

Winter 2018/Spring 2019

CLIS

Christians in
Library and
Information
Services



CHRISTIAN LIBRARIAN

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OXFORD CONFERENCE SATURDAY 6 APRIL 2019***

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EVENTS AT A GLANCE

- CONFERENCE: PUBLISHERS AND ROBOTS: SATURDAY 6 APRIL 2019:** Blue Boar House, Oxford, with speakers Manoj Raithatha, Instant Apostle, and Dr. Nigel Crook, Oxford Brookes University. Details: pp. 8-10.
- CHRISTIAN HERITAGE LONDON TOUR OF THE BRITISH MUSEUM: WEDNESDAY 15 MAY 2019.** Details: p. 11.
- ANNUAL PUBLIC LECTURE: SATURDAY 19 OCTOBER 2019:** Manvers Street Baptist Church, Bath, with guest speaker Bob Hartman. Details: pp. 12.

PLEASE PRAY FOR

- Forthcoming CLIS activities including the annual conference and annual lecture.**
- The work of Christian Heritage London, the Bible Society Library, The Kilns, Universities' and Colleges' Christian Fellowship, the Evangelical Alliance, and After Work Net.**
- Christians and others working towards an ethical approach to the development of artificial intelligence and robotics.**
- **Christians and others concerned for the environment and working to reverse the effects of climate change and global warming.**
- Public and other library services in an era of cutbacks, closures and redundancies.**
- Christians and others working in the House of Commons and House of Lords and for the work of groups such as Christians in Parliament and Christians in Politics.**
- Christians involved in the arts, media and entertainment and the work of organisations such as the Arts Centre Group, Christians in Entertainment and Christians in the Media working in these areas.**



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THE FIRST WORD

RICHARD WALLER recalls the theories of a once-fashionable communications expert and suggests that his best known theory is one hundred per cent correct when applied to the communication of the Christian faith

THE MEDIUM IS THE MESSAGE



When I was at library school, longer ago than I care to think about now, there was a lot of talk about the perceptive, pioneering communications theory expert Marshall McLuhan. He is most famous for his dictum '*The medium is the message*', i.e. the means by which a message is passed is part or, or maybe all, of, the message. That is, we cannot separate the message we wish to convey from how we choose to express it.

The development of this idea was linked to the rise of post-modernism, although in the 1960s and 70s this was not clearly seen. It has a big element of truth to it. We see it every day in the spin doctors and other phenomena that are only possible with the advent of modern electronic and digital media. McLuhan spoke of '*electric media*' which sounds odd in the twenty-first century, but he was clearly a man ahead of his time, predicting many things that have since come true, including the Internet.

Attractive packaging of the message is very much part of modern communications. With the result that many people look at the medium and never get to rational understanding of the message these days! Emotion and impression rule. As the article on McLuhan in the ***Canadian Encyclopaedia*** puts it, “*The perception of reality then becomes dependent upon the structure of information.*”

To put it more colloquially, the way the message is put across is responsible for the way it is understood.

I gather that modern communication theory is no longer in love with all of McLuhan’s theories, but in one field in which he was one hundred percent right is our Lord Jesus. The Word was the message! That’s what we say at Christmas and witness to every day, that Jesus is the message from God and people need to follow him. He is the perfect message and needs to be heard. Those who truly encounter the real communication from God are never left unaffected, sadly they may be repelled and reject it, but they are never indifferent in their reaction.

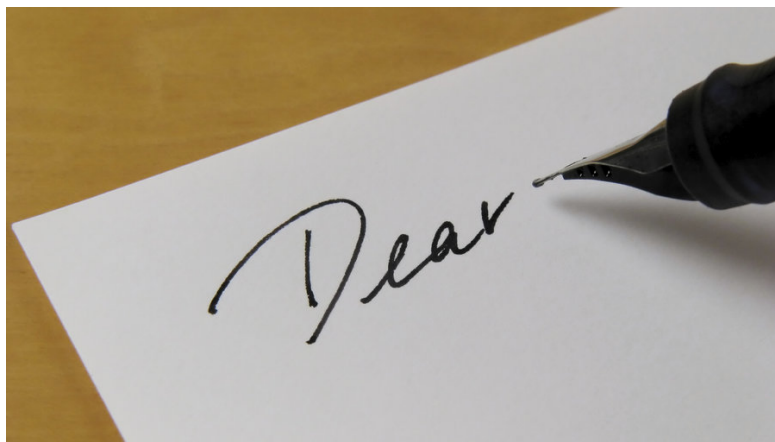
We too are the message! In fact we Christians are the way in which our Lord seeks to reach out with his message of salvation, the good news of the Gospel. That brings an important responsibility. Is our message (the way we are and the way we behave) getting in the way of the Word of life we want to tell others about? I leave the thought with you for 2019.

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

THE SECOND WORD

ROBERT FOSTER notes a decline in the art of letter writing and calls for more debate and dialogue with other people

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR



Whilst thumbing through a 2018 issue of ***Information Professional***, I noticed that there was no letters page. I looked in the back issues, and again, no letters page in those either. So I sent an e-mail to CILIP and asked if the letters page had been dropped when the magazine changed its name. I received the swift and helpful reply that no such decision had been taken, but there were now very few letters. As it turned out, the last time a letter of any length had been received it was turned into an article. Otherwise, most communication within CILIP happened via social media, notably the *Twitter* feed. I'm sure this change has been felt elsewhere, in other organisations.

It started me thinking about how people now discuss issues, and indeed how far we get down the road to a discussion at all. The idea

of letters to the editor in publications hasn't completely died out, even if it is generated by e-mail. The letters page in London's ***Metro*** newspaper is usually replete with opinion, albeit rarely addressed 'Dear Sir' – usually it's more a case of 'Can I remind Gary that ...' Gary being the last correspondent on the subject in question. The fact that people have a voice via a publication or social media is a sign of free speech, and that is not to be taken for granted, but as with any such communication, one wonders how much is discussion and how much is letting off steam.

Some while ago now, a friend told me they had seen a painting by a local artist which they found offensive. The friend was an art history student and a Christian and the artwork was - in their eyes – anti-Christian. So they plucked up courage and went to see the artist. As it turned out, the motive behind the piece was not anti-Christian at all, even if it was open to misinterpretation. The two persons had a helpful discussion, and in fact the artist was pleased that someone somewhere had responded to it. Having the interaction made all the difference. It strikes me that the human response is all too often to stick with our assumptions, and not have a debate or discussion. Perhaps – and I include myself in this – it is time for New Year's resolution or two on this matter.

For some, their letters, forums, discussions and representations have ended in disillusionment – and I am sure this is the case for many in the public sector over the past few years. Yet, the New Testament has examples of its central figures being generous with their time to talk with others. If we can somehow see our engagement with others as part our life as Christians, it will surely not go completely to waste.

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*.

CLIS

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PUBLISHERS AND ROBOTS

DON'T MISS OUR ANNUAL CONFERENCE

SATURDAY 6 APRIL 2019

From 10.30. a.m. – 4.45. p.m.

***UCCF, BLUE BOAR HOUSE, BLUE
BOAR STREET, OXFORD, OX1 4EE***

Speakers

MANOJ RAITHATHA

Instant Apostle

Dr. NIGEL CROOK

Oxford Brookes University

CONFERENCE THEMES

Publishers and Robots is the title of the *Christians in Library and Information Services* Conference to be held on **Saturday 6 April 2019** in the headquarters of the *Universities' and Colleges' Christian Fellowship* at **Blue Boar House, Blue Boar Street, Oxford, OX1 4EE**, from 10.30. a.m.

