perspective on moral development in humans, and the key to it is **change**. How do we become more what we as Christians would call Christlike? That is a direction that is a formation of our character.

If you've read any of Dallas's books you'll know one of the things he says over and over again is you don't target action. By just trying in the moment to be moral is not going to do it. If that's your strategy it's likely to fail. For example, think of an angry person.

But what if Donald Trump decided when he woke up one day, I'm not going to be an angry person. By an angry person I mean someone whose anger is their normal mode of responding; they just get angry very easily - not somebody who occasionally gets angry - most of us get angry sometimes. But if you've got an anger issue, by saying in the moment of anger "*I am not going to be angry*", that is not the solution. You have to tackle the sources of action before you get angry.

You have to target the sources of the action and that's where the virtue ethics comes in: that's focusing on who you're becoming. Jesus would talk about the state of your heart, and out of the stores of your heart come good things; that's the theological perspective that I'm taking on this.

As a Christian, how do we do that? We become a disciple of Jesus Christ. The word disciple in the Greek is *mathētēs*. And here's my definition: it's an adapted version of Dallas's definition of a disciple. **Discipleship is a lifelong apprenticeship to Jesus**; that's really important. Apprenticeship is very important; that gives the right context in which we learn through living with Jesus. Lifelong apprenticeship to Jesus lived from within the kingdom of God - that was Jesus' message announcing the availability of the kingdom of God - that results in spiritual transformation, into Christlikeness. That's a Christian perspective on moral development. This is Dallas's golden triangle: of course at the top of the triangle is the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is the mediator, the initiator of change and the enabler of change.

But there are two other important sources of change, drivers of change. **Ordinary trials and temptations of life**: we learn as we're living it through. We don't go into a classroom with Jesus and then learn it in the classroom and try and apply it, it's as we are living it. And then the third one is **planned disciplines** that we use just as Jesus did it in his own earthly life; he fasted, he practiced silence and solitude, scripture memorization.

So there's a whole pattern of life that he deliberately followed and he's inviting us to follow in order to develop. The target of this, the whole focus of it is **developing the mind of Christ**. That's where we want to end up at. This is Dallas's description of the human self, very briefly: Heart, will and spirit is at the centre. There's a sense in which the inner circles are contained within the outer circles, heart, will and spirit as origins of our creativity and our ability to choose, thoughts and feelings as the mind. Then there's the body, and then there's a social context, and then around that he puts the soul.

Those are the essential dimensions that Dallas talks about, and this comes from Jesus' reply to someone who says: "*which of*

the commandments is the most important?" and basically he says, *"Hear oh Israel the Lord our God is one. Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, with all your strength"*. Those are the dimensions that Dallas put in there. So that's a very quick snapshot of Christian moral development and humans.

How would that apply? Let's just have a bit of fun for a minute and think what might that look like if we tried to apply it to development in robots. Would we take a discipleship idea? Who would the robot be a disciple of? Well it's a question of a lifelong apprenticeship. If the robot is an apprentice, who's it in apprenticeship to? It needs to learn from someone's example and teaching, who would that be? The second part of being a disciple is living within the kingdom or queendom of who? whose kingdom, whose queendom? Ultimately it will be whoever has the ultimate responsibility for the way things turn out - probably the owner or manufacturer of the robot.

And that results in transformation into whose likeness? Who are we aiming for? Who is setting the standard? Probably we are. That's so interesting – a sobering thought.

A golden triangle translates into a robot. Who is the initiator? The actor is the human owner / developer. Ordinary interactions with humans is the context in which the robot will learn morality; also planned activities for machine learning. Maybe we need to set things up in a way that enables a robot to learn what is right and wrong, and in fact with one of my PhD students we're engaged in a very long drawn out exploration of what that might mean. What kind of environment do you create for a robot in order for it to learn and experience the difference between right and wrong? And the focus of it is, whose mind are you aiming at?

