

Winter 2015



CHRISTIAN LIBRARIAN

CONTENTS INCLUDE

- ***TOP TWENTY-FIVE BEST SELLING CHRISTIAN
AUTHORS***
- ***WHAT AM I READING?***
- ***SPURGEON'S COLLEGE LIBRARY***
- ***DIGGING DEEP INTO CHRISTIAN THOUGHT***
- ***OUTSOURCING AND PRIVATISATION***
- ***FAMINE IN THE AFRICAN CHURCH***

EVENTS AT A GLANCE

●19 – 21 FEBRUARY 2016: BLOXHAM FESTIVAL OF FAITH AND LITERATURE

Bloxham School, Bloxham,
Banbury, Oxfordshire, OX15
4PE.. Speakers include **Kate
Charles, Catherine Fox**, and
Salley Vickers, Details: pp. 11-
12.

●SATURDAY 23 APRIL 2016: LCF/CLIS FORTIETH ANNIVERSARY YEAR CONFERENCE

Regent Hall, 275 Oxford Street,
London, W1C 2DJ, from 10.30.
a.m. Speakers: **Nick Spencer**
(*Theos*), Rev. **William Morris**
(*St. Martin-in-the-Fields*). Details:
p. 9.

SATURDAY 15 OCTOBER 2016: CLIS ANNUAL PUBLIC LECTURE

Methodist Central Hall,
Warwick Lane, Coventry, CV1
2HA, from 2.30.p.m. Speaker:
Nick Page, author of *A Nearly
Infallible History of Christianity*.
Details p. 10

PRAYER NOTES FOR WINTER 2015

PLEASE PRAY FOR

●Next year's LCF/CLIS 40th
Anniversary Year Conference in
London and our annual lecture in
Coventry.

●Suitable candidates to come
forward to fill vacancies at our
2016 Annual General Meeting.

●The security of the CLIS web
site following a recent attack by
hackers.

●*National Libraries Day* and the
*Bloxham Festival of Faith and
Literature*.

●The *Scottish School of Christian
Mission*, *Sarum College*,
Spurgeon's College and their
respective libraries.

●The *Association of British
Theological and Philosophical
Libraries*.

●The work of *The Poetry Church*
and the opportunities it provides
for Christian poets to
disseminated and publish their
poetry.

●Those involved in literacy and
Christian literature work in Africa
and elsewhere.



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Work UK; Universities' & Colleges' Christian Fellowship. Web Site: www.christianlis.org.uk*

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SELECTED CONTENTS

04: Eddie Olliffe: Top Best-Selling Christian Authors

06: Robert Foster: What Am I Reading?

19: Janice Paine: Spurgeon's College Library

22: Diana Guthrie: Digging Deep Into Christian Thought

30: Diana Edmonds: Outsourcing and Privatisation

39: Emmanuel Oladipo: Famine in the African Church

THE FIRST WORD

EDDIE OLLIFFE highlights some of the problems facing authors in the current publishing scene and identifies some of the Christian writers who have succeeded in reaching a wide audience

THE TOP TWENTY-FIVE BEST SELLING CHRISTIAN AUTHORS IN THE UK

Authors are finding the brave new world of publishing a confusing and fractured place. So much was promised to writers with the advent of the digital age, yet so little has been forthcoming. Self-published sales are tiny. The vanity publishing niche continues to thrive on the back of authors' desperation to be in print. The MSS slush pile and the ubiquitous rejection slip have simply been replaced by print-runs of costly self-published titles, all in search of a market beyond one's friends, family and church. Ironically, the traditional publishing model remains the best route to market. If you are an author, do get good advice before spending your hard-earned money on '*publishing packages*' that promise much, but may deliver very little. Publishing is one thing, but selling and marketing remains paramount.

Having said that, many authors do indeed see great success. Thanks to data provided by *CLC Wholesale UK* (and published recently in ***Together*** Magazine), I can reveal the *Top Twenty-Five Best-selling Christian Authors in the UK Market*. Please note that this data looks at the unit quantity of books sold during much of 2015 and ranks authors accordingly.

THE MAIN HIGHLIGHTS ARE:

- 52% of authors are from the USA, 40% from the UK. The perception that the Christian book market is dominated by the USA does not appear to be borne out.
- 72% of authors are male, 24% are female, with 8% of titles written by couples.
- 48% of authors write in the Inspirational genre, 32% in Teaching and Theology, 12% in Relationships and 8% in Christian Fiction.

The Top Twenty-Five authors in the UK Christian Market are (alphabetical by surname):

- | | |
|----------------------|-------------------|
| • Francis Chan | • Nick Page |
| • Gary Chapman | • Rob Parsons |
| • Nicky Gumbel | • David Pawson |
| • Timothy Keller | • Adrian Plass |
| • R T Kendall | • Francine Rivers |
| • Nicky and Sila Lee | • Corrie Ten Boom |
| • C.S. Lewis | • Nick Vujicic |
| • Max Lucado | • Rick Warren |
| • Jeff Lucas | • Rowan Williams |
| • Joyce Meyer | • Tom Wright |
| • Beth Moore | • Philip Yancey |
| • Stormie Omartian | • Sarah Young |
| • John Ortberg | |

Eddie Olliffe is Interim General Manager for *CLC International (UK)* and President of *Christians in Library and Information Services*. Eddie blogs at eddieolliffe.wordpress.com and tweets from [@eddieolliffe](https://twitter.com/eddieolliffe)

THE SECOND WORD

ROBERT FOSTER finds inspiration in two different books with something in common and is surprised to find the Bible in an unexpected place

WHAT AM I READING?

"What have you been reading lately?" is a question I occasionally get asked, usually when the other person finds out what I do for a living. At one time I would have been ready to side-step such a question to correct the mistaken assumption that reading books is Number one on a library job spec. But I've decided now that it's not an unreasonable thing to ask, even to someone who works in a library where volumes of printed music outnumber books by quite a large factor. It can, after all, lead to interesting conversations and even friendships, and perhaps there is scope for finding common interest in unexpected places.

So what have I been reading lately? I currently have two books on the go, and I have to admit I'm taking my time with both of them. The first is John Eliot Gardiner's ***Music in the Castle of Heaven: a portrait of Johann Sebastian Bach*** (Penguin, 2014). This massive study of six hundred and seventy-two pages pages of small type (many with long footnotes in even smaller type) is the printed magnum opus of one of the outstanding conductors of his age and his lifelong passion for the music of Bach. It is a personal portrait of Bach, a quest to get to the heart of the composer, by focusing on the sung church music,

mainly the cantatas and passion settings. I too am very fond of Bach's music, but my overriding reaction to reading Gardiner's book is actually how little of Bach's choral output I really know. At times I have wanted something more interactive than the text - I think you can only get the best from a book like this by having some recordings to hand. The other challenge of the book is to any preconceptions one might have had about Bach being a saintly individual. Gardiner is quite sure that Bach could be quite a difficult person, albeit one who didn't have the easiest time as a church musician.

The other book is ***The Book of Books : the radical impact of the King James Bible, 1611-2011*** by Melvyn Bragg (Sceptre, 2011). I expect some readers of ***Christian Librarian*** have already come across this book, and even read it for themselves. It's certainly very readable, as you would expect from such a well-known author. Bragg covers not only the inception of the KJB, taking its lead as it did from Tyndale's translation, but how that version of the Bible (for so long and for so many people *the* Bible) was the instrument for certain historical, literary and religious movements in English-speaking societies. As the title suggests it's about the phenomenon that is the KJB, not so much what lies behind the translation. Don't expect Bragg to tell you which translation has taken the place of the KJB - he will have none of it.

I've found that both books have something in common. Both authors are ready to acknowledge, even emphasise, the religious aspect in what they are dealing with. Gardiner may not share the thought-world of Lutheran theology, and he points out that Bach's music - even the church music - can move people of all persuasions. But he is equally convinced that Bach was a man on a mission to write music for God, someone fairly convinced about his doctrine and place in the world. Equally, Melvyn Bragg, whilst being fairly candid about

his own relative agnosticism, is prepared to hold the Bible up as part of the reason for certain movements within history. It's not all positive, but there is much that is, and his account of the work of George Whitfield I found particularly moving. From a Christian point of view, one might reasonably conclude that both books have a secular basis. More evidence that the mainstream viewpoint is now against us. But it's not a completely all-or-nothing picture, not all the time anyway.

Just recently, whilst waiting for my car to be serviced, I wandered into a W.H. Smith, and to my surprise, on the shelf were three copies of the updated Good News Bible for children (***Rainbow Good News Bible (GNB): The Bestselling Children's Bible***). I was amazed. Here, one of the last high street shops still selling books, was actually recommending the Bible. My first thought was that this was a mistake; perhaps the person stacking shelves had been side-tracked or found they didn't have room in the spirituality section for several volumes over an inch thick, had put them on the nearest available surface and would come back to pick them up later. Then, I thought, perhaps it was the work of a customer, who decided they would move any Bible they could find to a prominent position. But the more I thought about it, the more I came to the conclusion that the clue was probably in the title - it's a bestseller for the children's market - that's why it was there.

Robert Foster, BA, DipIM, MCLIP, was elected as Chair of the Executive Committee of *Christians in Library and Information Services* at the AGM/Conference held in Leicester on Saturday 19 April 2015.