The conference will address the twin themes of Christian publishing and artificial Intelligence and robotics. In the first session of the day **Manoj Raithatha** will speak on **Christian Publishing for the Twenty-First Century** and will root his talk in a Bible passage around the need to share the Christian gospel in innovative ways via publishing.

In the afternoon session Dr. **Nigel Crook**, will speak on the subject **The Virtuous Robot: developing robots with moral competence**. He will ask: Can we, should we, develop robots with moral competence? In his talk he will discuss the motivation behind developing '*autonomous moral machines*' and offer a '*virtue ethics*' perspective on how this might be done.

CONFERENCE SPEAKERS

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

In 2008 Manoj's professional and personal worlds were shattered. The financial crisis devastated his property business and a sudden illness threatened his son's life. Manoj found himself utterly dependent on the prayers of a Christian couple he had recently met. Following God's miraculous intervention in his son's life, Manoj committed his life to Jesus Christ and wholeheartedly serving God's plans and purposes for the world we

live in. You can read Manoj's story in his autobiography *Filthy Rich* (Monarch, £8.99, ISBN 978-0857215901)).

Dr. Nigel Crook 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.

BOOKINGS

The booking fee is £20.00 (£18.50 for unwaged delegates) and bookings for the conference should be sent to the treasurer, **Diana Guthrie**, 5 Arden Mead, 4 Staveley Road, Eastbourne, East Sussex, BN20 7LH. Telephone 01323 419181. If required payment can be made through the PayPal system – see www.christianlis.org.uk/event/2019-clis-annual-conference-agm-save-date/

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Our Annual General Meeting is to be held on **Saturday 6 April 2019**, from 11.20. a.m., as part of the annual conference proceedings. Please let the Secretary have any motions for discussion, or nominations for office, in writing not later than one calendar month before the meeting. Contact: Graham Hedges, Secretary, 34 Thurlestone Avenue, Ilford, Essex, IG3 9DU.

Nominations are invited for the following executive committee positions: Secretary, Treasurer, Recruitment Secretary, Library Assistance Manager, Webmaster, Overseas Secretary, and Members Without Portfolio (x 3). Each nomination needs a proposer and seconder and the candidate also needs to indicate his or her willingness to serve. Some of our existing committee members are willing to stand for re-election but we are always pleased to hear from other members willing to serve on the committee. Could this be you?

CLIS NEWSLETTER



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

BRITISH MUSEUM TOUR

Following last year's walking tour of historic London, led by Ben Virgo of *Christian Heritage London*, we have arranged a guided tour of the *British Museum* on **Wednesday 15 May 2019**, beginning 2.00. p.m..

Among the British Museum's collection of sixteen million items are awesome artefacts that powerfully illustrate stories relating to such Bible characters as Elijah, Jehu, Isaiah, Hezekiah, Abraham, Nehemiah, Esther, Paul and others. The *Christian Heritage London* tour of the museum seeks to draw attention to these stories, and thence to the story behind them all – the grace of God seen in his faithfulness to sinners.

The cost of the tour is £15.00 per person and if you would like to book a place or places please send your booking and payment to Janice Paine, 22 Queensgate Gardens, 396 Upper Richmond Road, Putney, London, SW15 6JN. Cheques should be made payable to *Christians in Library and Information Services*. Some members who can arrive in central London in time may wish to have lunch together in a local restaurant prior to the beginning of the tour. If you would like to join the lunch party, please let Janice know.

Last year's tour of places of Christian interest in the City of London was much appreciated by those who took part and we are looking forward to an equally enjoyable and informative tour of the *British Museum* on Wednesday 15 May 2019.

ANNUAL PUBLIC LECTURE

Our annual public lecture will return on **Saturday afternoon 19 October 2019** when we will be returning to the **Manvers Street Baptist Church** in Bath and our speaker will be the well known children's writer and master storyteller **Bob Hartman**.

PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL NEWS

- Former librarian the Rev. **Andrew G. Paterson** has recently moved from Bristol to Edinburgh and taken up a new part-time role as associate pastor on the ministry team of the *Charlotte Chapel*. Andrew will have a special responsibility for mission at the Chapel while continuing with his wider responsibilities in encouraging mission within the *Fellowship of Independent Evangelical Churches*. Andrew is a former President of the FIEC and previously worked as a housebound librarian in the *London Borough of Wandsworth*.
- **Jennifer R. Poulter**, a member of the CLIS *Facebook* group, is a former librarian who is now a full time collaborator with sixteen others around the globe involved in producing children's and young adult books. According

to one reviewer Jennifer's book ***The Very Cross Bun*** 'is a wonderful, funny tale that even the youngest reader will love ... filled with colourful and expressive illustrations and a light-hearted, amusing story line, this re-telling of a traditional fairy tale will become a book that children will love to read over and over again'. ***The Very Cross Bun*** is available in the United Kingdom from [Amazon.co.uk](https://www.amazon.co.uk)

- Our past speaker **Paula Renouf**, Director of the *Speaking Volumes* library scheme, appears on the front cover of ***Together*** magazine, for November/December 2018, presenting an award to the *Triangle* bookshop, Farnborough, on behalf of *Speaking Volumes*. Paula herself received a special appreciation award on behalf of *Speaking Volumes* at the *Christian Resources Together* conference for booksellers and publishers held at the *Hayes* conference centre, Swanwick, in September 2018.

BLAST FROM THE PAST

One of my earliest literary efforts has recently re-surfaced on the Internet. *If Only ...*, a satirical re-telling of the story of the Day of Pentecost from Acts chapter two, intended to highlight the contrast between early Christianity and the contemporary church, appeared in the October 1972 issue of ***Buzz***, a popular magazine of the day. The story also appeared in my local church magazine and a Christian magazine published in New Zealand and was reprinted in two books. You can now read this forgotten blast from the past on the ***Buzz*** on-line archive at www.buzzmagazine.online

LONG STANDING MEMBER

Late last year we received the sad news that our long standing member **Derek Fawcett** died in October 2018. Derek joined our Fellowship in 1984 and attended a number of our meetings, sometimes with his wife Norah. He was a good friend of LCF/CLIS and took part in most of our library working parties at the former *Northumbria Bible College*. He took a particular interest in the Powerpoint presentation on the history of the *Librarians' Christian*

Fellowship that Richard Waller prepared for our annual general meeting in 2014 and contributed some photographs.

Derek worked until his retirement as the Librarian of *Merton College*. CLIS readers will want to give thanks for his life of Christian service and remember his wife, Norah, and other family members and friends at this time of bereavement.

VOLUNTEERING WITH MAKING MUSIC

Our retired member **Sylvia Allaway** is a member of the choir *Adoramus* which is affiliated to a charity called *Making Music* which provides advice and information to member groups and societies. *Making Music* maintains a database, *Music Bank*, of 'tens of thousands of pieces for repertoire, notes and sheet music to borrow from other member groups'.

In 2013 *Making Music* requested help to cleanse the database with the aim of eliminating duplicate or near duplicate data which could lead to confusion. After some training at the *Making Music* office Sylvia was given an alphabetical section of composers. She was asked to go through the database editing the various composers' entries. This involved quite a steep learning curve especially when it was necessary to edit the various editions of individual works.

At the end of 2015 *Music Bank* was upgraded and there were quite a lot of issues to be resolved. When work re-started at the end of 2017 Sylvia became involved in the new role of editing programme notes and this work continues until the present time.

