



2021 Conference



CLIS Memories

Christian Librarian

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CHRISTIAN LIBRARIAN

No 87 AUTUMN 2021
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Contents

First Word: A Strange Year!	<i>Richard Waller</i>	Page 3
Committee Vacancies		Page 6
2021 Annual Conference Address:		
Telling the Church's story: the outlook for religious journalism	<i>Mark Woods</i>	Page 7
Annual Report and Accounts	<i>Robert Foster & Diana Guthrie</i>	
		Page 13
Book Review	<i>Robert Foster</i>	Page 17
CLIS Memories Event	<i>Karen Hans</i>	Page 19
Tribute to Brenda Dixon		Page 26
Book Reviews and recommendations		Page 28
Conferences Survey: your opinion needed		Page 31
2022 Annual Conference		Back Cover

CHRISTIAN LIBRARIAN: NEWSLETTER AND JOURNAL OF CHRISTIANS IN LIBRARY AND INFORMATION SERVICES

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CLIS Christians in
Library and
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CLIS was founded in 1976 as the Librarians' Christian Fellowship

Affiliated to: Evangelical Alliance; Transform Work UK;

Universities' & Colleges' Christian Fellowship.

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A Strange Year! First Word by Richard Waller President of CLIS



What to call this introductory article? Various things occurred to me, but perhaps the most accurate might be "Some thoughts on being president in a plague year!" Having just this morning had a long conversation with a solar panels salesman who couldn't accept that God might have his own reasons for not stopping the evils and troubles of this world, I was put in mind of the quote from Amos "*Is there evil in the city and the Lord has not done it?*" The word that the RSV, which I was using back when I studied Amos 52 years ago, translates as "evil" is more accurately and usefully rendered as "disaster" or "trouble". What Amos was pointing out was that the troubles of this world are not outside the sovereign control of God and he has his own reasons for permitting what is going on, difficult though it may be to see it. The trouble we encounter is not a reason to lose faith in God.

I know we were all shocked when God removed our long standing secretary and editor, Graham Hedges. I think we were all used to relying on his encyclopaedic memory and endless fund of ideas. This compounded the vast problems we had coping with the lockdown in general and keeping CLIS going in particular. The Committee has been struggling to get things going again and is only now back on top of the work.



It has been an odd experience this last 18 months, Zoom meetings have taken over from face-to-face events, and the conference was really hard to manage back in April when all you could see was the screen and there was none of the usual ambience of being together with friends and chatting. It did not help that my screen sharing facility decided to let me down that day, having functioned flawlessly for months of managing the on-line meetings for my Church! Having said that, I did enjoy the conference very much and thought both speakers excellent.

Frankly though, Zoom committee meetings are much better from the point of view of coordinating activity. I am not actually part of that committee and have to remember this at times, but it has meant that I know what is going on. I rather suspect that they may well stay online, just as my church's elders and deacons' meetings have been so much easier when we don't have to assemble in one place. We do see each other anyway in that case, although CLIS is a bit different, scattered as we are all over the country and also NZ (which poses interesting problems for attending meetings with a pretty well 12 hour clock difference!).

I did also get to one FOCLIS meeting, which was rather fun. FOCLIS is in the US equivalent of CLIS – the Fellowship of Christian Librarians and Information Specialists. That was a purely social event and not that well attended on that occasion. My appearance caused no little astonishment as you can just pop-up on Zoom if you have the link, which they did send to us.



They were meeting lunch-time for a chat and it was early evening here. It was good to meet a few people from an organisation I had heard of but not met up with previously.



Taking over part of the editing of this Christian Librarian magazine has also been an interesting experience. I have been production editor. This means that while Robert Foster collected articles and edited them into shape I then actually assembled them into the magazine and sent it to Diana

Guthrie, who arranged the printing and distribution. Far too many people seemed to think I had done all the work. Not at all! So instead of Graham we have an editorial team, which perhaps points out just how much work he did do for us. Perhaps we relied on him too much and God was saying to us it was time that the rest of us stepped up and to him that it was time that he had a rest from his labours for the Lord.

Hopefully we can start living normal lives again soon and CLIS can get back to personal meetings as well as remote conversations on-screen. However, CLIS does rely on participation. Your Fellowship needs you as things are very different now.

We need new people to serve in various roles and in 2022 we have a library that needs us to help catalogue their books so they can put them online. This last one looks like being my project, so anyone for a trip to Soham in Cambridgeshire (they are even opening a new railway station there in honour of the event) to help

the Biblical Creation Trust? More details nearer the time. There are also things you can do like offering to help with our internet and social media presence, currently almost non-existent, or simply writing bits and pieces we can put in such places; book reviews, short articles for the CL and more besides. It doesn't have to be a major and time consuming commitment, it can just be a one-off if you have an idea. Please do help.

CLIS needs to reinvent itself for a new era. It was coming anyway, Covid-19 has simply speeded up the process and it is my privilege to be president as this unfolds and we see what God will do in a post pandemic world.

Richard is currently President of CLIS, and in the past has served as Secretary, Committee Chair and Library Assistance Co-ordinator, having been a member since 1974.

When not doing CLIS things he is reading, running his garden railway, pursuing his interest in vexillology and then fills up any spare time with being Church Secretary at his local church and Secretary of the local Grace Baptist Churches fellowship in Lancashire.