CLIS

Christians in
Library and
Information
Services



NEWSLETTER

From The Secretary:
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40th ANNIVERSARY YEAR

Next year will mark the fortieth anniversary of LCF/CLIS and we plan to mark the occasion with a special anniversary conference,

The Conference is to be held on **Saturday 23 April 2016**, at the *Salvation Army's* **Regent Hall, 275 Oxford Street, London, W1C 2DJ**, from 10.30. a.m. Our speakers are to be **Nick Spencer**, Research Director of the think tank *Theos*, and the Rev. **William Morris**, of *St. Martin-in-the-Fields* Church, London, and author of ***Where is God at Work?*** (Monarch, £8.99, ISBN 978-0857216281)..

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The **Annual General Meeting** of *Christians in Library and Information Services* is to be held on **Saturday 23 April 2016**, from 11.20. a.m. at the **Regent Hall, 275 Oxford Street, London, W1C 2DJ** as part of the Annual Conference programme.

Motions for discussion at the meeting, and nominations for office should be in my hands not later than *Saturday 26 March 2016*. Candidates for election need to indicate their willingness to serve in writing, and should be supported by a proposer and seconder, who must also indicate their support in writing.

Nominations are invited for the following executive committee positions: Secretary, Membership Secretary, Recruitment Secretary, Prayer Secretary, and Minutes Secretary..

COMMITTEE VACANCIES

After thirty-five years as Secretary of LCF/CLIS, the present writer would like to retire from office at next April's Annual General Meeting. This matter was discussed at this year's AGM and it was suggested that, in order to

make the workload more manageable, the post should be divided into two or even three separate roles: Secretary, Publications Editor, and Events Organiser. This, of course, can only work if suitable candidates willing to undertake the tasks come forward. If you would be prepared to consider serving in one (or more) of these roles, or would like more information about what might be involved, please let me know. I will also be pleased to hear from members who might be willing to serve in other committee roles.

ANNUAL LECTURE

Plans have been made for next year's Annual Lecture to be held on **Saturday afternoon 15 October 2016** at the **Methodist Central Hall, Warwick Lane, Coventry, CV1 2HA**. **Nick Page**, "*unlicensed historian*" and author of ***Dark Night of the Shed, A Nearly Infallible History of Christianity and Revelation Road***, will be our guest speaker. More details to follow.

PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL NEWS

- Despite being housebound for much of this year, the present writer, **Graham Hedges**, has continued to work on a voluntary basis for the *Evangelical Alliance*, indexing recent issues of ***Idea*** magazine, reviewing books for the magazine and web site, and updating a web page listing Christian resources for Hallowe'en.

- Poet **Stewart Henderson**, who gave our annual lecture in 2006, appeared on BBC1's ***Songs of Praise*** on Sunday 22 August 2015. Interviewed at the *Keswick Convention*, Stewart performed a poem inspired by the landscape of the Lake District and explained his debt to the Lakeland poets including Coleridge and Wordsworth.

- Our President **Eddie Olliffe** has written the booklet ***Guide to Selling the Bible*** (ISBN 978-0993245404) which was included with the July/August 2015 issue of the book trade magazine ***Together***. Eddie offers brief notes on a bewildering twenty seven English translations of the Scriptures, provides sales figures, and gives guidance to booksellers on matching the appropriate

edition of the Bible to individual customers.

NATIONAL LIBRARIES DAY

Next year's **National Libraries Day** has been arranged by *the Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals* for **Saturday 6 February 2016**. NLD has been arranged to "*celebrate libraries, library staff, and their communities all over the UK*".

Next year's campaign aims to get more public libraries (in particular) involved than ever before, showcasing what libraries have to offer for all different needs and interests with ideas to attract as many visitors as possible to local libraries on Saturday 6 February.

I hope that CLIS members will want to get involved in NLD, not only in their libraries but in their churches. For example, you could write a short article on libraries for your church newsletter or web site, perhaps mentioning the importance of using libraries as a source for Christian books. You could also mention the Christian Book Promotion Trust's *Speaking Volumes* scheme which assists churches to donate Christian books to libraries. You could give

a short talk on libraries as part of a Sunday service or mid-week meeting, or include a prayer of thanksgiving for our heritage of books and libraries. You can find more information about NLD on the web site www.nationallibrariesday.org.uk

BLOXHAM RE-VISITED

After an interval of one year, the **Bloxham Festival of Faith and Literature** returns from **Friday 19 – Sunday 21 February 2016**. Described as "*a literary festival with a theological slant*", the Festival "*celebrates the very best new fiction and non-fiction with a faith perspective*" and is to be held at the *Bloxham School*, three miles south of Banbury in Oxfordshire.

2016 will mark the four hundredth anniversary of the death of William Shakespeare and the theme of the festival is to be "*All the World's A Stage*" with a performance by the **Reduced Shakespeare Company** included as part of the programme. Other Shakespeare-related sessions will include poet **Malcolm Guite** on *Sounding the Sonnet: from Shakespeare to Seamus and Beyond*, **Alison Shell** on *Shakespeare and Religion*, and

Salley Vickers on *Shakespeare and Other Inspirations.*,

Catherine Fox will be talking to Canon **Angela Tilby** about her recent Cathedral novels *Acts of Omission* and *Unseen Things Above*, both published by SPCK's *Marylebone House*.

Kate Charles will be asking why crime novels with church backgrounds are enduringly popular and discussing her latest novel *False Tongues*, also published by *Marylebone House*.

Christian Librarian subscriber Canon **David Winter** will be talking about *At the End of the Day*, his book on old age, published by the *Bible Reading Fellowship*, in conversation with the recently retired Bishop of Oxford.

The shortlist for the 2016 *Michael Ramsey Prize* will be announced at Bloxham. First launched in 2005, the prize is awarded every three years and "celebrates the most promising contemporary theological writing from the global Church".

You can find more information about the *Bloxham Festival*, including prices, travel directions, and booking arrangements by e-mailing sarah.meyrick@oxford.anglican.org or by visiting the web site at www.bloxhamfaithandliterature.co.uk

RELIGIOUS BOOK CLUB

I have had a letter from **Ken F. Bowden**, a retired librarian from Lancashire, who has a complete set of *Religious Book Club* titles published by the *SCM Press* between 1937 and 1979 for which he wishes to find a home. This set consists of some two hundred and forty three volumes, so the recipient would need to be a library or individual with a great deal of spare shelf space! Arranging the transportation of the books might also be expensive or difficult. The collection includes titles by such writers as William Barclay, A.M. Hunter, Stephen Neill, Lesslie Newbigin, Alan Richardson, Max Warren and others. Many of the titles came from the *Manchester Diocesan Conference Centre* at Carawshawbooth which closed some years ago. I have a complete list of the titles if anyone is interested. If you think you might be able to provide a home for the books, please contact Mr. Bowden at "Cadeby", 34 Fernhill Crescent, Bacup, Lancs., OL13 8JU. Tel. 01706 873042.

SCOTTISH SCHOOL OF CHRISTIAN MISSION

A number of our members took part in library working parties at the *Northumbria Bible College*, Berwick-on-Tweed, and the *International Christian College*, Glasgow, in the late 1990s. The latter institution was formed by a merger between the *Northumbria Bible College* and the former *Glasgow Bible College*, and their two libraries amalgamated to form the *Grogan Library* serving the ICC.

The *International Christian College* ceased its educational operations in the summer of 2015, moving the library into storage. ICC has since undergone a re-branding and change in focus and the *Grogan Library* is now attached to the *Scottish School of Christian Mission*. It is hoped that the library will be accessible again from the summer of 2016.

The School is currently advertising for a part-time librarian to take responsibility for the *Grogan Library* in Glasgow. The closing date for applications is 1 December 2015 and you can get more information from the Principal, Richard Tiplady, at richard.tiplady@sscm.ac.uk

Members who took part in our *Northumbria Bible College* working parties will be especially sorry to hear of the passing of Joyce Smith in December 2014.

Joyce was the wife of Dr. David Smith, then Principal of the College, and a speaker at our annual conference in the year 2000.

TALE OF THE TIGER

Controversial evangelist Tony Anthony has found a new publisher for his “autobiography” ***Taming the Tiger*** two years after a panel nominated by the *Evangelical Alliance* concluded that large parts of the book were invented.

The book purports to describe Anthony’s childhood in China, his career in martial arts, his work as a bodyguard, his criminal career, and his conversion to the Christian faith.

Following widespread questioning of the truth of the story an enquiry in 2013 came to the conclusion that “*significant parts of the testimony were untrue*”.

The original edition of the book was withdrawn by *Authentic Media* but the book has been re-issued this year by *RoperPenherthy Publishing*.

The original edition of the book won awards from the now defunct *Christian Booksellers’ Convention* and from the *Christian Book Promotion Trust*, but an announcement has

recently appeared on the latter's web site at <http://christianbookawards.org/prVIOUS-winners/> explaining that "due to undisclosed reasons" their award to Tony Anthony has been withdrawn.

Taming the Tiger Returns appears in ***Premier Christianity***, September 2015, p. 9. ***Statement on the Re-publication of Taming the Tiger***, appears in ***Idea***, the magazine of the *Evangelical Alliance*, for September/October 2015, p. 27.