INKLINGS SCHOLAR

Congratulations are due to our committee member Dr. **Rachel Johnson**, who has received the *Neuhouser Award for Distinguished Scholarship and Service* presented by the *Centre for the Study of C. S. Lewis and Friends* at *Taylor University*, Indiana, USA. In 2002 Rachel helped to set up and catalogue the *Brown Collection* at *Taylor University* consisting of works by five

authors from the influential *Inklings* literary group that was formed at the *University of Oxford* in the 1930s.

In August last year Rachel retired after four years service as an Assistant Librarian at the biblical studies library at *Tyndale House* in Cambridge. She will, however, continue to assist at *Tyndale House* as a volunteer. Rachel previously held the post of Research Librarian at the *University of Worcester*, having worked in several other university libraries. She has conducted extensive research into children's literature and is the author of ***A Complete Identity: the youthful hero in the work of G.A. Henty and George MacDonald*** (2004). She serves as Library Assistance Manager on the CLIS executive committee.

NARNIA AND MIDDLE EARTH

CLIS readers will probably have heard the news reports that the media services provider, *Netflix*, has acquired the screen rights to all seven of C. S. Lewis' ***Chronicles of Narnia*** and is planning a new series of films and episodes based on the popular fantasy series. Lewis' stepson, Douglas Gresham, will be one of three executive producers working on this project.

Some years have passed since Narnia last appeared on the screen and my own hope is that *Netflix* will reboot the series by starting with the Narnian creation story ***The Magician's Nephew*** rather than attempting another re-make of ***The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe***. Other readers may disagree and it will be interesting to see what *Netflix* make of the Christian symbolism in Lewis' books.

There have also been reports that *Amazon* is planning a new series of films based on ***The Lord of the Rings***, by J. R. R. Tolkien, Lewis' friend and fellow *Inkling*. There has been speculation that this new series will explore the earlier lives of characters like Aragorn and Gandalf, rather than simply re-hashing the existing films by Peter Jackson.

In the meantime, according to the *Internet Movie Database*, there are two feature films in development which will be of interest to admirers of the *Inklings*. ***Tolkien and Lewis*** will explore the friendship between the two writers while ***Tolkien*** will depict Tolkien's early life culminating in his military service during the First World War.

POETRY ALIVE

On Saturday 17 November 2018 the *Arts Centre Group* organised *Poetry Alive* at the *Westminster Central Hall*. The guest speaker was Lord **Leslie Griffiths**, well known as a Methodist leader and broadcaster, who took his audience on an imaginary tour of his native Wales, pausing to read some of the poetry of writers who had been born or lived in Wales. These included such major figures as George Herbert, Dylan Thomas, Gerard Manley Hopkins, and R. S. Thomas.

Christine Smith, of *Canterbury Press*, spoke about her role in publishing and love for poetry. A selection of poetry with a Christian or religious theme was read by Emma Danby and our own past speaker Tony Jasper. Poets featured included our former speakers David Porter and Stewart Henderson. Prizes were awarded to the winners of the 2018 *Jack Clemo Poetry Competition*, named in honour of the celebrated Cornish poet.

LIVE AND ON-LINE

As a member society of the *Evangelical Alliance* we are pleased to welcome the Alliance's re-designed web site at www.eauk.org which went 'live' at the end of August 2018.

The site has been given a complete makeover and now includes a number of new features including a listing of resources provided by member organisations. Enquirers can find information about CLIS, for example, plus a photograph taken at our 2014 Conference, in the 'Resources' section under the heading 'Services and Training'. The web site retains many traditional features including information about the EA's activities, membership information, and news and views on current matters of interest to evangelical Christians.

The new site is very impressive and won a 'runner up' prize at the 2018 *Premier Radio Digital Conference* held in London on Saturday 3 November 2018.

CHRISTIANITY IN THE WORKPLACE

One of the *Evangelical Alliance's* recent projects has been the publication of a booklet ***Christianity in the Workplace: an employer's guide to Christian beliefs***, produced in co-operation with the *Lawyers' Christian Fellowship*. This includes advice on such topics as Sunday working, wearing crosses, alcohol and gambling, language and other issues of conscience along with information on the legislation affecting equality and diversity in the workplace. Perhaps you could order a copy on behalf of your employer or human resources department. You can obtain copies from Inewari Diète-Spiff at the *Evangelical Alliance*, 176 Copenhagen Street, London, N1 0ST. Copies are free but a donation towards the costs will be appreciated.

FOR RETIRED MEMBERS

Our retired members, and those heading for retirement, will find much to interest them on the web site <https://afterworknet.co.uk> a recent initiative from *Christian Action Research and Education (CARE)*.

A news release from CARE explains that the experience of retirement has been transformed in our generation. Unlike their parents, those now at the end of their full time working lives often have the health, energy and resources for new experiences and challenges. However, many Christians are unaware of the opportunities available. The *After Work Net* web site aims to put this right with advice on faith, relationships, health, finance and volunteering opportunities. There are also regular blogs and e-mails to keep supporters in touch and a *Facebook* group to facilitate the exchange of news and views. The Programme Director for *After Work Net* is one of our own past speakers, **Peter Meadows**, who gave our annual public lecture back in 1989.

CURRENT AWARENESS

- A recent editorial in the ***Church Times*** considers the current plight of the public library service as revealed in recent statistics published by the

Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA). It is estimated that £30 million was lost from libraries' budgets in 2018 . The library system would be facing total collapse were it not for an estimated fifty thousand volunteers around the country who put in almost 1.8 million hours of help.

The article argues that libraries promote well being in ways that go far beyond the action of reading. They are hubs of community activity and information and places of refuge and discovery. They have not been made redundant by the Internet. Libraries act as depositories for the gathered wisdom of generations of writers. The very act of preservation and display in peaceful surroundings is a sign of a healthy society. *Books for Life* appears in the **Church Times** for 11 January 2019, p. 16.

- Pat Ashworth's article *Religious Treasure in the Attic* profiles the *Bromley House Library* in Nottingham, one of the few surviving subscription libraries in this country. The library was founded in 1816 and includes a collection of some two thousand theological works currently housed on the top floor of the building. Many of these books have not been borrowed for decades and the staff are unsure whether this is evidence of a decline of interest in theology or stems from a reluctance of readers to climb the stairs to the upper storey. Steve Bates, a member of the library, is currently looking at every volume in order to assess its importance.

Books in the theology section are catalogued and shelved by date, so that the higher the number the more recent the book. The library costs £104 a year to join and is located in central Nottingham's Angel Street. More information is available from www.bromleyhouse.org The article appears in the **Church Times** for 11 January 2019, pp. 24 – 25.

- Colin Blakeley's article *Exploring the Writers who were Haunted by Christ* is based on an interview with the Rt. Rev. Richard Harries, Lord Harries of Pentregarth, the former Bishop of Oxford. Lord Harries' latest book is entitled ***Haunted by Christ: modern writers and the struggle for faith*** (SPCK, £9.99, ISBN 978-0281079346) and is a study of leading poets and novelists, some of them Christians but others not. Literature is one of Lord Harries' passions and he is particularly drawn to books '*that show some kind of wrestling with the Christian faith*'.

The playwright Samuel Beckett, for example, is described as a '*Christ haunted man, a secular mystic*'. Other writers considered in the book include

T. S. Eliot, Stevie Smith, Gerard Manley Hopkins, William Golding, Shusaku Endo, C. S. Lewis and Philip Pullman. The last two writers are both gifted storytellers but reach very different conclusions as to what it means to be human. Like Lewis, however, the atheist Pullman is a profoundly moral writer who insists that literature should have a '*moral clout*'. The article appears in the ***Church of England Newspaper*** for 12 October 2018, pp. 8 – 9.