CLIS Committee Vacancies

*Please note we have the following
committee vacancies:*

***Treasurer
Publications Editor
Committee Secretary***

*If you would be willing to take on
one of these tasks or would like to
know more please contact the CLIS*

Chair, Robert Foster

Email:

robert_foster31@hotmail.com



Telling the Church's story: the outlook for religious journalism

Mark Woods

Talk at the Annual Conference on 17th April

Friends, thank you for inviting me to speak to you. By way of introduction: I was a Baptist pastor for 16 years, so I have a background in theology and ministry, and I've been a religion journalist for nearly 20 years. My reflections for you are more from my years in Christian journalism. I want to talk a bit about the landscape of religious journalism, and its current difficulties; then a little about the future.

The Christian periodicals that survive today are mainly from the Victorian era; some have fallen by the wayside in quite recent years. They arose from that surge of interest in religion, together with Victorian advances in printing technology and a general can-do, self-improvement attitude. There was another burst of energy in the third quarter of the last century. So in 19th century – naming the ones still around or whose names you might know – we had:



The Church of England Newspaper, 1828

The Tablet, 1840

The Baptist Times, 1855 (closed as a print publication in 2011)

The Universe, 1860

Catholic Times, 1860



Methodist Recorder, 1861

The Church Times, 1863

The Christian Herald, 1874 (closed 2006)

The War Cry, 1879

The Catholic Herald, 1888 (now monthly and merged with the US print edition)

More recently formed monthly papers and magazines:



Challenge, an evangelistic paper set up in the 1960's by CPO in Worthing; in 2001 a rival paper, Good News, was set up. Good News took Challenge over in 2012. It claims a circulation of 77,000 copies a month.

Evangelical Times, founded in 1967 by Peter Masters, minister of the Metropolitan Tabernacle, CH Spurgeon's church; it's highly conservative evangelical.



Evangelicals Now, formed in 1986 as a rival for the evangelical constituency; it's less hard-line, with a different sort of relationship to culture. Both these papers might have a readership of around 5,000.

Premier Christianity has a complicated publishing history; it started as Buzz in the '70s. It's the major non-denominational evangelical magazine and claims 30,000 readers.

Behind these names and dates, there's a whole history of highly nuanced conversation about churchmanship, theology, culture and class. For instance the Tablet was sixpence, while the Universe only cost a penny and was more for the Catholic masses, while the Tablet was for the middle class intelligentsia. And these papers have had editors who've made their own judgements. They have both reflected and formed their readerships' agendas. They speak their readers' language; so their vocabulary, turns of phrase and assumptions about what readers know and how they talk and what they believe are used very deliberately. There are catch-phrases, beliefs and positions that people just know about. At the same time, responsible papers know that they aren't there just to tell their readers what they want to hear; they sometimes have to push back, or get their readers to think, or defend an unpopular idea. They can do that if they know them well enough.



I think these papers have been incredibly valuable, and their longevity speaks for itself. They've spoken the truth to power; they've

critiqued the leadership of their denominations or their particular tribes; they've disseminated different kinds of spirituality; they've held organisations and cultures together. However: the world they're operating in now is unrecognisable from what it was when they were first set up, both the old ones and the newer ones, and it is extremely challenging for at least three reasons.



1. The tribes have fractured. Denomination is no longer a particularly strong badge of theological culture or belief. Even within tribes like 'evangelical', there are so many shades of meaning nowadays; membership of the Evangelical Alliance is falling, and it doesn't really serve any more as the umbrella body. Evangelicals have also become internationalised to a great extent; so you have Hillsong, an international movement based in Australia, with its own communications; complementarian Calvinists in the UK will probably go to the US Gospel Coalition website for congenial resources. Or take the CofE – it's facing enormous strains over issues like same-sex marriage, and it's becoming less meaningful to talk about an international Anglican communion. So some papers have found their natural constituencies disappearing.

2. The Church is smaller. This is not just in absolute numbers of people attending church – the percentage is much less, but the population is much higher – but in terms of people identifying themselves as Christian. So the market of people interested in what the Church has to say is smaller. Some denominations are facing real issues apart from that; Methodists for example are facing a demographic cliff-edge, because they have so many members over 80.

3. As we all know, there's been a knowledge explosion – at least, a communications explosion, which is not the same thing at all. The internet has been a game-changer for every kind of communications medium. Writing has been democratised – you don't have to pay to read someone's opinions or to find out what's happening in the world. The problem for the press is that decline in revenue is

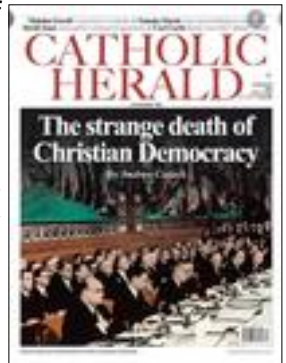
exponential, because it comes from two sources – circulation and advertising. When circulation falls, ad revenue falls. So you put the price up, and circulation falls, which means ad revenue falls ...

The Methodist Recorder is by far the most expensive weekly paper, at £265/year. The Church Times, print and digital, costs £115. The Catholic Universe costs £55 for the digital edition, £99 for print and digital; for the Church of England Newspaper those figures are £70 and £75. If you look at the smaller papers, it's very difficult to find out what the circulation is! They don't like to say, because low numbers might frighten off potential advertisers.