Gavin Drake's article ***Shaming the Tiger*** appears on the ***Ship of Fools*** web site at http://shipoffools.com/features/2013/shaming_the_tiger.html

Christian publisher".

It has been explained that both the IVP and SPCK imprints will retain their separate identities and will continue to work with other charities committed to the production of good quality Christian literature.

Inter-Varsity Press has always been known as a conservative evangelical publisher, traditionally linked to the *Universities' and Colleges' Christian Fellowship*, and its merger with the more theologically diverse SPCK will come as a surprise to many, but we wish them well as they enter into this new phase of their ministry.

IVP AND SPCK

The trustees of the *Inter- Varsity Press* and the *Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge* recently made the surprise announcement that IVP is to come under the management of SPCK. The latter organisation has agreed with the current IVP trustees on a comprehensive plan to "re-finance IVP and ensure it is fully resourced as an evangelical Christian publisher in the digital age". It is hoped that this new arrangement will "secure the future of IVP as the United Kingdom's leading evangelical

CHRISTIAN PROFESSIONAL GROUPS

On 15 June 2015, Janice Paine attended a meeting for Christian Professional Groups, organised by *Transform Work UK* and the *Evangelical Alliance*, to both of which CLIS is affiliated. This was a very useful day for 'networking' with members of other CPGs; other groups attending included *Christians in Pharmacy*, the *Post Office*, *Police*, *Law*, *Medicine* and *Science*.

The first session shared "three things our group is celebrating" and "three areas

we're struggling in" – it wasn't difficult to think of examples of both for CLIS! – followed by discussing ways in which CPGs could work together.

From the *Evangelical Alliance* staff, Chine Mbubaegbu gave an inspiring talk on how the EA is changing to be more relevant and accessible, but also diversifying its communications using different types of media to reach different groups of people (e.g. via **Threads** for 20s-30s, twitter etc). She gave several useful hints for our groups on communication and marketing, especially concerning good use of web-sites, social media and articles.

It was very encouraging to meet people from other Professional Groups and discover many with similar struggles to CLIS; also to know how TWUK and EA can support us through these types of meetings and training days.

CURRENT AWARENESS

- Carole Burrows' article *Onward Christian Soldiers* calls on booksellers and librarians to work together in order to keep libraries open and foster literacy.

A poll before the General Election revealed that many librarians favoured a Labour victory as it was felt that this party

was more likely to support public libraries. The number of professional librarians in public libraries dropped from 6001 in 2003-4 to 3106 in 2013-14 and the number of service points open for ten hours or more fell from 4622 to 4145.

A few years ago there were twenty-one library book suppliers but now there are only three.

Booksellers should contact their local public libraries and offer assistance in supporting library services. Many booksellers have specialist knowledge that could help librarians in developing specialist collections. Christian booksellers could encourage libraries to develop their Christian sections and, perhaps, act as library suppliers for this area of stock.

The article appears in the Christian book trade magazine **Together**, for September-October 2015, p. 19.

- *Fifty Years and Counting*, by Justin Brierley and Sam Hailes, marks the fiftieth anniversary of **Buzz** magazine, first published in October 1965.

Buzz began as the newsletter of *Musical Gospel Outreach*, an organisation set up to serve the Christian beat groups playing in the church coffee bar scene of the day.

The magazine was the only place in which readers could find information about Christian youth

culture. According to founder editor Peter Meadows “*The major Christian publications were dull and denominational.. The only youth magazine at the time thought Christian music was of the devil and they paid the price, bless them*”.

The scope of the magazine expanded over the years and circulation peaked at over 30,000. Following several name changes and mergers the magazine became **Premier Christianity**, now published by Premier Christian Radio, founded by (our past speaker) Peter Meadows in 1995..

Recent years have seen the circulations of Christian magazines tumbling with the **Baptist Times** ceasing as a print publication. However, the circulation of **Premier Christianity** has grown and the link with the radio station has enabled new readers to discover the magazine.

The article appears in **Premier Christianity** for October 2015, pp. 32-39.

- CLIS member Kim Walker’s **Crusade and the History of Christian Publishing** marks the sixtieth anniversary of **Crusade** magazine which is described as the *Evangelical Alliance’s* first attempt to produce a popular level illustrated magazine. It was described as being the fruit of Dr. Billy Graham’s work in this

country and the first issue included articles by John Stott, Billy Graham, John Laird and Paul Rees.

The article appears in **Idea**, September-October 2015, p. 26.

- Alison Graham’s article *Meet the Exorcists* provides the background to **Midwinter of the Spirit**, ITV’s autumn drama series featuring the work of a *Church of England* exorcist.

Midwinter of the Spirit (Atlantic Books, £7.99, ISBN 978-0857890108) was the second novel in Phil Rickman’s *Merrily Watkins* series of supernatural crime fiction. There have been twelve books so far with a further title **Friends of the Dusk** (Atlantic Books, £18.99, ISBN 978-1782396949) to be published in December 2015.

In the TV series Anna Maxwell Martin played the part of Merrily Watkins, a *Church of England* Vicar and an initially reluctant exorcist or “*deliverance minister*”.

Readers of the 1999 novel will have noticed a significant modification of the original storyline. However, author Phil Rickman accepts that it would have been difficult to adapt a five hundred and fifty page book into three hour-long episodes without making changes.

The article appears in the **Radio Times** for 19-25 September 2015, pp. 28-29.

- Articles in the ***Bulletin of the Association of British Theological and Philosophical Libraries***, Volume 22, No. 2, June 2015, include: *The Cambridge Centre for Christianity Worldwide* (Ruth Maclean), *The Wren Library at Trinity College* (Sandy Paul), *Swings and Roundabouts: More E-Book Options* (Michael Gale), and *Librarians as Educators: Learning and Teaching in a Library Environment* (Rachel Eichhorn). There are reports of ABTAPL's Spring Conference in Cambridge in March 2015 and announcements of next year's Spring Conference to be held at *Domus Carmelitana*, Rome, from **30 March – 4 April 2016**. Details: from the Conference Secretary, David Mitchell, librarian@west.org.uk

CHRISTIAN MUSIC PIONEERS

Although their recordings rarely found their way into library collections, Christian musicians of the 1960s and 1970s pioneered a minor communications revolution that is still remembered today. In the United Kingdom, artists like Parchment, Out of Darkness, Malcolm and Alwyn, Judy MacKenzie and early Graham Kendrick produced music that

was intended to commend the gospel to a generation that had grown up listening to the Beatles, the Rolling Stones and Bob Dylan. In the United States artists like Larry Norman, Randy Stonehill and the Second Chapter of Acts played a similar role.

In this country much of the impetus for what later became known as “*contemporary Christian music*” came from the organisation *Musical Gospel Outreach* (MGO) formed exactly fifty years ago this year but which made its greatest impact in the following decade.

MGO launched its own record labels which provided an outlet for the music of the new movement. Other Christian record companies rushed to jump on the bandwagon and it was probably inevitable that, sooner or later, the bubble would burst.

From the late 1970s onwards the emphasis started to move away from contemporary Christian music as British companies concentrated on music for praise and worship. This was music that was inspired by the rising charismatic movement of the day but which had less obvious relevance to listeners outside the Christian community. I am interested to know whether there are twenty-first century equivalents of the pioneering artists of the 1960s and early 1970s. Perhaps I have simply not discovered them.

CHRISTMAS CHOICE

As the season of Advent and Christmas approaches, there is no shortage of books expounding the meaning and significance of the Season. Paula Gooder's ***Journey to the Manger*** (Canterbury Press, £12.99. ISBN 978-1848257948) is part of the author's "*Biblical Explorations*" series and provides a popular commentary on the events surrounding the birth of Jesus including the Annunciation, the Nativity, the flight into Egypt, and the presentation in the Temple. The author combines insights from biblical scholarship with devotional reflections on the meaning of the texts.

Journey to the Manger is a companion volume to the same author's ***Journey to the Empty Tomb*** (Canterbury Press, £12.99, ISBN 1848255715) which follows the events of Holy Week culminating in the crucifixion and the resurrection of Jesus.

Walking Backwards to Christmas by Stephen Cottrell (SPCK, £7.99, ISBN 978-0281671470) is an unusual re-telling of the Christmas story told in reverse order with reflections on Anna, King Herod, the wise men, the shepherds, Joseph, Mary and even Isaiah and Moses who prefigured the birth of Jesus.

Popular poet Malcolm Guite has compiled ***Waiting on the***

Word (Canterbury Press, £9.99, ISBN 978-1846258006) a selection of poems for every day of Advent, drawing on a wide range of Christian and English literary traditions.

Songs of Praise presenter Pam Rhodes has compiled ***Tidings of Comfort and Joy*** (Hodder and Stoughton, £11.99, ISBN 978-1473630031), a personal selection of carols, poems, Bible readings and other passages from a variety of sources. Alongside these items Pam Rhodes shares some of her own Christmas memories and explores the meaning of the Christmas season.

Younger readers may appreciate Andy Robb's ***Fifty Christmasiest Bible Stories*** (CWR, £6.99, ISBN 978-1782594185) which re-tells well known Bible stories in words and cartoons. If you find yourself wondering how the author has managed to find fifty Christmas-related stories in the Bible, you will have to read the book to find out!