- Lucy Winkett's article *A Prophet for our Times* considers the legacy of William Blake and takes as its starting point the recent unveiling of a new gravestone for the poet and painter at London's Bunhill Row cemetery. This event on the anniversary of Blake's death in late 2018 attracted an eclectic mix of rock singers, priests, comedians, and punk poets.

Blake's critique of the organised Church was so fierce, and his interpretation of the Bible so individual that many would scarcely recognise his understanding of the Christian faith as orthodox. However Blake's faith was in the Jesus whom he believed the Church had abandoned and he should be regarded as a prophetic rather than destructive force within the Christian tradition. His reflections are rooted in the biblical themes of theodicy, apocalypse and prophecy. Blake's insistence that God '*becomes as we are , that we may be as he is*' is surely an incarnational reflection. This article appears in the ***Church Times*** for 7 September 2018, p. 17.

- Paul Richardson's article *Celebrating the man who shaped our language* examines the legacy of the Bible translator William Tyndale and is based on an interview with the writer and broadcaster Melvyn Bragg. Lord Bragg has previously made a television documentary about Tyndale and has written a book ***William Tyndale: a very brief history*** (SPCK, £7.99, ISBN 978-0281077137).

Bragg believes that, as someone who helped to shape the English language, Tyndale is more important than Shakespeare. Many popular phrases, such as '*fight the good fight*' and '*salt of the earth*' come from Tyndale. In the King James Bible 93.7 % of the New Testament and 85% of the Pentateuch came from Tyndale but the preface makes only a vague reference to making use of the best of earlier works.

Melvyn Bragg himself is an agnostic but is passionate about religion as a force for good in society. The article appears in the ***Church of England Newspaper*** for 20 July 2018, p. 9.

***News from the Membership Secretary:
Janice Paine, MCLIP, 22 Queensgate Gardens,
396 Upper Richmond Road, Putney, London,
SW15 6JN. Tel. 020 8785 2174
e-mail members@christianlis.org.uk***

Listed below are those who have renewed their membership or changed details since the previous issue. We would like remind current members that subscription renewals are now due for 2019. It would be greatly appreciated if payment could be sent **before the end of April**. Minimum subscription rates for 2019 are: £30.00 (full rate), £20.00 (retired, unemployed), £20 each for two members at the same address, students free (eOnly); overseas (outside Europe) please add £5.00 for postage. If you have *changed address, job, etc.*, please let us know as soon as possible.

LATE RENEWALS

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

CHANGES TO ADDRESS, JOB ETC.

[REDACTED]

JANICE PAINE reports on a visit to the Bible Society Library at the University of Cambridge Library on Wednesday 12 September 2018

BIBLE SOCIETY LIBRARY



A warm autumn day in Cambridge saw a group of CLIS members and friends gather at the *University Library* to be warmly greeted by Dr. Onesimus Ngunga, Librarian of the *Bible Society Library*. Onesimus gave us a brief history of the *Bible Society*: inspired by the story of Mary Jones and her desire to read the Bible in her own language, it was founded in 1804 with the dual purpose of translating and distributing scriptures affordably in local languages. The library collection (now over 39,000 volumes) was mostly acquired through various donations, and now they receive first editions of all new English Bibles. The collection was moved to Cambridge following the *Bible Society's* move from London to Swindon.

The Library

We were shown round the two floors of the library collection: the upper floor with Bibles in the ancient languages, plus Annual

Reports of the *Bible Society* and a beautiful painting of Bede transcribing scriptures by hand; the lower floor with Bibles in English in approximately two thousand worldwide languages.

Special Bibles

Onesimus had on display for us some rare and precious Bibles: One of the first printed Gutenberg New Testaments (1516); , Luther's German New Testament translation (1522); Tyndale's English New Testament; a King James Bible (1611); the first printed Chinese New Testament (1810); a Dutch/Malay Bible (1651); a Madagascar Bible (1835)

The last named was preserved during persecution by burial wrapped in animal skins – this emphasised what treasured possessions these Bibles were (and still are to the many still suffering persecution) – while we can take them for granted.

We also saw a collection of Scripture portions given to the armed services in various wars [collected by CLIS member Rachel Johnson's father]; their largest Bible, an illustrated folio used in telling Bible stories; and a collection of miniature Bibles, some in cases incorporating magnifying glasses!

Other collection highlights

Other highlights included the largest collection of Chinese Bibles in the world; more than five hundred manuscripts in one hundred and eighty four languages, the oldest in fourth century Coptic; thousands of letters from missionaries (such as David Livingstone) recording their translation work.; and "*Language files*" about the work of translation, including the difficulties of finding appropriate words in cultures very different from the first century Near East.

The library today

Visiting overseas students are immensely grateful to the pioneer missionaries/translators who went overseas enduring incredibly difficult situations to provide scriptures in local languages. The annual reports are a gold mine for their research, containing details of all the translation work. Several current legal disputes have been resolved through use of the library's records.

There is currently a scanning project to digitise Chinese Bibles and missionary letters. (See ***Christian Librarian***, Spring 2018, for details of this project and how you can help). Onesimus has received e-mails from some potential volunteers but if anyone else is interested in assisting they should contact Dr. Martin Reynolds who co-ordinates volunteer groups. He can be contacted at webbsmanager@missionassist Ninety per cent of the library's holdings are now catalogued in electronic format. Preservation work is carried out in conjunction with the conservation department at the *University Library*.

Final note

We are most grateful to Dr. Ngunga for showing us the collection and sharing with us his gratitude and enthusiasm for those early pioneers of Bible translation – from Tyndale to the present day. There are still five thousand languages worldwide with no Bible! Thanks also to Rachel Johnson for organising this visit.

For further information about the library, see the web site <http://www.lib.cam.ac.uk/collections/departments/bible-societys-library>

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

LOIS COOPER enjoys a tour of the former Oxford home of C. S. Lewis and a visit to the church where the author of the *Chronicles of Narnia* worshipped for thirty years

VISIT TO THE KILNS



Ever since some of my family moved to the Oxford area I have wanted to visit *The Kilns*, home of C. S. Lewis, where he wrote many of his books. I was very pleased when *Christians in Library and Information Services* arranged a group visit. It gave me a chance to visit family, and avoid a day trip from the Isle of Wight.

Conveniently there was an exhibition *Tolkien – Maker of Middle Earth* at the *Weston Library*, so I went there as well, having to dodge the cameras of tourists around Oxford! A confession here is that even though I read ***The Hobbit***, I started reading ***The Lord of the Rings*** and felt I had better things to do with my time! I did watch the recent films as

they came out in January, and January is a bleak month to celebrate one's birthday. The exhibition was busy and I did find it interesting.

The following day I met up with the Library group at *The Kilns*. C. S. Lewis wanted a remote location because of his unusual family relationships which were against the *Oxford University* rules in force at the time. . Mrs. Moore, the mother of a friend of Lewis' killed in the First World War, was the owner of the home and Lewis and his brother Warnie were the tenants. They also had a pessimistic gardener living with them, who is said to have been the inspiration for Puddleglum the Marsh-wiggle in ***The Silver Chair***. It is a quirky 1922 home, with quite dark rooms, built on the site of two kilns. They lived there 1930 to 1963. In fact the lightest room was C.S. Lewis' bedroom but it would have been the coldest too with two outside walls! He kept the door locked between him and Mrs. Moore and had stairs to the ground outside, so it would look right!