So, where are we now? There are some papers with really dedicated owners and editors, who are prepared to take a financial hit. The CEN is owned by Keith Young, a businessman who injects funds as required; the Recorder is owned by the editor and her husband, who are utterly dedicated to it. Others are part of larger groups – the Church Times is part of Hymns Ancient & Modern; the Universe merged with the Catholic Times last year,

and they are part of the Universe Media Group. Others have re-invented themselves – the Catholic Herald moved from weekly to monthly a couple of years ago, and merged with its US edition last April. Others are owned by their denominations or church groups, like the URC's monthly magazine, Reform. You can have a



certain amount of editorial independence in a relationship like that, though you are inevitably going to be limited in what you can say. The really vulnerable ones are those that don't have money to invest and re-invent themselves.

The ones that are going to prosper will either move online, or they'll have a mixed economy of print and online. The Church Times has done this brilliantly, and is prospering, supported not just by Hymns Ancient and Modern, but by a large volume of Church of England advertising. For the others, it's a question of vision and resources, and of whether there's still a tribe who'll buy what they're selling. Some of them certainly won't survive in any

form; just as some secular newspapers won't survive in any form. I really regret that, because I'm an old romantic. When The Baptist Times closed, we did a commemorative edition; we raided the archives for reprints, and did a potted history of the paper and a lot of reminiscing. I don't at all regret the closure, and it had to happen, but there was a weight of history and a quality of thinking there that was quite humbling. And I appreciate that many of the names of papers I've been referring to are just names to many of you; I, on the other hand, know them all and have read them all; they're like friends, with their own characters and stories.



But old romantic as I am, I don't see the point in denying the obvious, which is that an era is passing – and passing in secular newspapers as well. The future will largely be online. You know better than me what that means for future historians – if you want to know stuff, you can't just pull a few volumes off a shelf any more, it's going to be much more complicated than that. But I am interested in what it means now, that the religious press has far fewer resources than it did, and is so much smaller than it was. Here are three suggestions.

First, it seems to me that editors used to be gatekeepers, ensuring that there was a certain quality of thinking in opinion pieces, that theological statements were within orthodox bounds, and that news stories were legally watertight and were probably well sourced and accurate. I was reminded of this by a post on Facebook recently in connection with Labour leader Keir Starmer's visit to the Jesus House Pentecostal church; then he found that they didn't endorse same-sex marriage, and apologised for going. On one social media group I belong to someone said the church was rampantly homophobic and had conducted exorcisms of gay people. When challenged on it, the person who'd posted it had no evidence of it, but was just repeating what he'd heard in the secular press. The fact that this story got traction in secular media shows

how far expertise in religion there has been hollowed out; there aren't the people with the experience to ask the right questions. So I think one thing traditional paid-for media can offer is fairness; there's an editor's code, and journalists generally do stick to it. I think good religious journalists can tell the truth about religion – though I realise that probably sounds impossibly idealistic.

Second, you need time and training to do serious investigative work, and serious thinking. There's far less of that going on than arguably there should be. Last year the story broke about Ravi Zacharias, the famous Christian apologist; he had been up to all sorts of sexual shennanigans. The story was broken by Christianity Today, in the US, and by proper, professional journalists. Now, there are individuals, really skilled and tenacious, who write blogs

and campaign and are professionals in all but name; there are several in the States, though none in the UK I can think of. They put their own time and money into their work. But generally speaking, you need time and resources to do this kind of thing; also libel insurance. One group



campaigning against clergy sex abuse in the US was hit by a massive fine when it made a wrong call.

Third, I think good outlets, online or printed, expand your horizons; they'll reassure you by speaking your language, but challenge you as well, by saying different things in that language than you thought they might. You might lose readers, but you might gain them too. That's the risk you run. If we aren't careful, we can get very siloed and safe in our thinking. I think of when I was writing for Christianity Today, a conservative, evangelical website; in a fit of madness, wrote an article about how God does not have a plan for your life, wonderful or otherwise. Normally I was glad of a few thousand hits; this one got a couple of hundred thousand. You can push boundaries as long as you respect your readers.

So as I think about the future, I am not wildly optimistic for religious press; but I'm not totally pessimistic either. There are definitely headwinds. But I think the Church needs people who'll help to interpret it to itself, and interpret it to the world outside the Church. Good religious journalism can do that very well. What that will look like in the next couple of decades is quite hard to say.

Rev Mark Woods is a Baptist minister and journalist currently working for Bible Society.

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ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2020-21

BY ROBERT FOSTER
COMMITTEE CHAIR



The CLIS year has been marked by two major events - Covid-19 and the loss of Graham Hedges.

Graham was in so many ways the driving force behind the work of CLIS, and we have lost a friend and a fine man. It is a mark of Graham's genius that the organisation has been a workplace fellowship, a Christian literature and media interest group, and a presence within the profession all rolled into one. And that may not cover everything. He had a heart for libraries and a keen perception of the issues of the day, which allied with his ability to make ideas work meant that CLIS events and publications were invariably interesting and useful. There have been many tributes. The previous issue of *Christian Librarian* featured a number of these, and our 2021 conference made space for people who wanted to bring further tributes.

We are now faced with the task of replacing the irreplaceable. Thankfully, Graham had identified two speakers for the postponed 2020 conference and we were delighted that both Mark Woods and Alexandra Davis were able to defer their talks until 2021. It was probably one of the best ways that Graham could be honoured, to proceed with the conference which he put so much into. Without Graham we are in need of a secretary and publications editor. If anyone would like to step into either of these roles – and please note that they will be two roles - please get in touch. You won't be expected to do exactly what Graham did. Being part of a committee such as this is very much doing what you choose to make it. It's voluntary. We know that we will be different in the future, and we are seeking what God has for us to do and waiting to see what will emerge.