Linking back to what I said earlier about the motives. The three

motives that people argue are driving us to look at this if you think about it: **increasing autonomy** is focusing on those inner two circles, on the mind on the will and the spirit. Ability to choose, to make decisions. **Increasing human likeness** is focusing on that, plus the body and that's either voice or physical appearance or both. **Increasing social interaction.** Everything is nestled within a social interaction; and all those together, through the mediation of the soul which is the thing that's being developed or changed underneath everything, is **moral competence.** I thought that was interesting that these things align. That wasn't by design, it's just how it occurred to me.

So we can see the reason why people might be looking at developing moral robots. We can see that there are some connections with Christian moral development; but can robots really be moral agents in the way that human beings are? I would argue no for a very simple reason that I think that the Inner Circle is the critical one - the heart, the will and the spirit. And that's what differentiates a human being from any other created being, be that animal or robot.

The robot does not have a heart will or spirit in it, which means that the robot is programmed, and everything it's programmed to do and its connections will determine how it chooses to act. So causal determinism which is what that was referring to means that there's no free choice to act; if there's no free choice to act then there's no moral agency in my view.

But what my colleagues say is while you can simulate the choice to act, fine I agree with this, I can make that robot look like it's choosing, I can create the ability for it to appear to choose to do something - so then do we get simulated moral agency? Possibly, I don't know. I'm very sceptical I have to say; but the one thing that really causes me an issue, I'd be interested in your thoughts on this, is one of my colleagues who

I respect a great deal - who's not as far as I know a theist, I think he's a materialist - would say to me: Okay Nigel so if you're saying that's a simulated freewill simulated moral agency; if it gets to the point where you cannot tell the difference between a human and a robot; if there is no (in his term) no objective test that will enable you to tell the difference, then there is no difference.

So how do you argue with someone who is a materialist about the existence of the spirit? It's really difficult. You have to do it somehow. So what I did on that occasion was to try to shift the focus from simulation, a simulated human, to being authentically human, and I used an example. Imagine for a second that I am writing "*Fifty pounds*" on this train ticket. Can I interest anybody in this simulated fifty pound note? You could change it for two twenties and a ten! Nobody of course will do that. A simulated one is not an authentic fifty pound note. Okay, it's not a very good simulation. So let me improve that. I could go to extreme lengths to make it look realistic. In fact I could go to the same lengths as they go to when making it. I could invest in a factory that's the same; it goes through exactly the same process and same materials and prints my fifty pound notes. But they're still not authentic. And as soon as somebody knows it's not authentic you will not be able to use it. It loses its value, and value is very important in this context.

Human beings have value not because of their material physical build and how they're made, but in relation to God - they're loved by God so they have intrinsic value from that point of view. You can't manufacture that value and no amount of replication of how the human body works will give you that.

A couple of other things to note about this. Is every fifty pound note the same? No, it's got a number on it, a unique identifier. It's got a unique identity. Again I think humans have a **unique identity**.

The other thing is, whose image is on every fifty pound note? The Queen. So the reason why this is an authentic fifty pound note is that it has the endorsement of the head of state, the Queen. Human beings have the endorsement of the head of the universe, God. And that to me is the only way I can explain to somebody why a simulated human being is not the same as a real human being. There is an **authenticity** behind it and even if you could find every objective test that doesn't distinguish between them it would make no difference whatsoever, because we have value, we have identity in our relationship with God.

I just want to point to a couple of things that my colleague and I have done. We've looked at this issue of **increasing autonomy** which focuses on those two inner circles of the human self, and the ability to make decisions. We asked ourselves the question, what happens if robots create novel goals? Now '*goals*' is the term we use to say a robot is making a decision to achieve something, so a goal is something that it wants to achieve, and most of the time robots don't create their own goals. They're programmed and told what to do. But what happens if robots could create their own novel goals? We wrote a position paper on that a couple of years ago.

What we found to be very important in that is that there are egocentric motivators. What would generate that new goal inside the robot? It would need we think at least two types of motivation. One would be avoiding pain, maybe a pleasure generator, intrinsic motivation, self sustenance and things like that.

But interestingly social motivators like social acceptance, empathy, obedience and the sort of ethics around behaviour would also be a motivator to generate new goals, and one of the examples we cite in the paper is: if you ask your robot to go

and get some money out of the bank and it wasn't designed to do that, even though you've asked it to do that, it then has to figure out a way of achieving that goal. It could do that in a variety of different ways. It could go and stand behind someone in the queue at the cash machine and it could just take their money as it came out and run off with it. I mean if we put robots in situations where they have to think autonomously for themselves to solve a problem to achieve something, how do we know they're not going to break some important moral rules? So that's what that paper was about.