We were given a tour of the house and a brief history of his time there. The first room we went to was where C.S. Lewis received visitors. Wartime blankets were used for the curtains (the original ones fell apart!), the walls were nicotine stained and ash was put on the carpet to keep the moths away. We went through several downstairs bedrooms to a library. When Lewis died there were five thousand books in the house. Some were going up the stairs (I felt good about that as I have books going up the stairs!) Lewis' fellow lecturers found his *Narnia* books embarrassing. They weren't detective novels, which were considered ok for academics to write! The group showed interest in a painting - the original sign from the *Eagle and Child* pub (nicknamed *The Bird and*

Baby) - where Lewis and the *Inklings* group of writers met. The piano where Maureen (Mrs. Moore's daughter) had lessons is still there.

Warnie's rooms were where he could escape from the women of the house. There were various photographs of C.S. Lewis and the family in the rooms. At the top of the steep stairs in the attic there was a model of *Narnia* – snow covered trees and the lamp post - which was tastefully done. Finally we finished in the kitchen and dining room. Originally there was a lot of land with *The Kilns* but this was sold for houses, and a lake (a disused quarry) has been made into a nature reserve which we visited afterwards.

Our next stop was *Holy Trinity Church* where C. S. Lewis worshipped for over thirty years. He didn't like staying behind and talking to people after the services and the same applied to his lectures! We were shown the graves of C. S. Lewis and Mrs. Moore. We then went into the church to view the window which has been etched with scenes of *Narnia*, in memory of a couple of local children who died young. The window changes as the light shines through it. Aslan the Lion is shown as a sun, emphasising the lion as a Christ-like figure radiating light and life. The word *Narnia* appears amongst the rays of light coming from his mane, emphasising Aslan's role as giver of life to *Narnia*. The window features the Castle of Cair Paravel, the horse Fledge, the magic apple tree, a talking tree and other animals. I thought it was tastefully done.

Lois Cooper worked until her retirement for the public library service on the Isle of Wight.

RICHARD WALLER is surprised to hear from a former library assistance project from fourteen years ago

HAWORTH BOOKPOINT



Hall Green Baptist Church in Haworth, West Yorkshire, asked for help in setting up a lending library as part of their *Bookpoint* library and bookshop project fourteen years ago. Unlike some projects we have been involved with over the years, they were very willing to do the work themselves, they simply needed advice to point them in the right direction. So keen were they that they even bought a copy of the Dewey 200 schedules and taught themselves to use them accurately!

I didn't actually expect to hear from the project again, although over the years when I have met the lady who runs it, since we do move in much the same circles, I have been told it is doing reasonably well.

I was therefore surprised to suddenly get an e-mail towards the end of 2018 asking for more advice, this time on the matter of book withdrawal. The volunteers who help were having trouble agreeing on a policy. Of course, this is one of the more difficult questions to arise in libraries and you can do damage by getting it wrong.

The issue here really seemed to be losing sight of the original vision, which fourteen years ago was very clear. Volunteers change and with it the grasp of what the library was trying to do had faded from view. I advised them to have a meeting with the elders of the sponsoring church and refocus everyone's minds on the vision. They said they would and I await hearing what happened with interest!

So, if you want to visit one of the few operating '*walk-in off the street*' Christian libraries then should you be holidaying in or near Haworth and sampling the delights of the *Bronte Parsonage* or the *Keighley and Worth Valley Steam Railway* that runs ten miles up the valley, why not drop in and take a look? *Hall Green Baptist Church* is right in the town centre at the top of the steep road up from the railway station past the park to the bottom of the high street that leads up the hill to the Parsonage. *Bookpoint* is housed there, the entrance being just by the steps that lead up to the chapel.

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

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Minutes of the meeting held on Saturday 14 April 2018 at the Salvation Army's Regent Hall, Oxford Street, London, W1C 2DJ.

Present

Those present were Eddie Olliffe (CLIS President and AGM Chair), Richard Waller (CLIS Life Vice-President and President-Elect), Robert Foster (CLIS Executive Committee Chair), Diana Guthrie (Treasurer), Graham Hedges (Secretary), Janice Paine (Membership Secretary), John Wickenden (Webmaster), Karen Hans (Prayer Secretary), Andrew Parker (Member without Portfolio), Annabel Haycraft (Member Without Portfolio and Minutes), Susan Bates, Judith Bishop, Vernon Burgess, Mary Chibnall, Derek Jowett, Richard Knight, and Jeffery Turner.

Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Janet Danels, Sarah Etheridge, Christine Gagan, Gordon Harris, Rachel Johnson, Heather Lewis, Elizabeth Pool, Kirsty Robinson, Mary Wood, and Arabella Wood.

Minutes

The minutes of the annual general meeting held on Saturday 8 April 2017 at the *Carrs Lane Church Centre*, Birmingham, were approved as a correct record.

Annual Report from the Chair and Secretary

Robert Foster reported that, at the previous year's conference in Birmingham we had a demonstration on the interactive game *Guardians of Ancora* from Maggie Barfield of the *Scripture Union*. The panel session on the future of the library and information professions included presentations by Karen Hans, Susan Bates, Paula Renouf, and Michael Gale.

The Annual Lecture, on *Films and Faith*, in St Albans, was given by the Rev. Simon Carver and the text can be found in the Spring 2018 edition of ***Christian Librarian***.

There were two visits in 2017: one to *Tyndale House*, organised by Rachel Johnson, and the other to *Lambeth Palace Library*, organised by Sarah Etheridge.

There were four issues of ***Christian Librarian***, including reports of CLIS activities, visits and conference speakers. There was also a report on the *Kate Greenaway* childrens' book awards.

Graham Hedges' longstanding work as Publications Editor had already been commended by Eddie Oliffe. As Webmaster, John Wickenden maintains the web-site and facilities for payment. The web site now includes back issues of ***Christian Librarian*** and links to our social media.

Richard and Norma Waller have been cataloguing the books of the *Universities' and Colleges' Christian Fellowship* library, and arranging working parties of CLIS volunteers to organise the organisation's archives. Voluntary activities by individual members have included Janice Paine's work in the *Spurgeon's College* library and Graham Hedges' work on behalf of the *Evangelical Alliance*.

Graham Hedges and Simon Carver were interviewed on *United Christian Broadcasters* radio during *Libraries Week*. An obituary of our former President Dr. John Andrews appeared in the **CILIP Update** magazine.

There are one hundred and thirty two members and eight subscribers to our publications. This is a slight decrease on last year where we had one hundred and forty one members. Thirty three copies of **Christian Librarian** are donated to various libraries and organisations. We have seventy-five members on *Facebook*, which is an increase from last year, and twenty-five on *LinkedIn*. There were one hundred and seventy tweets, which is a slight increase on last year. One hundred and six members are receiving the **E-Newsletter**, which is down slightly from last year. The GDPR regulations may have had an impact.

We are saying farewell to Eddie Oliffe as President with thanks for his contribution to CLIS. Thankfully, Eddie has agreed to stay on as a Life Vice-President. Thanks were also recorded to everyone else who has served on the Executive Committee.

Thanks were given for the lives of members and friends who have died in the last year, including: Rev. John Waddington-Feather, Sally-Anne Fairall, Roger Page (formerly of the *Christan Literature Crusade*), Ada Hiley (founder of *Book Aid*); and Margaret Keeling (who was a former President, and passed away on 23 March 2018). Members were asked to pray for Margaret's husband Brian and their family.

Annual Accounts and Treasurer's Report

This was presented by Diana Guthrie. Copies of the 2017 accounts and the Treasurer's notes had been printed for all present.

The big difference in our income between 2016 and 2017 is that in the earlier year we received a legacy of £5,000 from our former President John Andrews. In 2017 our main income was from subscriptions and the donations which many members were able to give.