Despite the pandemic, it has not been a year of zero activity. Richard Waller, our president, published a colour edition of Christian Librarian; we had a Zoom coffee morning led by Mary Wood, which took the place of the annual lecture. Another highly significant activity behind the scenes was the collection of archive material from Graham's house, shortly before it was cleared for sale. There was just a small window to pick up files and other papers, which Karen Hans and Janice Paine did, whilst others of us were shielding. Given that Graham had stored a great deal this was no small undertaking. Volunteers have since been indexing the files of newspaper cuttings.

I would like to thank all the committee for their work over the year. Each of them has in some way taken on more than they would otherwise have done. We must record our special thanks to Diana Guthrie, our Treasurer, who will be standing down when her term of office ends, having served on the committee for many years. All organisations need someone who will look after the accounts and the CLIS accounts are in very good order owing to Diana. Please do come forward if you can take over.

By the 2021 Conference there were 111 members and 5 subscribers. The e-newsletter was delivered to 99 addresses, 57 of which were opened. My thanks to Janice Paine (membership secretary) and John Wickenden (e-communications) for providing these statistics and for their time and effort this year in so many ways.

During the past two years the following members have died: Philip Hayworth, Jean Plaister, Ann Winsor and as already noted, Graham Hedges. They were remembered at our 2021 Conference as part of our prayers of thanksgiving, obituaries having been published in the eNewsletter and Christian Librarian.

CLIS TREASURER'S REPORT FOR THE YEARS 2019 AND 2020

CLIS - STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR ENDING 31 DECEMBER 2019

INCOME

Subscriptions	2799.51
Donations	805.00
Annual Conference Fees	392.60
Paid walking tour & visit	269.29
Total Income	4266.40

EXPENDITURE

Christian Librarian	3115.05
Running Expenses (includes publicity, travel to Committee meetings, mini-laptop for Secretary)	324.96
Annual Conference	416.21
Annual Lecture	227.00
Donations:	
Donations to venues	120.00
Donations to Evangelical Alliance, Transform Work UK and Christian Book Promotion Trust	200.00
Gifts to other organisations	
Total Donations	420.00
Miscellaneous:	
Website	97.19
Insurance	215.17
Paid walking tour & visit	255.00
Total Miscellaneous	567.36
Total Expenditure	5070.58

Deficit for 2019 (expenditure over income)	-804.18
Balance brought forward from 2018	9241.24
CLOSING BALANCE at 31 December 2019	8437.06

ASSETS (at 31 December 2019):

Barclays Community Account	7840.89
Uncashed cheques (income)	+80.00
	7920.89
PayPal account	516.17
TOTAL ASSETS	8437.06

CLIS - STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR ENDING 31 DECEMBER 2020

INCOME

Subscriptions	2529.46
Donations	5962.65
Annual Conference Fees	291.49
Total Income	8783.60

EXPENDITURE

Christian Librarian	1466.09
Running Expenses (includes publicity, travel to Committee meetings, archives expenses)	489.09
Annual Conference 2020 (publicity and refunds)	224.20
Annual Conference 2021 (deposit)	200.00
Annual Lecture	0.00
Donations:	
Donations to venues	40.00
Donations to Evangelical Alliance, Transform Work UK and Christian Book Promotion Trust/Speaking Volumes, Book Aid	1000.00
Total Donations	1040.00
Miscellaneous:	
Website	133.20
Insurance	215.17
Total Miscellaneous	348.37
Total Expenditure	3768.55

Surplus for 2020 (income over expenditure)	5015.05
Balance brought forward from 2019	8437.06
CLOSING BALANCE at 31 December 2020	13452.11

ASSETS (at 31 December 2020):

Barclays Community Account	13940.16
Uncashed cheques (expenditure)	-740.17
	13199.99
PayPal account	252.12
TOTAL ASSETS	13452.11

Treasurer's notes to the Annual Statement of Accounts for 2019

Our main expense each year is publishing and sending out the *Christian Librarian*. In 2019 we were able to publish 4 issues of the journal (as well as the *e-Newsletter*, of course, which costs us nothing in printing costs).

There was an excellent Conference in 2019, held at the welcoming headquarters of UCCF, and we made only a small loss on that, due to UCCF's generosity in not charging us for the use of the room.

We are always grateful to the members who are able to give something beyond their subscriptions, and in 2019 donations amounted to more than a quarter of subscription income.

A growing number of members are using PayPal, especially since they can use it to pay for events such as the Conference as well as their subscriptions. As a 'seller' of services we pay commission (about 5%) to PayPal on these transactions, but if the system encourages people to join us, then it's worth it.

I have wondered whether we ought to have a savings account, as the sum of money in the current account is more than we need in a year, but there would be a lot of work finding and setting up a suitable account, for very little benefit while interest rates are so low.

Diana Guthrie
CLIS Treasurer
25 January 2020

Treasurer's notes to the Annual Statement of Accounts for 2020

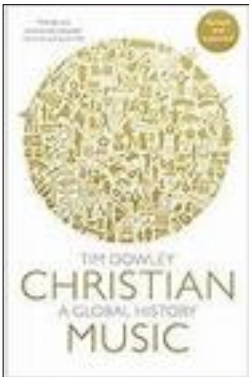
The accounts for this year have been slightly complicated by the arrangement and then cancellation of various events, such as the Annual Conference, which explains the income and expenditure for the events.