We then looked at the **social context** with a second paper that we published last year. The basis of this was to try and develop morals in robots by looking at how children develop morals; learning how children learn to know the difference between acceptable and unacceptable behaviour. We have a psychologist on our team, and he tells us that two things are generally accepted in role psychology at the moment. One is that children are born with an innate but elementary sense of what is right and wrong and they know that at a very early age.

If you have two toys in front of a baby and one does something naughty like bashing the other one, and then you present both of them, the baby will turn away from the one that's being naughty and will look towards the one that's good. So they seem to be born with a sense of what is right or wrong which is interesting, but it needs developing obviously. But the other thing which was really interesting was that they are born with a pro-social tendency. They want to connect with other human beings. The face of the mother and the face of the father in front of it - a smiling face – that is a feedback signal to the child that something is good.

How do we discipline children? We often discipline them by breaking that social connection with them. *“Go to your room!”* That's a banishment - I'm going to break off social interaction

with you. So there seems to be some connection, social bonding, something between the parent and the child that enables a child to learn and develop its morals.

That's the approach that we're thinking of taking with robots, that we have social bonding as a need. We will simulate the need in the robot that it needs to bond with people and breaking that bond will be a bad thing. It will need to work out - why is that person angry with me, what have I done? Then through that feedback signal then learn that what it's just done is not acceptable to that person, and adapt that way. It is very hand wavy at the moment, there's not an awful lot of technical stuff behind it, but that's the direction of our thinking.

I don't know if you're aware of where the word '*robot*' comes from; it's an old Slavonic word. Karel Čapek wrote a Czech play "*R.U.R.*" in the 1920s about robots which he called *robota*, which means slaves that were made to work in the factory to save human beings having to do it, but they suddenly became self aware and developed consciousness and realised they were being exploited and rebelled against the humans.

What a familiar story! Right from the very beginning, the concept of robots is as a slave. And what we're seeing is a mixture of mainly commercial but also social interest in robots, particularly in Japan; not so much in this country, but in Japan they are really venerated - to have a robot at home is a big deal, they value that. It's really quite hard to separate the two, but I think the commercial interest in developing robots like that, a mixture of toy but useful, is the biggest driver. But I agree it's a very mixed motive really.

I just want to finish off by saying that we do need to take seriously what's happening in the world of A.I. Robotics is pushing us in a direction we might not want to engage in, we might not want to go in that direction, but it's happening. So I

think as Christians we need to be aware of it and if possible have a hand in how that develops, which is one of the reasons why I'm interested in it. Very challenging from both a philosophy of theology point of view and technically. We can learn a lot about ourselves. This is one of the reasons why I'm interested in this: we can learn a lot about ourselves, because to me artificial intelligence has always been another kind of microscope on the human self, because we're trying to study human intelligence and replicate it. We learn a lot about ourselves and how we grow.

But you can't bolt morals on: I think that's a very interesting perspective. You can't just add, and a lot of people are trying to do that in this field. They're trying to say, Okay here's a robot, let's just add a moral layer on top. It doesn't work because our morality is integral; who we are feeds through everything, our mind, our bodies, how we are, how we behave, how we interact with people. Full moral agency is not possible as I've said. And we need some clarity on accountability: who is accountable for a robot that goes morally wrong. If we're going to have moral robots, that means there'll be the possibility that they will be immoral. And then there are issues about accountability, and always in my perspective a human should be accountable, never a robot accountable for itself.

Professor **Nigel Crook**, *Bsc (Hons), PhD, PFHEA*, is Associate Dean for Research and Knowledge Exchange and Professor of Artificial Intelligence and Robotics at *Oxford Brookes University*. He has almost thirty years experience as a lecturer and researcher in AI and is an expert reviewer for the *European Commission*. He serves on several scientific committees for international conferences. His research interests include biologically inspired machine learning and social robotics and his most recent work is in autonomous moral robots.