SPURGEON'S COLLEGE LIBRARY

**JANICE PAINE reports
on a visit by CLIS
members**



On Tuesday 18 August 2015, six CLIS members were welcomed to *Spurgeon's College* in South London by the Librarian, Annabel Haycraft. It was a fine day so we ate our packed lunches on the lawn in the very pleasant gardens outside the Victorian mansion originally built as "*Falkland Park*" in 1890. This was given to *Spurgeon's College* in 1923 when

they were able to move from "*central London, with its infamous smog, to the bracing air of the leafy suburbs of Upper Norwood.*"

The college was founded by Charles Haddon Surgeon in 1852 to train young men for the Baptist ministry; it now provides a variety of courses for men and women of all ages, including evangelism and counselling, from short courses to research degrees, with on-line learning options. Some of the students live on-site.

Our group relaxed in the current Student Common Room (previously the mansion's dining room) before visiting the adjacent 1937 building housing the library. This was splendidly refurbished in 2009, bringing together the lending and reference libraries previously in separate buildings. A beautifully carved frieze showing Spurgeon teaching his students is inserted in the wall of the Reference Library.

The collection of 70,000 books is classified by Dewey and uses the *Heritage Cirqa* LMS; borrowers use a self-issue system. There are extended, partly unattended opening hours (7.00 am – 11.00 pm) which unfortunately give rise to concerns about book losses.

As well as the main lending collection there is a large Biography section, periodicals, a

Reference sequence including study Bibles, commentaries, and dictionaries and a Temporary Reference section for heavily used texts. There are considerable electronic resources, with access to the *American Theological Library Association Religion Database* and many e-books and e-journals.

The library is available to all staff and students, but distance learning students do not have borrowing rights. A generous book budget keeps the stock up to date, supplemented by donations from staff and retired ministers, and Annabel also uses ABTAPL (*Association of British Theological and Philosophical Libraries*) resources for inter-library loans.

As the only full-time librarian, Annabel deals with a wide variety of tasks, including external enquiries, many of which are of a historical nature. She answers many of these from archive resources kept in the Heritage Room (no longer available for public visits, though we were able to see this on a previous LCF visit).

The librarian takes part in college open days, which include sample lectures, a service, and opportunities to learn about the courses available. A recent innovation is the *Centre for Spirituality* which runs Quiet Days one Friday per month, open to all

(pre-bookable).

We then visited the college chapel, opened in 1957, where we admired a statue of C.H. Spurgeon and the pulpit from the church where he was converted. A daily service is held here for all staff and students; those in training are encouraged to preach and lead the worship.

Finally we were provided with tea and biscuits back in the lounge, with time for a wide-ranging discussion on our varied current interests and concerns in the library world, such as preserving archives, running church libraries and using social media.

Many thanks to Annabel for giving up her time to host this visit.

Janice E. Paine, *MCLIP*, serves on the executive committee of *Christians in Library and Information Services* as Membership Secretary.

KEEPING DRY IN EDINBURGH

ANNE MACRITCHIE reports on a visit to the mother church of the *Church of Scotland* on Saturday 12 September 2015.

Three of us gathered at *St Giles Cathedral* and had an excellent tour by audio guide. It is the mother Church of the *Church of Scotland* and has many historical associations. The oldest part dates from the twelfth century but it was rebuilt in a Gothic Style in the fourteenth century. It was built as a Catholic church but became Presbyterian after the Scottish Reformation with John Knox being its first Protestant minister.

There are many side chapels and aisles one being the Chepman Aisle containing an elaborate memorial to James Graham, Marquess of Montrose. The *National Covenant* was signed in the Cathedral by Scots in 1638 to show their opposition to

King Charles I who wanted more control over the Scottish Church.

There is also a Thistle Chapel where the sixteen Knights and Ladies of the *Order of the Thistle* meet, the Queen is head of the order. We caught a short service at noon then went to *The Hub* for lunch – which was delicious – it's in a former church and is now the Festival centre.

Then it was on to the *National Library of Scotland* and the “*Lifting the Lid on Four Hundred Years of Food and Drink in Scotland*” exhibition and fortunately when we arrived the lady who curated it was there and she showed us round. It is a fascinating exhibition and I found it interesting that more fruit and vegetables were eaten in Scotland in years gone by than I had previously thought. There were also associated activities and books laid out upstairs under an event called *Hidden Library* which we had a look at. Despite a bad forecast we hardly got wet.

Anne MacRitchie is the Scottish Secretary of *Christians in Library and Information Services*.

SARUM COLLEGE LIBRARY

JANICE PAINE
reports on a visit by
CLIS members on
Saturday 17 October
2015



Sarum College is an ecumenical theological college situated in Salisbury's beautiful cathedral close. The Librarian Jayne Downey was our host on this Saturday morning, and explained the history of the college, which since its foundation in 1860 has had various merges and

changes in the type of courses offered. It now provides mainly Anglican ministerial training for about one hundred full or part-time students, plus another one hundred and twenty students on four three-year MA courses. The site includes a Victorian chapel, a public bookshop (with second hand department), Bed and Breakfast accommodation, and of course a substantial library of about forty-two thousand books.

As well as providing material for the on-site courses, Jayne (with the help of seven volunteers) provides for external paying users such as local ministers, *Moorlands Bible College* students, and visits from two local schools. The library is housed in a recently refurbished extension to the main Georgian building – we loved the comforting red carpet! – and there is an additional stack area for eleven thousand pre-1900 works. A sample of the oldest works was displayed for us, including a 1545 Bible. There

are about forty journal titles, and a strong liturgical and church music resource.

The service has many up to date facilities including the *Heritage* on-line catalogue, some on-line resources including e-journals and the *American Theological Library Association* Religion Database, access to the *University of Durham* e-resources. Inter-library loans and postal loans are also available.

Website address:
www.sarum.ac.uk/library

Many thanks to Jayne and the college for their hospitality, including a delicious lunch!

Janice E. Paine, *MCLIP*, serves on the executive committee of *Christians in Library and Information Services* as Membership Secretary.

DIGGING DEEP INTO CHRISTIAN THOUGHT

**DIANA GUTHRIE reports
on the CLIS Annual
Public Lecture held in
Salisbury Library on
Saturday 17 October
2015**

Our President, Eddie Olliffe, introduced this year's speaker, the distinguished writer, *Church of England* Reader, and Group Chair of the *Royal National Institute of Blind People*: **Kevin Carey**, who spoke on the theme of '*The role of the Christian librarian in a theologically turbulent age*'.

Kevin Carey began with this paraphrase of Winston Churchill's familiar saying, '*Never have there been so many theologians writing so much for so few*'. This prefaced a lecture which ranged very widely over a spectrum of ideas with which modern Christians should be concerning themselves

and which dug deep into Christian thought and traditions. What follows in this brief report is a précis of some of the topics covered, which gave rise to nearly half an hour of questions and comments afterwards.

A lot of the ills in Christianity can be traced back to the exercise of inordinate power. This was recently illustrated by the long-running debate over women bishops. It ultimately comes down to the question, '*Who has the authority to determine the meaning of Scripture?*' Christianity must make room for enquiry, but this should not become a merely intellectual pursuit. Our primary preoccupation must always be: what must we do to establish the kingdom of heaven on earth?

The modern tendency is to concentrate on private moral conduct at the expense of social and economic justice. The 1980s document ***Faith in the City*** was a rare instance of an organisational attempt to redress the balance, but its political effects were short-lived, and there's an instinctive secular suspicion that we've not lived up to Biblical instructions on social justice. God is love and created us in love, and we need to express that love in action rather than judgment. We cannot

separate Christianity from politics.

Why does '*the God of love*' allow suffering? This is probably the most common question asked of us, and we are fatally handicapped as Christian witnesses if we can't attempt an answer. It all goes back to the Fall. Where did the serpent / evil come from? If there was a serpent, then God probably spoke through it. The world was not created to fit human ideas of perfection; we are God's broken creatures, deliberately made so. We can't love unless we have free will, and we can't have free will in a perfect world. But having free will, we should exercise it in compassion and empathy. Most of the bad things that happen are the result of human fault, (though there are obvious exceptions to this rule of thumb). Suffering in itself is not sin; sin is being responsible for or being indifferent to suffering. What is at stake is not suffering but human identity.

The role of the librarian can be compared with that of the theologian, in promoting enquiry and discussion. Both librarians and theologians are the mats under the feet of those wishing to explore the world of ideas, and we should see ourselves as the servants of those who seek our assistance. The core purpose of librarianship is to point out the

possibilities that lie beyond our sphere of knowledge or our comfort zone.

we agree with. KC is worried by 'Thatcherite Protestantism' and suspicious of the word 'evangelical' if it means conservative evangelicalism. The US is getting less and less just over time, and the UK is following suit.

QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS

Should we be more extrovert in our witness by sharing books, internet references, etc.?

How did the teaching of the New Testament end up with the Creeds, the Thirty-Nine Articles, etc.?

KC: We need to understand the world we live in. Librarians are less gullible than many people, in that they are trained to evaluate resources.

'Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven' is the core reason for our existence, but too many people think of Christianity as a cultural, aesthetic or nostalgic experience.

Social Christianity writing tends to emanate from the Roman Catholic tradition of the church – maybe evangelicals should be reading more broadly?