Our main expense each year is publishing and sending out the *Christian Librarian*. In 2020 we published only 2 printed issues (as well as the *e-Newsletter*, of course, which costs us nothing in

printing costs). For the 2nd issue we decided to try out a new printer, who was able to print and dispatch the journal, which saved us both money and time.

CLIS' income has increased greatly over the last few years, due to two bequests (£5,000 from John Andrews' estate in 2016, and the very recent bequest of £5327.65 from Philip Hayworth, who died early in 2020). This has put CLIS on a surer financial footing, and as a result, the Committee felt it could give more generously to some of the Christian organisations that CLIS supports.

Diana Guthrie
CLIS Treasurer
25 March 2021



Book Review: **Dowley, Tim. *Christian music : a global history*. Revised edition. SPCK, 2018.**

This is both a useful and interesting book, suitable for any music or general collection. Originally published in full-colour by Lion Hudson in 2011, it has been updated and is now available as a paperback (currently £14.99) or as a download (£10.99), with illustrations in black and white.

As the title indicates, this is a survey of around 2000 years of music history right across the Christian Church. It's a huge period for any single historian to cover and the main author, Tim Dowley, has commissioned certain chapters from individuals with particular knowledge of national music traditions. He has written most of the book though, and thoroughly readable it is, its 328 pages packed with information and insight.

Dowley begins the story with the pre-Christian Jewish musical tradition, itself a welcome chapter, before going on to music in the early church. Reading this in the coronavirus lockdown with public singing ruled out, I found it fascinating that for a time early Christian services would have had little or no singing, meetings being conducted in secret. Despite this we get the picture that Christian-

ity was very much a praise-singing faith from the start. Dowley identifies excerpts of hymns in the New Testament as well as noting the importance of the Psalms in worship. We have no sure way of knowing what these hymns sounded like when sung, but the author reminds us that some scholars believe there are clues in medieval chant, and that some continuity may have been preserved.

A large portion of the book is given over to what might be termed 'sacred classical music'. I did wonder if perhaps there might be too much about this given the limitations of size, but this is after all a historical survey and history works from sources: sources for music in the established churches go back to the monasteries and there is understandably a lot to cover. I think the author does a remarkable job to condense as much as he has. This part of the book reads like a reference book or encyclopaedia article, highlighting major works and their significance. For me, based in a music college, it will be particularly handy.

The book also provides plenty of material on the history of corporate singing, particularly in English-speaking countries, ranging from the account of large crowds outside old St Paul's in the 16th century to the music of Hillsong in Australia. I was particularly interested in the flourishing of congregational hymn-singing inspired by the Wesleys, and which transferred to other denominations. I was also interested to read how the American camp-singing traditions, which included a strong religious element, spawned musical movements across the States. Spirituals, gospel, bluegrass and U.S. folk can be traced back to the informal singing of the camp meetings.

Whereas the chapters on the European classical tradition are condensed summaries, the chapters on music from around the world read like essays, examining the impact and responses to music used in missionary movements. The key point seems to be that the message has had to find a home in the language and culture of each locality for there to be later growth and development.

Someone with a particular interest in either the Contemporary Christian Music as I was, or the booming Hillsong movement might be disappointed. Dowley has little positive to say about the former, and the latter is not discussed at length. However, both are covered and the point of the book is to trace developments, which it

certainly does. I would have liked a reflective closing chapter though: perhaps a short piece on the overall journey of Christian music, or where Dowley thinks music in our churches might be going. It ends a little abruptly with a short piece on jazz influences, including Duke Ellington.

My only real criticism is the book's index, a typical librarian's bug-bear. For a book which is well referenced with many notes on its sources, it's disappointing that the index is selective. For example, the composer Hubert Parry has just one instance noted in the index, but he is mentioned at least two more times in the text. The index entries do seem to be the main instances in each case, but for library reference work it would benefit from having a more thorough index. That apart, I would recommend this book highly.

Robert Foster BA DipIM MCLIP chairs the CLIS Executive Committee.



CLIS Memories Event

A group of 8 CLIP members met in August 2021 in Peckham, South London, to pore over the CLIS photo albums compiled by Graham Hedges. We were joined on a Zoom call by 4 more, including CLIS / LCF founder Elizabeth Barber.

It was lovely to be able to meet in person at last, but also wonderful that those who wanted to take part, but were unable to travel to London, could participate remotely. I'm sure that would not have

been organised had it not been for the mind-shifts and new skills brought about by the COVID pandemic.

Many of the photos had been labelled by Graham, but often the people in the photos were not named, some of us tried to rectify that, whilst others worked on identifying the time and place of the photos not in any album. The dates of the albums were 1979-1998, but some of the loose photos were from the 2000s. (There are many more CLIS photos held digitally).



We ended the meeting with prayers: of thanksgiving for the positive role of CLIS in many lives and of petition that CLIS will continue to be a blessing to Christian Librarians and the wider profession.

The photos provoked memories, although some who came saw themselves at events that they could not recall! Some CLIS members who could not make it to the meeting wrote to share their own memories and ways of having been blessed through CLIS.

We would love to hear from other members who would be willing to share:

- The ways / times being a Christian impacted on your working life.