Our main expenses each year are publishing ***Christian Librarian*** and running the Annual Conference and Lecture. The 2017 Conference, held in Birmingham, made a loss; we have found that Conferences held outside London don not attract as many people as the Central London ones.

We were delighted to be able to donate £500.00 to the Library of the *Chaima Christian Institute* in South Sudan. We also paid for a copy of ***The Librarian's Manual*** (published by the *Association of Christian Librarians* in Ohio, USA) to be sent to the *Namibia Evangelical Theological Seminary*, who had asked if we could donate one, but we were very disappointed that the ***Manual*** was returned to the ACL without any reason being given; in the end we asked the ACL to donate it to another good cause.

Assets – there is no longer any money in the *Nationwide*; as the interest it was receiving had diminished to vanishing point, we closed the account in January 2017 and transferred the contents to our *Barclays* account.

Election of Officers

Eddie Oliffe read out the proposed candidates, who were all elected as follows:

President: Candidate: **Richard Waller**
Proposed by Executive Committee

Life Vice-President: Candidate: **Eddie Olliffe**

Proposed by Executive Committee

Publications Editor: Candidate: **Graham Hedges**

Proposed by: Kim Walker and Janet Dannels

Membership Secretary: Candidate: **Janice Paine**

Proposed by: Annabel Haycraft and Rachel Johnson

Scottish Secretary: Candidate **Anne MacRitchie**

Proposed by: Moira Mitchell and Myrtle Anderson-Smith

Any Other Business

Richard Waller thanked members who had volunteered their time in the UCCF working parties. Three more experienced cataloguers are needed to help at a later date.

Graham Hedges invited members to sign cards for Margaret Keeling's family and also a *Get Well* card for Gordon Harris. He announced that a walking tour of Christian London was due to take place on 23 May 2018. There would not be an annual lecture in 2018 but there would be autumn visits to the *Bible Society Library* and *The Kilns*, the former home of C. S. Lewis.

The 2019 conference will be held on 6 April 2019 at the UCCF premises in Oxford and Dr. Nigel Crook from *Oxford Brookes University* will be speaking on the subject of Artificial Intelligence.

There was no further business and the Annual General Meeting closed at 12.15 pm.

REVIEW

GORDON HARRIS considers a recent book which welcomes the digital communications revolution but provides warnings about the possible misuse of technology

DRIFTING INTO DANGEROUS WATERS

God & my mobile: keeping the faith in a digital world.

Nigel Cameron

CARE, 2018, £8.00, Pbk., 168p., ISBN 978-0905195247.

Have you noticed the revolution on our transport system? More passengers are browsing their mobiles than are reading newspapers.

In the introduction to his new book, following on from his ***The robots are coming: us, them and God***, Nigel Cameron emphasises that Christians should keep pace with the accelerating digital revolution, but, as in all things, live “*in it*” but not “*of it*”.

He emphasises that there’s nothing wrong with the technology, but there is a lot wrong with the business models of giants such as *Facebook* and *Google* which draw in your data and will do anything to keep you on-line. Children are particularly vulnerable to excessive use of on-line media. He cites Sherry Turkle whose book ***Reclaiming conversation*** reveals how much we engage with others through media instead of having an empathic talk face-to-face. Research has shown that children are unhappy with parents who are constantly checking their mobiles instead of spending time with them.

It’s obvious that we need to limit our time on-line, but Cameron maintains that Christians and the Church in general are failing to

take the lead in discussing on-line addiction. We would do well, he writes, to observe God's commandment "*fill the earth and subdue it*" (Gen. 1.28).

Cameron then goes on to describe the incredibly rapid digital change from the 1980s to the present day. His theological reflection on this is that God is re-connecting the human race, post-Babel, with ever more sophisticated channels of communication (including *Google Translate*) - but some governments block parts of the Web from their citizens. God is also calling us to master technology rather than let it master us.

We are now interconnected more than we ever have been, but hacking has made us frighteningly vulnerable. And this changes the way nations wage war. A smart-home may seem attractive, until hackers switch off your heating. He singles out *Alexa* as a device which could be used as surveillance on what you say in your own home. Attacking the monopolistic nature of the giants of Silicon Valley, he warns that members of *Facebook*, even if alarmed by recent revelations about its use of personal data, are loth to leave because no other platform provides the same enjoyable link with family and friends.

Nevertheless, Cameron predicts the collapse of *Facebook* if it cannot retain its members' trust. In contrast, he praises *Twitter* for its simple reporting of specialised topics. Generally optimistic, Cameron sees the Internet as God-given and beneficial. It provides access to education, information, podcasts, video, fact-checking websites, open access journals, democratisation. Moreover, the cheapness of mobiles has caused a communications revolution in less developed countries. But the industry is still dominated by giant companies in the USA and China.

In Part II of the book Cameron issues six "*challenges*" (though they are more like warnings):

- It is a myth that we can multitask effectively. Mobiles can be a distraction from the important task at hand.

- Privacy. Facebook tracks every detail of its members' lives.
- Security. The more we use internet-dependent products, the more vulnerable we are.
- Monopolies – the giants are monopolies but have not been broken up through anti-trust legislation. They have virtually no competitors.
- Facebook has destroyed accurate journalism and newspapers.
- Believing on-line charlatans.

In Part III *“Living the mobile life”* Cameron reveals some worrying trends, and he suggests ways of overcoming our addiction to our mobiles:

- People retreat from reality by always checking their 'phones instead of engaging with others.
- All mobiles (even hands-free) are a distraction from driving and should be banned.
- Children are being left to look at screens for too long.
- Teenagers are seriously suffering from smartphones. There is a correlation between use and depression (but not proved causal).
- Some families reserve a whole day to be free of all screens.
- “Ten Commandments”* which users can obey to be less dependent on their mobiles.
- How to survey your church on how they use smartphones / mobile phones.

This review of Nigel Cameron's thorough treatment of the mobile revolution may give the idea that easy access to the Web from our portable devices is wrong in itself. Cameron would be the first to welcome the technology, but warns that we are drifting into dangerous waters, unless we can subdue our mobiles.

Gordon Harris, *BSoc, MPhil, FCLIP, DipKM*, is a Life Vice-President of *Christians in Library and Information Services* and a Past President of the *Librarians' Christian Fellowship*

ANDREW PARKER describes more than three decades working in a variety of roles within the House of Commons library service and recalls encounters with high profile politicians

THIRTY-TWO YEARS IN WESTMINSTER

I first started work at the House of Commons Library in May 1986 filling a temporary two-year post in the then *Indexing Unit*. Based in the *Norman Shaw North* building (which may be familiar from old crime films or television series because it used to be part of *New Scotland Yard*), this involved indexing Parliamentary Questions for the computer system.

The post subsequently became permanent, and in 1989 I moved to the *Education and Social Services Section*, part of the then *Research Division* (as opposed to the *Parliamentary Division*). I was part of the support for specialist Library researchers in subjects like Education, Health and Social Security.

Promoted in 1991 (on the day, if I remember rightly, that Robert Maxwell fell off his yacht and drowned), I moved to a split post. I spent half of the week in the POLIS (formerly *Indexing*) Unit and the other half at the *Book Loans Desk*, located in the *Members' Library* in the *Palace of Westminster*. This entailed direct contact with MPs. Each post was shared with a (different) colleague.

In 1995, I took over running the *Book Loans Desk* full-time and my face-to-face contact with MPs and others increased. Some were '*regulars*' and quite heavy users, and I came to know them quite well; others were more occasional and others again didn't use the service at all. It was much easier to get books back from some borrowers than from others. Originally, our sanctions were virtually non-existent, but this changed with the introduction of charges for

the replacement of lost books. The regime became tougher during the years when Priscilla Baines was Librarian; she was determined to treat all users equally, from the Prime Minister downwards. I think one of the first '*lost book*' cheques I saw was from Tony Blair in 10 Downing Street. Only Priscilla's determination could have achieved such a result.