KC: The state needed such dogma for its church, but KC finds the Thirty-Nine Articles incoherent. Theology has to be organic; it didn't stop with Jesus' ascension into heaven, which would have cut out later theological development. Protestantism's problem was its obsession with the corruption of the Roman Catholic Church. We must face organic theological development for ourselves, which will be uncomfortable, even risky. People must have both a personal and a collective (community) relationship with God.

KC: We should never limit our reading to that written by people

In view of his statement about traditional evangelicalism, how does KC feel about the increasing impact of Holy Trinity Brompton's witness as a very evangelical organisation?

KC: HTB's impact has been considerable (particularly in the London area), but too many people think that attending an *Alpha* course is all they need to do, that they now have all the answers. *Alpha* doesn't do enough to encourage people to think things through for themselves and to apply their learning. Too many people use the Lord to justify their own decisions.

The well-known atheist and broadcaster Professor Cyril Joad said that the greatest obstacle to his belief in Christianity was animal pain, although he turned to Christianity in the end, realising that there isn't an answer to every problem.

KC: We were made imperfect, a mixture of good and bad. Christianity has tended to duck this problem and become incoherent. But we can never explain everything, and life

continues to hold much mystery. KC doesn't believe in the doctrine of original sin, if it then introduces a system for absolution (by the clergy) and thus a power structure.

Which part of the Bible would KC recommend to someone picking up the Bible for the first time?

KC: The Gospel of Luke every time.

The Lecture was rounded off with a vote of thanks from CLIS Chair, Robert Foster, and then tea.

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

MEMBERSHIP MATTERS

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

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

NEW MEMBER

[REDACTED]

LATE RENEWALS

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

CHANGES TO ADDRESS, JOB ETC.

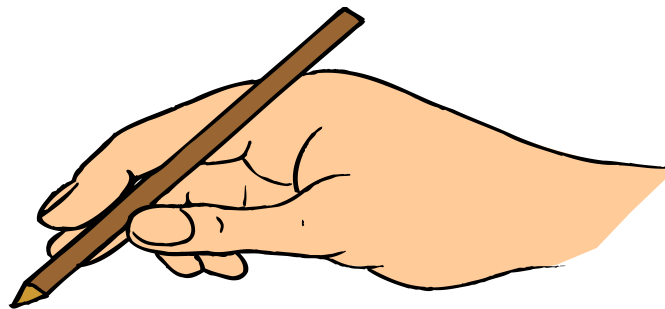
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ARTICLES

JOHN WADDINGTON-FEATHER introduces a pioneering publication devoted to religious poetry and recalls a convicted prisoner who contributed to the magazine

TWO DECADES OF THE POETRY CHURCH



In 1995, I was approached by a group of Christian poets to launch a magazine under my *Feather Books* imprint devoted entirely to religious poetry; the reason being that the editors of secular poetry magazines were understandably reluctant to publish religious verse. So in the Spring of 1995, ***The Poetry Church*** was published as a modest twenty-page quarterly magazine.

By coincidence, it accorded with my ministry in *Shrewsbury Prison* where I was an assistant chaplain. I'd been ordained into the Anglican non-stipendiary priesthood twenty years earlier and helped out in the prison the odd night a week after school and at weekends. I'd established a strong rapport with prisoners who were writers like myself, and encouraged them in their work. It was an informal part of a wider rehabilitation programme, for each week a team of writer-teachers sponsored by the *West*

Midlands Arts Council came into prison and ran writing classes. They were a great success, socially and educationally.

So, from the start ***The Poetry Church*** published work written by men in British prisons, and it wasn't long before it also published poems by American prisoners. To the present day, poetry is still published from abroad written by men and women in prison, providing a link with the outside world and rehabilitation.

For one man, the magazine was a vital link with life outside his prison cell. He was Sean Sellars, in solitary confinement on Death Row in *Oklahoma State Penitentiary* for eleven years. At seventeen he was sentenced to death for shooting his mother and step-father who'd abused him terribly from childhood. In prison, ministered to by a chaplain, he converted to Christianity from a Satanic cult he'd joined as a teenager. He began writing and compiled a book of short stories and poems. A selection was published by *Feather Books* and ***The Poetry Church*** in 1998. It was called ***Imprisoned Realities*** and Sean wrote a moving introduction. The following year Sean was executed by lethal injection aged twenty-seven.

Ten years later after a bout of ill-health and aged seventy-five I handed over the editorship and publishing of ***The Poetry Church*** into the very capable hands of Tony Reavill and his daughter Olivia Egan. Under their guidance, the magazine has gone from strength to strength and is now over two hundred pages long, published twice a year by Tony's imprint *Moorside Words and Music*. His address is: Eldwick Crag Farm, High Eldwick, Otley Road, Bingley, West Yorkshire, BD16 3BB. E-mail: reavill@globalnet.co.uk Tel: 01274 563078.

The Rev. **John Waddington-Feather**, BA, FRSA, has worked as a teacher, school librarian, and prison chaplain and is the proprietor of *Feather Books*. His latest novel is ***The Merchant Bank Mystery*** (CreateSpace, £6.50, ISBN 978-1515155591), a new title in the *Blake Hartley* mystery series.

DIANA EDMONDS introduces a 'hot topic' and describes her experiences in running public library services in several London boroughs

THE OUTSOURCING AND PRIVATISATION OF LIBRARY SERVICES

An Address to the Christians in Library and Information Services Conference "Challenges at Home and Overseas" held on Saturday 18 April 2015, in the Theatre, YMCA, 7 East Street, Leicester, LE1 6EY.

Thank you for the welcome. A hot topic, but a bit about me to start.

I have been a Christian for most of my life and am a long standing member of CLIS. My husband has latterly become a vicar – a bit of a shock to find one's husband is suddenly a vicar. I've got used to being sort of joked about from the pulpit but now, Tony is on Twitter as '*Rural Vicar*' and I do feature. '*Mrs. Rural Vicar due back from Conference - kitchen not quite up to scratch!*' I get the feeling Mrs. Rural Vicar is not always portrayed in a fortunate light! Whatever, we have three lovely grown up children and are now proud grandparents and I'm very happy to be what I am.

So, I am a librarian, qualified really rather a long time ago now! I've worked in a variety of sectors and had a very exciting career and enjoyed

it all greatly. I ran a business, sold it and moved on. I went to Haringey where I was really not a very good public servant. I'm not naturally a local authority person, too impatient. I remember on my first training course they said that I would learn and that I would learn patience, but I'm afraid that I never did!

However in 2011 I moved and went to GLL which is a social enterprise running Leisure Services but they wanted to diversify and move into Library Services, so I went to set up that new Division, all very interesting and rather exciting. GLL is rather an odd place. I feel it's a bit like being in the Navy, (appropriately for Greenwich). I don't think they would recognise the comparison, but do take it from me that this is an affectionate description. They all wear militaristic uniforms and refer to '*wet side*' and '*dry side*' as if you might be about to embark on a ship. I find it rather entertaining that there I am sitting in a corner reading as the representative of the Library Division. We run Library Services in two London Boroughs and also Prison Libraries and are looking to take on more.

What about privatisation? Libraries are traditionally based in the organisations which they serve. Public libraries are in Local Authorities who employ the staff and manage the buildings and similarly Universities and companies. This regime began to change in the late 80s and the 90s when organisations, particularly in the commercial sector, started to look at what they were doing and asked, '*Do we really need to clean? Do we know anything about cleaning? No, we don't. We are a finance company*'. So they started to employ other people much more pervasively and to outsource these traditional services and Libraries were one of the areas outsourced. So that is where my client base came from when I ran *Instant Library*. I had a river of client base, a river of income because when you run a company that is what you require, to have customer accounts and to have money coming in on a regular basis. I got up to 15/20 Libraries which were outsourced from a variety of organisations. The oil industry is a very big outsourcer, *Elf*, *Total*, *Shell*, also utilities such as *British Gas* and *London Underground* – so *Instant Library* ran these libraries and that was the ethos in which we were operating.

The key thing for a company in outsourcing is that it is more flexible to operate. In good times you can have large library services, or large

cleaning forces, but if you are not in good times, you can downsize very fast. You can't do that if you actually run that service yourself. You have many more employment regulations to go through, so it is a much, much more flexible procedure if you outsource functions which are not core to your business. In Margaret Thatcher's era there was an attempt to do this in Local Authority Public Libraries. Typically some utilities, facilities management, finance and payroll were outsourced, things which could move easily but not Library Services themselves. This was largely due to a report put out from within the Library world at that time. I was involved in it and there was strong resistance and pressure from Libraries and the *Library Association* to say that there was no market. I ran a company which already managed twenty large services so I felt this was a wrong thing to say and undoubtedly came about because of pressure.

The first real attempt at outsourcing or privatisation came with *Hounslow Libraries* which became a Trust in 1998. I went to Haringey from *Instant Library* on July 4 2001, an auspicious date! I ran that service in the guise of *Instant Library*. I was still the Managing Director and I had *Instant Library* staff working alongside but I can still remember the criticism that I received. I interviewed someone recently and he recalled that at that time lots of people didn't speak to me but that he had! Nice that somebody spoke to me at least. However a defining moment came for me with the Local Authority run library model. I went to a '*Friends Group*' meeting at a library where I had made changes and improvements and looked at a Gallery Wall which I'd had installed. It was blue rather than white which I had specified. It had been painted by LA painters! This was death to me as I am very colour focused. I moved shortly afterwards!