- The ways / times being a CLIS member impacted on your working life or your faith or life in general.

Please email these with a subject heading "CLIS Memories" to: schoollibraryhans@gmail.com. We will publish these in future editions of CL.

The committee is also keen to engage in raising the profile of CLIS via social media and via an article about librarians with faith to be submitted to CILIP Update. The aim is to point to God, to encourage Christian librarians to join us and to plant a seed in the minds of those without faith. To this end we might be able to use snippets from members' memories in an anonymous way. When you send your memories in please state whether you are happy for them to be used in this way.



The meeting was organised by and this article written by Karen Hans

Karen is CLIS Prayer Secretary and a member of the CLIS Committee



Personal Memories of CLIS

Some members who could not attend the memories event emailed or wrote in with comments. Here is what they had to say.

John Marrison wrote in to say:

Without realising it at the time, becoming a member of the LCF in 1989 was one of the most important decisions I made in my life. This was at library school in Manchester.

Four years later, disillusioned with librarianship after being turned down for job after job and carrying out semi-voluntary work in schools, Philip Hayworth invited me to join an LCF working party at Northumbria Bible College. It was here that I met my future wife, Glenys. But this experience was just part of it. Earlier in 1993 I had been seriously ill. The working party, Christians working together in community, provided healing, restoration and invigoration. The Lord used the LCF to repair my life. As well as meeting Glenys, this time at Berwick introduced Philip Hayworth into our lives as a much loved friend and man of God. The work also put flesh on the bones of some library school teaching.

Glenys and myself were married in January 1996. Soon afterwards Richard Waller of the LCF was instrumental in my finding work with Wigan libraries. What started as six weeks cover lasted 21 years. During that time the work was so varied, involving a wide spectrum of librarianship. I worked at many locations around the Wigan borough



and was blessed with some wonderful colleagues. One of the strengths of Wigan libraries is a sturdy team ethic. It was also a privilege serving the people of Wigan. According to Richard Osman's House of Games, the friendliest street in England is located in Wigan, this does not surprise me. I owe a tremendous debt of gratitude to Richard Waller.

2020 was a tough year. Philip Hayworth was not the only significant person in our lives to pass away. This leaves a sense of unfinished business. Philip and Joy were such loving friends to Glenys and myself. Joy struck up a deep bond with Glenys but died in 2008. She was a lovely Christian lady but was misunderstood. One of Glenys' greatest gifts is understanding the misunderstood, this is one of the reasons she is my wife. On a parting note I attended a LCF lecture at Oxford in 1990 and Graham Hedges went out of his way to introduce himself and have a word. I will always remember this.

May God bless LCF and CLIS.

Gordon Harris (Life Vice president) said:



Gordon as he looked while serving as our president — we have all got older since then!

My daughter Rebecca (our first child) was born in 1976, and so was LCF! I remember coming across Elizabeth Barber's appeal in *Christian graduate* and being keen to sign up for this initiative to form a group of Christian professionals. In those early days LCF was strictly evangelical in character and belief, and although it has kept that identity, LCF (and CLIS) may have become a little more broad church.

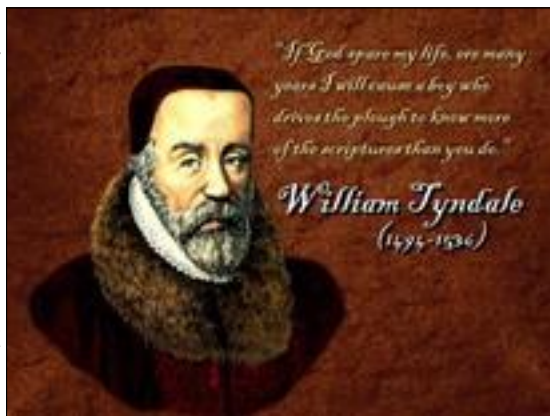
One of the most valuable activities of LCF/CLIS was the service of Christian worship at the annual conference of the LA/CILIP. They were all memorable (one included a vicar preaching from the top of a step-ladder), and the one which has always stuck in my mind was the service which I led at the annual IFLA Conference in Glasgow in 2002 which was so well attended by professionals from all over the world - united in Christ.

Janet L. Danels writes:

I am grateful to CLIS for giving me the chance over the years to view topics of professional interest, with others, from a distinctively Christian perspective. I have attended CLIS meetings when able since 1988. As I have spent a long while in more recent years unemployed, and earlier I had times of unemployment, the Annual Lectures have meant a lot to me as they provided an opportunity for academic intellectual stimulation, which normally I don't have.

I especially remember the lecture from a performance poet, perhaps because it was unusual and added variety. Others of particular interest were when authors and publishers spoke about their work. As well as the lectures I attended in person, I was very interested in some that I did not attend but was able to read about in 'Christian Librarian'. I remember an authoress making the point that authenticity in writing is important: a novel with incorrect detail does not have credibility. Again when I was absent, someone gave an interesting talk on fake news and what is needed for a fake news story to become established. One point he made was that the audience needed to have a certain gullibility – they needed to be prepared to believe the story. He warned us that Christians could have gullible tendencies! (Perhaps we are more used to honesty from other people!)