In 2001, I moved to the *Reference Room*. This was only next door to the *Oriel Room*, where the Loans Desk was located, but the work was quite different. As the name implies, I now became involved in reference enquiries, and the creation of some bibliographic databases, with a particular focus on identifying less obvious sources of biographical information about MPs, past or present. Interesting enquiries included having to contact the agents of Penelope Keith and Susan Hampshire, and 'phone calls to Buckingham Palace were not unknown.

In about 2004, I moved away from the Palace and over the road to the *Derby Gate* building. After a spell full-time in the *Indexing and Data Management Section*, as it was known by now, I moved to another split post in 2005. This time, the week was divided between IDMS and the *Parliament and Constitution Centre*, a research section whose subjects included (as the name suggests) all areas of Parliament itself, government, constitutional issues, the monarchy, and so on.

In 2006, although now located full-time in the PCC, some of my work was for the *Reference Services Section*, in the Palace (updating biographical databases, for example).

In the summer of 2011, I moved from the PCC to undertake project work. Initially, I worked on my own, digitising and making a list of old (pre-1995) *Commons Library* research papers. These had been published in several series, the oldest dating back to 1948.

In 2012, I began working with a colleague, on a project to update the *Commons Library* intranet pages. This was completely different from anything I had previously undertaken, but I learned a

lot from a colleague, whose technical knowledge and focus on the user (customer) were both impressive.

In 2014, I joined the *Library Resources Section*, while still undertaking project work. In 2015, I joined the newly-formed *Research Information Service* (RIS) and in August of that year moved to another building near *St. James's Park* tube station.

My main work by now, and in the three years to my retirement in October 2018, was the compilation of a ***Human Rights Bulletin***. This was published weekly in Parliamentary sitting time and less frequently during Recess. After a major revamp, this went to all members of one Select Committee and a number of other committee staff., some MPs or their staff, various Library colleagues and others. I had full editorial control as the level of interest in Human Rights increased in the media and more generally, I added a number of other subjects to the original ones. Consequently, the bulletin expanded in scope and in size.

I was also responsible, up to retirement, for updating the appropriate records when a current or former MP died. For this, the assistance of my friend Stephen Lees in Cambridge (for whom I had worked in the *University Library* there in the late 1970s) was essential. He is an acknowledged national expert on MPs past and present, whose knowledge is encyclopaedic.

Several 'classic' moments stand out. Perhaps the most awkward occasion was the one when I looked up, one afternoon, to see Lady Thatcher at the Loans Desk! She should, technically, have approached the *Lords Library* first with her enquiry, but I wasn't going to say that. She asked a totally impracticable question, which I met with an embarrassed silence and an increasingly red face. Fortunately, she was accompanied by an aide who was still an MP and he reduced the enquiry to more manageable dimensions.

On one occasion, a wag approached me and said he'd like a loan of £10,000! This illustrates the ambiguity of the phrase 'Loans

Desk' (now known as the 'Library Loans Service' but still susceptible to the same joke).

It was probably in the 1990s when I used to work at the *Loans Desk* on one evening a week (known as 'Night Duty'), as well as during the day. Originally on a Tuesday, which could be quite busy, this later changed to a (quieter) Thursday. I think it was on a Tuesday evening when Tony Benn asked me to wake him up at a certain time, after a short doze! When I went into the next room, wondering how best to do this, I saw him with a piece of cardboard around his neck which read '*Please wake me up at 8.55. p.m.*) Clearly he believed in taking all precautions!

I also worked all night on a few occasions, regular cups of tea every two hours or so, and seeing the sun rise on the other side of the river, were part of the experience.

Although it was not technically part of the '*day job*', I also contributed two sections to the reference book ***Facts About the British Prime Ministers***', published by *H. W. Wilson* in the United States, and by *Mansell* in the UK, in 1995. My subjects were Margaret Thatcher and John Major.

For most of my time in the Commons Library, I tried to be involved in what was originally known as the *Parliamentary Staff Christian Fellowship*. This has evolved and grown over the years, with some *Bible Society* input, it is now an All-Party Parliamentary Group, known as *Christians in Parliament*, to which MPs, Peers and staff of all kinds belong. It holds regular services, prayer meetings and occasional special events in the Speaker's House, with a guest speaker. I would encourage you all, in these increasingly uncertain times, to pray for its work.

Andrew Parker, MA(Th), MA(Lib), MCLIP, worked until his recent retirement as a Higher Library Executive in the *House of Commons Library* and serves on the executive committee of *Christians in Library and Information Services* as a member without portfolio.

Ten years ago an eminent team of scientists and theologians addressed environmental issues and the reality of climate change and global warming. Where are we now? GRAHAM HEDGES looks at the evidence and suggests ways in which Christians and librarians might respond.

CREATION STILL IN CRISIS



CREATION IN CRISIS: CHRISTIAN PERSPECTIVES ON SUSTAINABILITY

Edited by Robert S. White

SPCK, 2009, £12.99 , Paperback, 298p., ISBN 978-0281061907

Some years ago, when I was working for the library service in London, I remember a conversation with a young woman who was concerned about the environment, and such issues as global warming and climate change. Louise told me that she had been brought up in the church, but when she raised her concerns with members of her congregation, there was a lack of interest and an attitude that it wasn't their problem. Eventually Louise drifted away from the church and found an outlet for her interests elsewhere.

I personally have seen no lack of interest in environmental matters in the Christian community; take the work of groups like *Green Christian* (formerly *Christian Ecology Link*), an association of Christians keen to relate their faith to current environmental concerns and to encourage members of their churches to think seriously about such issues, and *A Rocha*, which recruits volunteers from various Christian backgrounds to work on conservation projects in different parts of the world. Other relevant groups include *Christian Climate Action*, which recently staged a major demonstration in London, and *Operation Noah*, which also campaigns exclusively on climate change. But, perhaps environmental concerns are less frequently aired at local church level, where there may be an attitude that we should ‘*stick to spiritual things*’ such as prayer, evangelism and personal Bible study.

Creation in Crisis, a collection of essays that originated as a conference held at the *Faraday Institute for Science and Religion* in Cambridge in 2008, features contributions from eminent scientists and theologians, who set out to bring “*theology down to earth and give wings to science and technology*”, and in so doing, as James Jones, former Bishop of Liverpool, said, “*help to persuade Christian readers not to over spiritualise the beatitude which holds before us the promise of inheriting the earth*”.

The book was published almost ten years ago, and the environment has continued to be a matter of concern since it was released. Only recently, for example, a preliminary study by eminent scientists, among them Frederick Otto of the *University of Oxford*, has concluded that climate change made last summer’s heat wave in Britain and other countries ‘*twice as likely*’. Similarly, following flooding in India, *Christian Aid* warned that such devastation will become the norm if nothing is done to tackle climate change. Add to this, the amount of plastic in the ocean has become a matter of concern.

Since I wrote the original version of this article a new study from the *Inter-Governmental Panel on Climate Change* has argued that global temperature rise must be limited to 1.5 degrees Celsius if environmental catastrophe is to be averted. The COP24 international conference in Poland came to an end after two weeks of talks, but without any firm commitments to implement national carbon emission reduction plans by 2020, one of the goals of the 2015 *Paris Agreement*.