Last Wednesday I went to a conference which was all about different models of service delivery. I think there are very few local authorities in this country who are not currently looking at how they deliver their services and I think that we shall see in the near future a wave of outsourcing and alternative delivery mechanisms. The reason is basically financial. Local authorities are having their budgets slashed and in return they are cutting departmental budgets. If you look at how Library budgets are being slashed versus how Adult Social Care is being slashed, it is disproportionately. That is because a local authority, although there is a statutory obligation to provide libraries, is not really bothered. Libraries come low on their agenda because the key things which concern them

are looking after children, looking after vulnerable adults and then Refuse! Most complaints are about cleaning the streets and refuse but the key concerns are vulnerable children and vulnerable adults. I speak here having worked in Haringey and had the drama of Victoria Climbié and Baby 'P'.

Alas, libraries can expect a fairly mean future but what new organisational models will do is reduce the spending cost of libraries while still providing a service, I hope. Alternative models are available in the UK at this time. Library services can be put out to a private company.

There is *Carillion*, a construction company with a facilities management wing. *Carillion* bought out the Library Unit from another construction company, *John Laing* and now runs *Hounslow, Ealing, Harrow* and *Croydon Libraries*.

Then GLL, for whom I work. a large, charitable social enterprise, is another major contender. We took over the *Greenwich Libraries*, twelve libraries including a newly developed one, the *Woolwich Library* where there had been an initial surge of interest but already the interest was fading so that visits were falling off. Greenwich has always been at the rear for staff in London, it was always a sort of dinosaur. When I started with Haringey, that was at the tail end and then we moved to the top. It always gave me great pleasure to see this process. When I went to Greenwich, I discovered I was right at the bottom again! Greenwich was twenty-ninth out of thirty-three when two Authorities had not put in any returns. So that gives you a flavour of where we were. Very low issues, very low numbers of visits, poor use of technology and hardly any librarians. So what we had to do was make sure that the library was valued and enjoyed by the staff and residents. Incidentally we saved *Greenwich Council* a quarter of its spend on Libraries. They had a spend of 4.2 million which is now down to 2.95 million. In 2013 GLL took over a further eleven Libraries in Wandsworth. We have quite a standard offer. What we do first of all is improve IT. We get fast broadband, we get *People's Network*, we get good printing, we get wireless and that all goes in on Day One. We have our own in house team who are excellent. We now run two local authority Library Services. We did bid for *Harrow, Ealing* and *Croydon* but

were unsuccessful so we are looking for further opportunities.

We are now managing Prison Libraries which are a very rewarding area in which to work although they are the kind of Cinderella service in the local authority. It seems as though you send your least loved member of staff there to stay out of the way and not bother anybody. We run *Belmarsh Prison* Library in Wandsworth. It is the largest prison in Europe and really does remind me of the ***Shawshank Redemption*** with that physical structure of corridors and galleries. We also run the Young Offenders' Institution for young men from 18 – 25. When I got there the library looked like a mixture of Dr. Seuss and a Gentlemen's Club. It had Dr Seuss posters and leather tub armchairs, a rather odd contrast so we jazzed it up. I bought an old mini which we cut in two and put a coffee table in the middle. Unfortunately the kids see it as an in-house challenge to steal a bit from the car and we occasionally find it losing wing mirrors and things like that so it does need a bit of ongoing maintenance. At the start old stock had obviously been sent there, although you are supposed to buy new, and the stock we took over was just criminal, dare I say. As with everything we do, we want it to be good so we have gone for it in a thorough going way. We have appointed a co-ordinator for Prison Libraries, a lady librarian with a real vocation for the work. Many people in prison cannot read so her task is to support them in literacy. From 2015 we are taking over *Park Prison* in Wales. The institution is run by a private company, G4S.

We are seeing lots of local '*mutuals*' which are typical of the way the Leisure Industry works now and the number of these will probably increase. This takes the local work force out, from the local authority; that is what happened in Hounslow and you can see the same in Suffolk and in York.

Then there are a number of libraries run by local volunteers. You may have seen reports about Lincolnshire where the local authority wanted out. GLL put in a very gentle expression of interest and was rebuffed – we won't bother you and do not bother to call us. The issue was taken up by local campaigners who said '*why do these people think they can deliver this service within your budget?*' Is it likely that the

volunteer library will last? Actually, from what I have seen, 'no'. Then what do we have, we have an asset, we have a building to be sold. So places like Lincolnshire are trying to erode the **Public Libraries Act** and saying that some libraries are statutory and others are not and can be sold. Then because we do not have any will to question that decision, it will just be steam-rolled through.

Why are these options attractive? Because they are cheaper - that is the bottom line. GLL is a straightforward company – we don't do bottom line. Now actually some local authorities want different services. Librarians can be difficult, the Local Authority does not want the trouble of Union activities.

What is GLL like? They are now twenty-one years old. *Greenwich Leisure and Libraries* was formed from the Leisure Department in Greenwich. They had decided that they could not afford to run the number of centres that they had and the staff felt they could do it better, they could do it differently if freed from local authority trammels. So they took it out and now they have what they call a partnership, contracted local authorities, over one hundred and fifteen centres and six thousand staff so the library business is really very tiny, a tiny element of this. They wanted to get into this, they are quite thorough going so they head hunted me and I went to set up the Division. Then we won the first contract so a little bit about what we do.

What we think of as a Library Service is made up of several elements – the buildings, hugely important what it looks like. If it looks 'local authority', it is probably not going to be very attractive so we work very hard on buildings. We buy appropriate furniture, good computer chairs which can be wiped down! We provide fabulous printers which can do everything, print from PC, from wireless, from files sent from home. People will buy print so Printing is now a key industry in Public Libraries. We buy fast broadband for wireless access and we provide enough plug in points for half the lap tops in the area!

Stock is of course also vital, it is important not to buy the wrong books. We buy low cost, we negotiate very good discounts but we analyse

what the customer wants not what we think he wants. As librarians what we want to read is not necessarily what our clients want. They want to read the best sellers, what has been mentioned in the press or on TV and not much else. It is difficult to keep lending books, we can push them in the first year but thereafter issues do decline. It is easy to get people into the Library but not as easy to lend to them anymore.

Location is a really important factor but also demographic. We take account of the nature of the community. Wandsworth has a book loving culture where it is easier to lend. There are lots of retired academics around Putney who feel it is the role of the public library to take the place of their University Library to which they no longer have easy access. Why do we not have the material they want? Woolwich is really 'Aldi', pile it high and flog it cheap! And it is now the busiest library in London – use has gone up by 92% since we took over and the library is packed from morning to night so we have extended the hours as we have done in Wandsworth. Greenwich is by and large quite poor as it is a regeneration area. There are lots of immigrants and B & B so a varied mix of cultures. The library is only four hundred yards from where Lee Rigby was killed. In one library in an area of South East Asian and Nepalese people we use ethnic art from that area and run art programmes as well as coffee mornings for Asian women.

We want to provide a general welcome, so that we seem to say '*Hello, we're here!*' We try to make sure that everybody has a place, (young children, teenagers and older people) to enable them to do various things. Obviously we want them to be able to read, we want big space for activities such as Rhyme Time – in Woolwich Children's Library we have a big circular area for just that. We have found that young people study in groups so we have provided that group space where they can work together and not feel they must be dreadfully quiet. However we also have silent study space, I've just introduced '*Shush Zones*' where you study in silence and we find there is a lot of demand for this. Perhaps it is that students in London don't always have space of their own. What we also want to give them and others is a place to relax and we provide classes in Yoga, Dance and Art where appropriate.

We have observed that there are a lot of lonely people in this world

and libraries increasingly are in a position to tackle social isolation. I went to Kent to have a look at their libraries and encountered a librarian who did not know me or my role. She invited me for coffee in the library coffee bar and described how she had observed one lady wandering around the shelves, and then another lady and eventually they met around the shelves and came for coffee and finally, very casually arranged to meet the next week. So she gave me the game plan and history of how people get to know each other. It is valid so I hope she was not too disappointed I could not put it into operation in her library!

Staff are very important for GLL. We are keen that they are involved and engaged in the enterprise. GLL is a mutual, owned by the people who work there so we all have a share in the business. Not everybody takes it up but the offer is there. It really works and from the staff's perspective, offers stability. When *John Laing* sold out to *Carillion* the staff did not realise it had happened until they saw that their e-mail addresses had changed. If staff are taken over by GLL, we do our best to see that they belong and many staff say that they feel happier under GLL. All their rights are preserved, we won't change their terms and conditions, they keep their Pension Rights and we have admission to the Local Authority Pension schemes. We want staff who take ownership and are empowered. We have a Library Manager in each Library and that works rather well. Not all are qualified librarians, but we offer support if they want to qualify. GLL will pay three quarters of their fees. We find that if the employer does pay everything it is not necessarily successful – better for the member of staff to have some investment in himself/herself. We do work very hard with our staff – we have standards and offer training. We want them to be qualified but above all we want them to be kind. Staff do everything from selling 'Leisure Centre membership to traditional library work, we want them to be flexible but happy and provide 'Good Customer Service'. We do get very irritating people in libraries but we don't want our staff to tell them that they are irritating!