The lecture I think I enjoyed most and which I remember most clearly was the one on William Tyndale. I would say this did have a lasting effect on me. What a huge contribution he made to the church! The lecturer had a great enthusiasm for his subject, and pointed out Tyndale's remarkable abilities with language. Apart from his knowledge as a



translator and teaching himself Hebrew, phrases he used passed later into the Authorised Version of the Bible and became part of the English language, and some can still be heard quoted on the TV by people who probably have no idea they are quoting from the Bible! For instance, 'Am I my brother's keeper?' 'Seek and ye shall find', 'the signs of the times'. Subsequent versions of the Bible I find use far more words and are therefore far harder to learn by heart, even though more contemporary. He was probably the most talented translator we have ever had.

However what also struck me about Tyndale in a less positive light, was the influence of his widely read work: The Obedience of a Christian Man. He greatly emphasized obedience to authority as

an overall principle in many facets of life. Disobedience to authority was seen as disobedience towards God, even if the authority concerned was acting wrongly. To my mind he goes slightly further than the parts of the Bible on which I assume his thoughts are based. He also believed that even in times of persecution when it was not possible to obey both God and the State, only passive resistance was justifiable. Around the same time I think, I also read a book on the persecution under Mary I and this teaching was very influential at that time. I wonder how much influence this has all had on society generally over time. The quotes from Tyndale that I have read do not mention Parliament's position at all which is a notable omission. It was very important well before Henry VIII, for instance during the minority of Henry VI. Having been myself in various churches, both Anglican and non-mainstream, which strongly emphasized the authority of the leadership, I started wondering whether the overall idea (although it receives some support from Hebrews 13 v. 17: 'Obey your leaders') might owe a great deal to Tyndale! I am not sure that the Bible itself warrants the very great overall prominence which some churches give to the whole principle of authority, raising it above all else. My recent reading shows that Tyndale in fact rejected the religious leaders of the time, but these represented the Pope, a foreign power. He did emphasize authority in general. In any case the CLIS lecture together with other things, started me thinking rather differently as regards authority in the Church, with a more questioning attitude! I don't tend to remember the CLIS conferences as much as the lectures, but they have been interesting even so. I remember especially hearing Margaret Keeling, and also someone from Wycliffe Hall, Oxford which interested me from the start as I was aware of the College, as Oxford was for a long time my nearest major town.

Many CLIS visits I would have liked to attend, but living more recently in Manchester generally has meant it was not possible for me. However Philip Hayworth as the CLIS Northern Rep., arranged a visit to the John Rylands Library, a part of the University of Manchester, which I very much en-



joyed. They have some very ancient Biblical fragments in Greek, and also got out some beautiful old volumes to show us some of the illustrations, done by hand. I think we saw similar volumes during a visit in York.

I spent about three years on the Executive Committee for CLIS (then known as LCF), which I found interesting and I basically enjoyed gaining the experience which I had not had elsewhere. It was a problem however that the meetings were always in London and could be difficult to access, and I found it too much travelling although I think I only attended two a year out of three. On occasion I appreciated being put up for the night!

My friendship with Graham Hedges has been the main source of influence of CLIS for me personally. Due to CLIS publications and conversations with Graham, I have certainly maintained a much broader knowledge than I would otherwise have had of Christian circles and the thinking within them, especially in the Christian literary world. The publishers' catalogues sent out with CLIS publications have also been a means of keeping up with what is being written and published by Christians, and also in opposition to Christianity (as works may then be produced to counter that). I feel this is all important as general knowledge of the society of which we are part.

Brenda Dixon

Obituary by Hilary Taylor

A long-standing member of Librarians Christian Fellowship (now CLIS), Brenda Dixon died in Darlington on 23rd May 2021. She served as Northern rep/membership secretary on the committee and supported the work of the Fellowship through attending meetings and conferences and participating in library assistance working parties.

Brenda studied Latin at Bedford College, London and on graduating in 1969 moved to Newcastle to complete her Librarianship training. Appointments in the Colleges of Education at Middleton St George and Retford followed and in 1979 she moved to the In-

stitute of Education Library, Sheffield University as Senior Cataloguer. She later transferred to the main Library as Senior Library Assistant, a post she held until her retirement in 2007.

Following the invitation of a Christian friend to attend church, Brenda committed her life to Jesus Christ during her final year in London. She remained a faithful disciple, seeking opportunities to serve Him through her church membership, attending first Richmond Road Wesley Reformed church and latterly the Wycliffe Independent church in Sheffield. In particular she held a prayerful



*The team at a Stapleford House Library Assistance Working Party— one of the several ways in which Brenda put her professional skills at the service of the church
Brenda is at the rear on the right*

interest in the work overseas, serving as Mission Secretary, distributing information to members and attending many prayer meetings and conferences. The support of several charities offered another opportunity for service. The work of Caring for Life, a Leeds – based Christian charity extending God's love to the homeless and those in need was very close to her heart and even through later ill-health she would regularly make the journey from Sheffield.

Brenda was widely read and interested in many aspects of God's world, appreciating its variety and beauty. Although setting little store by earthly possessions she did confess a weakness for buying books – in her life-time it would have been 100's! Many were Christian books and many of those sermons – she had a real hunger to know more of the Lord and to grow in her Christian life.

For many years Brenda lived with and supported her Mother and elderly Aunt. When her health began to fail she moved to Darlington to be near her sister Doreen. It was her joy to be received into membership at Geneva Road Baptist church just weeks before her death. As a friend she was faithful and constant, someone always ready with a simple word of encouragement and hope and where there was a need for prayer a "go to" person. You could be very confident that Brenda would pray.