The Situation a Decade Ago

Among the eminent scientists who outline the threats to the ecosystem posed by climate change and global warming in the first section of ***Creation in Crisis*** is Sir John Houghton, who began with an essay on sustainable climate and the future of energy production. Sir John's particular concern was the rise in carbon dioxide (CO₂) levels in the atmosphere during the past century as a result of the burning of coal, oil and gas. He claimed that if insufficient action was taken to control these emissions the concentration of CO₂ would rise to two or three times its pre-industrial level during the course of the twenty-first century.

Sir John considered the potential of alternative forms of energy, including solar energy, tidal power, wind power and even nuclear power (about which he has reservations). He suggested practical steps that individuals can take to reduce energy consumption including home insulation, car share schemes and the use of public transport. In the end, however, he said concerted action is needed at government level.

Calvin DeWitt, meanwhile, wrote on sustainable and unsustainable agriculture and drew attention to the degradation of agricultural land in many parts of the world due to intensive farming methods and a relentless quest for profit. He commended approaches to

farming that *'seek to promote and understand ecosystem health while minimising adverse effects on natural resources'*. His final section responded to criticisms that organic farming methods and the like may be insufficient to satisfy the world's need for food.

Richard Carter looked at the links between poor water supply, inadequate sanitation, poor hygiene practices and ill health, especially in sub-Saharan Africa. He recalled that the *United Nation's* Millennium Development Goals had called for the proportion of the world's population without access to safe drinking water or basic sanitation to halve by 2015. At the time of writing, it appeared that while the target for safe drinking water was likely to be achieved, the sanitation target was likely to fall short of the desired result. The author surveyed parts of Africa where positive change had been achieved and called for greater efforts to extend the benefits of clean water and adequate sanitation to other parts of the African continent.

Brian Heap, Flavio Comim and George Wilkes took a critical look at international agreements on climate change and suggested ways in which their impact could have been greater. The *Kyoto Protocol* of 1997, for example, proved to be largely symbolic due to loopholes in the agreement and an inability of national governments to agree on how the protocol should be implemented. The authors called for *'greater co-ordination and integration of actions and responsibilities through multilateral agreements and coalitions nationally and locally'*. They recognised, however, that the self-interest of national governments and multinational corporations has often limited the effectiveness of such international co-operation.

Despite their different perspectives, the contributors agreed that urgent action is needed to safeguard the environment and that reducing carbon emissions and greenhouse gases should be a priority. They drew particular attention to the extent to which western nations consume a disproportionate amount of the world's resources and recommended practical ways in which the production

and use of energy could be made less harmful. For example, standards of insulation and energy efficiency in buildings, in the United Kingdom and United States, need to be brought closer to those of the Scandinavian countries. For cars, various technological developments were proposed for the coming decades including petrol/electric hybrids and hydrogen fuel from non-fossil sources. They pointed out that, while much of the world's pollution is caused by wealthy western countries, the poorer nations are often the ones who suffer the most damage from rising ocean levels and other problems.

Making a Stand

The reality of climate change is still sometimes greeted with scepticism by the media and members of the public, which James McCarthy, another eminent scientist with an essay in the book, argued is a consequence of industrial corporations, with a vested interest in fossil fuels, spreading misinformation on environmental matters, often using the same lobbyists who were employed by tobacco companies to play down the health risks associated with smoking. He says: *"The concerted efforts of climate science contrarians and their financial patrons to deny the validity of climate science have contributed to delays in formulating and implementing meaningful policies to address climate change in developed and developing nations."* It's encouraging to see that the contributors were not afraid to venture into controversial areas.

John Guillebaud and Pete Moore dared to take a stand too, as they tackled the problems of population growth and argued the need for more effective programmes of contraception. They pointed out that world population was projected to reach 9,400 million by 2050 and argued that unlimited population growth is not an option on a finite planet. In their view promoting methods of family planning would seem to be part of the solution although they noted Catholic and Orthodox objections to the practice and wider Christian concerns

that the availability of contraceptive methods would encourage sexual activity outside the confines of marriage.

Robert White, then, raised the question of whether natural disasters should be regarded as '*acts of God*' or as the results of human follies. He recognised that phenomena such as earthquakes, storms and flooding may have purely natural causes but asked us to consider the extent to which the unsustainable lifestyles of the affluent West may have exacerbated the damage and human suffering experienced by those living in less affluent regions especially in the global south.

Finally, Rene Padilla concluded by raising the question of globalisation and the dangers of international capitalism. His chapter provides a critique of consumerism and the effects of an economic system which encourages us to aspire to an ever-increasing standard of living without due regard for the ecological and environmental consequences of continuous economic growth.

Back to the Bible

The theologians took the floor in the second part of the book. Hilary Marlow considered the Hebrew prophets and their concern for the welfare of the earth. The writer looked at verses from Micah 6, Isaiah 1 and Amos 4, as well as the later chapters of Isaiah and portions of the Psalms, to establish links between human sinfulness and the health and well being of the natural order. She suggested that a study of the relevant biblical texts can offer '*new insights that resonate with and are relevant to current environmental concerns*'.

Richard Bauckham looked at the concept of the Kingdom of God, as proclaimed by Jesus, and argued that this is a holistic vision

which includes all aspects of life and looks forward to God's ultimate redemption of the created order. His chapter on Jesus and nature in the four gospels considers the so-called '*nature miracles*' (such as the calming of the storm by Jesus) which he believes indicate a divine concern for the natural creation. We are reminded of God's concern for the falling sparrow (in Matthew 10) and attention is drawn to a remarkable passage in Mark 1: 13 which implies a state of harmony between Jesus and wild animals during his forty days and nights in the wilderness. The clear implication is that God is concerned for the natural order and this should be our concern too.

These essays (both the scientific and theological ones) implicitly or explicitly challenge an opinion which one occasionally hears in Christian circles, that as the present world order is to be destroyed at the time of the second coming, we do not have to worry too much about the fate of the environment in the meantime. This attitude is then tackled head on by theologians Douglas Moo and Jonathan Moo, who expound the Christian hope for a new heaven and new earth and stress the continuity, as well as discontinuity, between the old and new creations.

Are we all better at taking care of creation now?

A decade has passed since these papers were first published and this raises the question of how much progress has been made in the intervening years. Perhaps inevitably, the picture is mixed. Recent abnormal weather conditions in various parts of the world have certainly highlighted the probable effects of climate change and have led to renewed discussion in the media and elsewhere. A recent decision by leading retailers to phase out plastic packaging, which is difficult to recycle, is a step in the right direction. On the other hand, despite widespread agreement that air travel is a major contributor to air pollution, the British government seems determined to press ahead with a third runway at Heathrow.

Despite hopes that the development of electric cars will help to improve air quality, it has recently been claimed that these benefits will be cancelled out by increased air travel in the years to come.

What can we do as Christians? Certainly we can think about our own lifestyles and consider recycling, the efficient use of energy, and the merits of travelling by public transport rather than by car. We can make our concerns known to members of parliament, government ministers and business leaders and try to put environmental matters on the agenda of our local churches.

Is there anything that we can do specifically as librarians? The answer to this question is likely to vary according to the type of library or information service in which we are employed. However librarians may have a role to play in highlighting environmental concerns by arranging book displays on relevant themes, compiling bibliographies and reading lists, and inviting members of environmental groups to give talks on library premises.

Creation in Crisis harnesses the knowledge of scientists to address the seriousness of environmental degradation and climate change in real terms, but brings in essential Christian thinking, which, in my view, points back to the Creator and his encouragement to develop a better understanding of these issues and see them as our concerns too. The book is not an ‘easy read’, especially for those without a scientific background, but it still raises many questions that need to be addressed as we approach the end of the second decade of the twenty-first century.

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