We want our libraries to be places of destination. We programme so that every day there will be two or three activities going on in every library. Baby yoga, baby massage, baby ballet; story time, manga. Lots of activities and interest for adults; art classes, Tai-chi, photographic competitions, ballet programmes, music, dance and drama. We aim to provide a service space for people across the GLL estate. I just think it's wonderful!

Does it work? There were more visitors to Greenwich Libraries in March 2015 than ever so we must be doing something right. One of our libraries was short listed for '*Best Library*' and their issues have tripled and they are open all hours. GLL has built on the experience of local authority services and adapted and expanded in technology with the times. We do feel proud of what we do and after twenty-one years, GLL founders still have a vision for Public Service.

Thank you for your interest and attention.

As a librarian, **Diana J. Edmonds**, BA(Hons),Dip.Lib, FCLIP, has worked in a variety of roles, in public libraries, academic libraries and specialist libraries, including the *Tate Gallery*. Prior to joining GLL as Head of Libraries, Diana established an information company, *Instant Library* and worked in the business as Managing Director and a consultant. She worked internationally as a consultant in the oil and railway industries, but sold *Instant Library* in 2001 although she stayed with them until 2004.

She then joined *Haringey Council* as Assistant Director, Culture, Libraries and Learning. In Haringey, the Library Service had failed an *Audit Commission* Inspection with no hope of improvement. However visits to libraries increased by 300% in subsequent years and this year by 100%. By 2011 the Library Service had become one of the most popular in the country and Diana was awarded the MBE for her work and moved on to *GLL. (Greenwich Leisure and Libraries)*.

EMMANUEL OLADIPO looks at some of the problems facing the Christian community in the African continent and suggests some possible answers

FAMINE IN THE AFRICAN CHURCH



Books, Libraries and Information Services

An Address to the Christians in Library and Information Services Conference “Challenges at Home and Overseas” held on Saturday 18 April 2015, in the Theatre, YMCA, 7 East Street, Leicester, LE1 6EY.

1. Introduction:

The Roman military officer, scholar and encyclopaedist, Gaius Plinius Secundus (23-79), better known as Pliny the Elder, made an observation which has become a famous classical quote: *“Out of Africa always comes something new!”* The context of his assertion was the reward of exploration of the unknown continent for the Natural Historian. Even now, two thousand years after Pliny and with the continent very well known, the new things that drew the ancient scholar continue to attract.

Sadly, that is not the whole story. For instance, writing in the *International Herald Tribune*, David Harland, a senior policy adviser on humanitarian affairs with the *United Nations* in Geneva, had a different take on the Pliny quote.

"Pliny the Elder said that 'out of Africa there is always something new.' These days it seems that the opposite is true: Out of Africa there is always something depressingly familiar..." His concern was Africa's mostly man-made disasters which form an unending litany of woes. Bad governance by kleptocratic rulers, extremist insurgencies, Islamic terrorists and internecine civil wars lead to famines and continuous floods of both internally displaced and cross-border refugees.

This is the context of the scarcity of reliable books, good libraries, and modern information services, sufficient to constitute a veritable famine gripping the church in Africa today. A solution to this problem will no doubt contribute significantly towards a resolution of other problems as well-informed people are better equipped to tackle practically all issues thrown at them. Conversely, the message the prophet Hosea transmitted to Israel in his days find some measure of application everywhere: people are destroyed by lack of knowledge.¹

2. Missionaries, Churches, and Books

Thankfully, there is also the happy story of the Church in Africa. It is said that in 1900, Christians numbered ten million on the continent. By 2000, there were three hundred and sixty million. By 2025, conservative estimates see that number rising to six hundred and thirty three million. According to Philip Jenkins, prolific author, futurologist and distinguished Professor of History and Religious Studies at *Penn State University* in the USA, these changes are more than demographic:

"As Christianity becomes more Southern, it becomes more biblically orthodox. While people like Bishop John Shelby Spong and Templeton Prize winner Arthur Peacock insist that Christianity must abandon its historic beliefs to survive, it is precisely these historic beliefs that attract our Southern brethren."²

In order not only to thrive and grow but also to make its necessary contribution on the global forum, the Church in Africa needs all the help it

¹ Hosea 4:6

² Quoted by Charles Colson in

<http://www.cbn.com/spirituallife/biblestudyandtheology/perspectives/colson020722.aspx?option=print>

can get; and especially to combat the famine it currently faces with regard to Books, Libraries and Information Services.

Thank God for books. St Paul underlines the value Christians should attach to them by his own example. Even when he was expecting to be put to death at any time, he still requested that his books be brought to him, (2 Tim 4:13). Christian thinkers through the ages have followed his good example. It was Erasmus of Rotterdam (1466-1536) who famously said, "*When I get a little money I buy books; and if any is left I buy food and clothes.*"³

Satan does not like books. The most tragic evidence of this coming out of Africa today is the notorious Boko Haram currently devastating parts of northern Nigeria. Literally, their name means "*Books Forbidden.*"

Christians are sometimes described as "*People of the Book,*" as happens thirty four times in the Holy Quran of the Muslims.⁴ It is not a bad description. "*Biblos,*" the root word of "Bible," is the Greek word for "book"; and "*Biblos*" is the very first word of the New Testament. Crucially, we see The Book, faithfully interpreted, as sufficient authority for our faith and life. It would seem that Christians are so much into book learning that some misconstrue their designation as "People of The Book" to mean "People of Books," hence the hatred of the likes of Boko Haram who also confuse Westerners with Christians.

We sometimes presume that the social concern of evangelical Christians was invented in our generation. In the manner of the Clapham sect, missionaries who came to Africa in the twentieth century demonstrated a holistic concern for body, mind and spirit. They built some of the first hospitals in Africa, and some of the first schools. That approach certainly served the cause of the gospel handsomely. It is the reason why most of Africa's first post-colonial leaders in secular as in religious life were the products of missionary education. By way of example, a team of evangelists once went into an African village to teach young men to read and write. A forward-looking traditional healer sent his son to learn so that he would record the secret incantations of his trade. The only book in that school was the Bible, and his son became a Christian. That son was my father.

There was a time when the missionary enterprise itself became suspicious of serious book learning; but thankfully, it proved to be only a

³ Collected Works of Erasmus Vol 1 (1974)

⁴ English Translation by Maulvi Sher Ali (<https://www.alislam.org/quran/>) Accessed 30/01/15

temporary aberration. Throughout Africa, what has proved enduring is that the link established by early missionaries between the church and learning has not diminished. In the main, governments have taken over the schools established by missionaries and churches, but that has changed nothing. Today, churches do not only build Bible schools and theological institutions. They also establish American-type liberal Arts Colleges and even universities all over the continent.

Information Overload

“Of the making of many books,” according to The Preacher, *“there is no end.”* A surfeit of information from all sorts of sources is both the blessing and the curse of our age. The Computer has ushered in the era of DIY publishing, and the churning out of new books has risen to the level of an epidemic. It is said that there are twenty million books in print today, and eight hundred new ones are being added to the pool in the USA alone *everyday*.⁵ (The figure of five hundred new titles in the UK every day is much higher per capita than what obtains in the US or anywhere else on earth.)

Publishers were a formidable defence against poorly written books. This gate-keeping has served the reading public exceedingly well over the centuries since Guttenberg. In addition to whatever obstacles Publishers in general install, Christian Publishers add their own criteria of acceptable theology which make them even more choosy. To monitor these, they would often belong to organisations such as the *Evangelical Christian Publishers Association* (ECPA), or *National Religious Broadcasters* (NRB), an association for Christian broadcasters and communicators in the USA, to which they are accountable for their conduct and products.

With self publishing, unfortunately, all such filters no longer exist for a great number of books that come on the market.

The attitude of modern youth to books deserves special mention. This subject is treated in more detail in a short video prepared by *Dorling Kindersley Books* for a sales conference.⁶

⁵ <http://www.publishingtechnology.com/2014/10/ipa-report-says-global-publishing-productivity-is-up-but-growth-is-down/>

⁶ Dorling Kindersley Books <http://marketingchristianbooks.wordpress.com/tag/future-of-publishing/> Accessed 30/1/15

3. The African Dimension

Naturally, Christians have their fair share of the output of new books; and being Christians they are more generous than average. They are willing, even eager, to give their books away; and large numbers end up in Africa. Such generosity deserves applause, when those have given so very freely to those who are in need within the body of Christ. Not many of these books, alas, are readable, relevant or reliable as, very often, they provide clever answers to questions nobody is asking in Africa.

The obvious solution is for capable Africans to write books for fellow Africans to read; and the number of well-trained and competent potential authors is growing by leaps and bounds. Increasingly, they are putting pen to paper or rather, they are tapping away at the keyboards; but so far the problem is not close to being resolved. Here are some of the reasons why:

- **Affordability**

Most people cannot really afford to buy books; and pastors are more poorly paid than average when they are paid at all. This is what makes donated books of all sorts to be so very attractive. It also means that authors and publishers alike do not get a good return for their work and investment.