Those of us who were blessed to know her will easily recognise the final words at her funeral service: *"Brenda, a humble Christian, a prayerful Christian, and one with her heart set on Glory, who is now forever with her Lord."*

Book Review

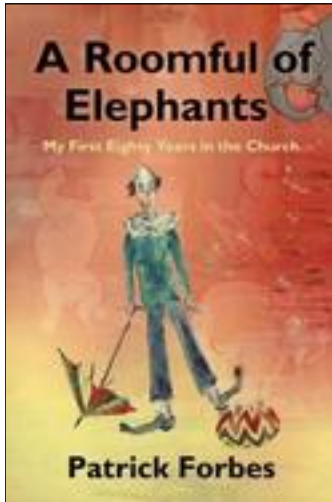
By Karen Hans

A roomful of Elephants - my first eighty years in the church

by Patrick Forbes

Published by Bauhan (2021)

ISBN 9780872333420



The author has led an extremely interesting and varied life, much through ministry in the Church of England. He also contributed regularly for many years to "Pause for Thought", one broadcast at least was particularly appreciated by HRH Princess Anne. The detail of this anecdote and many others are told in the book and either Patrick Forbes' memory is photographic or he must have kept a diary over the years as his recall for names and places is very impressive, though at times this detracts from the thrust of the narrative. The vast knowledge the author has of people in the Christian world reminded me of Graham

Hedges and there was another strong link with Graham in that Patrick Forbes' work involved information and communication in many forms, from instigating and producing village newsletters in the old-fashioned way to broadcasting on Premier Radio.

I found the premise of the title intriguing, but it was not often referred to throughout the book, which for me made for a slightly rudder-less read. (The author would appreciate the sailing reference there - he recounts some fascinating times on and under the water!). The final chapter, however, was a departure from the more-or-less chronological story so far in that we finally met the largest elephants and heard Forbes' ideas about CofE wealth and building stock, church unity, ecumenism and inter-faith dialogue. I will leave you with the phrase which was emphasised a number of times through the book and which is a good mantra for us all to live by: "Share the gospel of Jesus Christ, serve the community without strings and become a blessing".

Meeting God in Unexpected Places

Some book recommendations

by Richard Waller

In a couple of First Words recently I have mentioned my love of military SF and fantasy. Regrettably many writer in these areas are either indifferent to or hostile to Christianity. Just recently I have been rather pleased to meet God in a couple of quite unexpected places as I troll through some of the obscurer authors who write in this area.

Of course, not all authors sympathetic to the faith are in the least obscure, David Weber's monumental Honor Harrington series would be a case in point and I dealt with him in a previous Christian Librarian (No. 82 Summer 2019 "*Knowing is not believing*"). For anyone interested, the 22nd book in the series (*To end in fire*) has just come out and all of them are of blockbuster length!



I was cheerfully surprised to discover someone else with a sympathetic treatment of Christianity although, unlike David Weber, he simply does not believe or accept it. But he does understand it, and that is Matthew O. Duncan. I discovered his first run of novels, which were well-written space adventures of the very traditional sort set in the aftermath of a terrible war between the Serken and the Terran Federation. The Serken were, as seems almost inevitable in many circles, lizards, in this case eight feet high. The height varies, from Harry Turtledove's waist high to really massive, but why are they all lizards? However, be that as it may, Matthew Duncan has a parallel series to the purely military one, the New



Terra Saga, which has some character overlap. New Terra is inhabited by Bible-believing Christians who have built a society on that model. The portrayal of Christianity there is

very understanding of the real inner nature of the faith, the New Terrans are not bigoted narrow-minded frothing-at-the-mouth fundamentalists on the worst sort of Bible Belt model. The series isn't finished yet, book 4 is due out in the New Year, I gather.

Another recent discovery was Jeff Wheeler. He has been writing for some time, but I only came across him earlier this year. He is a man of strong faith who makes a point of his church commitment in his biographical note. He has several series, all I have so far read set in a variety of medieval fantasy world scenarios loosely modelled on the high medieval period.



I got hooked on his “The first Argentines” series, but they are a prequel to his Kingfountain series, which I am currently working through, that concern the later adventures of the Argentine dynasty. There is also the Muirwood series, which I do recommend, where (behind the fantasy scenario) the heroine believes she is sincerely following God only to find she is being groomed to be taken over by the ruler of the demons and become the antichrist. It isn't put like that of course, but it is really rather clever.

He also runs a fantasy E-zine *Deep Magic: the E-zine of Clean fantasy and Science Fiction*. I think that says it all. So much fantasy and SF is simply not readable by anyone possessing a sense of basic morality, never mind a Christian. I can thoroughly recommend him as a refreshingly safe change.



Have your say on conferences

To help us plan for future CLIS events please can you give us your feedback to the following questions:

1. Do you prefer CLIS conferences to be in-person or online (e.g. Zoom)? If you have no preference please also reply.
2. Our last conference was online and lasted for a morning. Would you have preferred a whole day event as in previous years?
3. Do you have any other suggestions?

Please send your responses to robert_foster31@hotmail.com

2022 Annual Conference and AGM

**Saturday 2nd April 2022
10.30am**

Mission Information

Speakers:
Erwen Dorking
(Sat-7 Ambassador)
&
Representative of
the London City Mission

Venue:
Wesley Euston Hotel
81-103, Euston St,
London, NW1 2EZ
and on Zoom

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