- **Poor reading habits**

In general, Africans are not good readers. Even at the level of higher education, the culture is to read purely with the object of getting through exams. There is little or no time, inclination or incentive to learn to read for pleasure. A good proportion of university graduates do not have a habit of reading anything outside of their professional necessities.

- **Abysmal Local Standards**

The most successful Christian authors in Africa tend to be pastors of mega-churches who have an uncritical, captive audience eager to devour whatever they care to put in print. With grossly misplaced confidence in their capability, they put their pathetic manuscripts in the hands of inadequate editors who are unable to discern outrageous deficiencies in content, style, or language. Next are the printers who seem to believe that a glossy cover makes up for all their crimes of omission and commission. The finished work is enthusiastically received by adoring followers who know no better. [Obviously, some people do not know the meaning of shame!]

The Most Revd Emmanuel Egbunu, Anglican Archbishop of Lokoja Arch Diocese, addressing a conference of some five thousand Nigerian faithful in Abuja a couple of years back, lamented the abuse inflicted on the general readership by dreadful literature:

“Before one knew it, self-publishing and private printing took over. So, whatever anyone felt like writing, he wrote, with minimal editorial input or quality control. Untrained artists who couldn’t grasp the focus of the manuscripts did whatever they could for cover designs, and the author was left to fund and market the publication as much as he could. This has taken the form of book launching to raise funds to cover the production, advertising during preaching engagements and Christian conferences, or even outright compulsion by those who have the authority to do so. In this way we have had people with no training in writing who are putting out books that are hardly readable because of uncountable grammatical blemishes. Even when we have obtained copyrights of other well published material, we still end up with poor quality productions with irregular pagination, varying print quality across the pages, and worse...”⁷

- **Library Services**

Very few African countries have public library services that are worthy of the name. In her 2010 research paper Martha Spiers estimated there were some thousand libraries in Nigeria (one for every 151,320 people).⁸ It would be asking too much, unfortunately, to expect even those to go out of their way to stock the sort of books that make for spiritual edification.

- **Information Technology**

It is the Age of Information, but the means of access is beyond the vast majority of Africans. The personal computer is a luxury most pastors cannot afford, and in the main, they are better placed than their congregations in this regard. Access to the Internet therefore depends on having the time to join the queue at the Internet cafe when electricity happens to be available. According to Spiers (op cit) Africa suffers from the most expensive broadband costs in the world, at over \$900 a month compared to approximately \$100 per month

⁷ Most Rev Emmanuel Egbunu, DIVCCON Theme Talk 1: *Getting Our Bearing*, Oct, 2013

⁸ Martha Spiers: *The Development of Information and Communication Technologies in Nigerian Libraries* (http://www.researchgate.net/profile/Martha_Speirs/publications) Accessed 30/01/15

in North America and Europe at the time of her essay. In addition, she identified other issues in the Nigerian context:

- Erratic Power Supply and an Inadequate National Power Grid
- Low Bandwidth and Internet Connectivity Problems
- Lack of Trained Personnel for Sustainable Capacity Building
- Limited Financial Resources
- Lack of Co-operative Ventures.

The net effect of all these is one aspect of the famine lamented by the prophet Amos.⁹ In addition to Africa's endemic famines of food and water, there is this debilitating famine of God's word through Christian literature and information technology.

Possible Answers

The situation is not beyond redemption. Let us look at some of the possibilities.

- **Early Start**

Habits learnt as children tend to last the entire lifetime. African children need to be helped to enjoy reading from an early age, but sadly, only very few, elite primary schools have libraries fit for purpose. Thinking through this issue has inspired me to the beginnings of a project to start a library in the Church School where I was a pupil as a child, with the active participation of my children and starting with books donated by my grandchildren and their friends, being more privileged than average. When this is established the plan is to do the same for the other two schools in the village: the Church Nursery/Primary School and the Muslim Community School.

- **Modest start**

If, in general, Africans are non-readers, they can be helped to become readers, starting with the sort of things they will read. As someone has rightly remarked, small booklets get read, but heavy tomes are kept prominently on the shelf to impress! Also, the fact that it is a person to person rather than a paper to person culture in Africa need not be entirely a disadvantage to reading. Topical issues can generate booklets that encourage and enhance informed discussion in community groups of all sorts.

⁹ Amos 8:11

- **Low-cost Start**

The fact that most people cannot afford to buy books does not mean that nobody can afford to buy any books. Where there is a will there is a way; and those who can afford to buy should be encouraged to do what they can, even if only at the level of a few inexpensive booklets. Also, Africans habitually operate in communities rather than as autonomous individuals. Bringing these two factors together can be the foundation of pooling resources to build small libraries even in rural communities.

- **Well-trained start**

Very often, eager starters quickly realise that good intentions are not enough! Exposure to excellence can work wonders in transforming the output of such people, but sadly, training opportunities are in short supply. *Langham Literature* is one of the few organisations who provide this kind of assistance.

- **Innovative start**

The growth of mobile phones and allied technology has been enormous. Nigeria's one hundred and seventy seven million people, for instance have one hundred and sixty seven million mobile phones between them, which makes ninety-five sets per hundred people, (the UK statistic is one hundred and thirty). Kenya's "M-pesa," developed by *Vodafone* for the local *Safaricom*, is an example of the sort of innovation that responds to local exigencies. (M for mobile, pesa is Swahili for money)

This is mobile phone based money transfer and micro financing service which allows users with a national ID card or passport to deposit, withdraw, and transfer money easily with a mobile device. It has since expanded to Afghanistan, South Africa, India and parts of Eastern Europe.¹⁰ Already, there is a crossover of such ideas to literary issues.

Conclusion: What can we do?

There is this famine in Africa, a famine of Books, Libraries and Information Services. People in a famine need to do all they can to help themselves, but by definition, they require external help to overcome the problem. As the African proverb says, Sheep too sweat, but it is hard to see! Africans in general, and the Church in particular, are taking steps to address these issues, but it is very much an uphill struggle for them. The question, then,

¹⁰ <http://blog.usaid.gov/2013/04/video-of-the-week-animating-m-pesa/>

is “*What can outsiders such as us do to help?*” Here are a few thoughts to ponder – there ought to be many more!

- **Africa Collective**

African Publishers are too small and under-capitalised to make a big impact; but co-operative ventures make for the economy of scale. Oxford-based *African Books Collective*,¹¹ formed by a consortium of seventeen African Publishing Houses now markets the books of one hundred and fifty Publishers from twenty-four countries. These are all autonomous and independent African publishers who share a common ethos of publishing from within African cultures, asserting Africa’s voice within Africa and internationally. This constitutes one possible avenue through which help can be channelled to address some of the problems highlighted above.

- **Village Libraries**

The Sovereign World Trust,¹² from Tonbridge in Kent, has entered into partnership with local Church organisations to set up and run scores of local libraries in several countries, notably Malawi, Uganda, and South Sudan. Similarly, although on a much smaller scale, *Langham Literature*,¹³ a division of *Langham Partnership International* established by the late Dr. John Stott, not only donates books to the libraries of Bible Colleges and pastors, but through the Preachers’ Clubs established by *Langham Preaching*, helps to set up mini-libraries both in cities and in rural Africa.

- **The Cell Phone Generation**

There is amazing potential in the Internet-savvy young techies growing up all over the continent. Like their contemporaries in other cultures, they too are into the IT revolution, unlike their parents of the “BBC” (= Born Before Computers) generation. Already, South African youth have embraced the concept of the cell phone novel pioneered in Japan. With mobile phones a lot more readily accessible than tablets or Kindles, this is a sort of technological leapfrog in e-publishing comparable to the Kenyan M-pesa revolution in finance. And, thanks to the ministries of *International Federation of Evangelical Students*, *Scripture Union* and similar agencies, a significant proportion of African youth know and love the Lord and seek to serve Him with all their heart. Under God, they can become the instrument for African transformation in years to come.

¹¹ <http://www.africanbookscollective.com/about-us#section-5>

¹² <http://www.sovereignworldtrust.org.uk/index.htm>

¹³ <http://uk.langham.org/what-we-do/langham-literature/>

How about exploring the possibilities of the cell phone genre in the service of Christian youth in Africa?

*“A wide door for effective work has opened to me, and there are many adversaries.”*¹⁴ This was St. Paul in his first letter to the Corinthians, and it would seem to be a good description of the Church in Africa.

There is much cause for praise for its growth and potential, for the fruit of the work of early pioneers and missionaries, and for the faithfulness of national believers who had to battle grave odds to maintain the faith. There is need for the church not only to grow big but to grow strong; and among the tools God provides for such growth in our generation are Books, Libraries, and Information Services. These are areas of serious need in Africa today. They are areas where we have been given much. And those to whom much is given, from them is much required.

The question for us, it would seem to me, is to seek out ways in which we can be part of God’s solution to this aspect of famine in the African Church.

Emmanuel Oladipo worked with the *Fellowship of Christian Students*, an affiliate of *Scripture Union*, in northern Nigeria for fifteen years before being appointed Africa Regional Secretary, based in Nairobi and responsible for the work in some forty African countries. He moved to the UK in 1992 when he was appointed to lead the worldwide work as International Secretary. After taking early retirement he worked for some years as Africa Co-ordinator for Rev. John Stott’s *Langham Preaching Ministry*.

¹⁴ 1 Corinthians 16:9