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Letter from the Editor

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Letter from the Editor



**Garrett Trott, *TCL* Editor-in-Chief
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ACL's vision is to be an "influential, vibrant, growing community that integrates faith, ministry, and academic librarianship through development of members, services, and scholarship."

This is a notable vision and one that the editorial team of *The Christian Librarian* (*TCL*) embraces. While some indicators of this vision are obvious, others may not be so. For example, librarians often times see the giving of their time, talents, and resources to an association like ACL as similar to serving in the context of a church. Their faith in the Lord Jesus Christ often drives their desire to participate in ACL. This is an excellent example of the integration of faith, ministry, and academic librarianship.

ACL members understand the critical role that librarianship plays in the 21st century. However, it is our faith in the Lord Jesus Christ that drives our involvement with ACL, and perhaps for some, or maybe even most of us, it is that same faith that drives our involvement with librarianship.

As Christian librarians, we also understand that faith involves a certain level of trust and that truth serves as a foundation to our faith. While there are a variety of manifestations of truth (even in historical Christian doctrine), there are certain truths that, I think most would agree, are critical to the Christian faith.

God created. There are a variety of views on how this happened and in what time frames this happened, but most Christians (regardless of their denominational background) will agree that God created. He created the heavens and the earth, He created every living creature, and He created male and female. He created everything *ex nihilo* (out of nothing).

A second, but similar, truth that most Christians embrace is that Jesus Christ resurrected from the dead. The resurrection of Christ is a key point where historical Christianity differs from many other religions and religious movements. Again, there have been numerous opinions about how exactly this resurrection took place (and

some were noted as heresy in the early church – such as the gnostic idea of merely a spiritual resurrection), however the bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ remains a critical component of orthodoxy.

A third doctrinal element critical to Christianity is the idea that the bible is God's word. In other words, the bible is not simply "another book." It is not on the same playing field as other classical texts such as Homer's "The Odyssey." Christians use the bible for direction and guidance in life. While there are numerous opinions on the concepts of inspiration, infallibility, and canonicity, most believers would agree that the bible is the word of God.

While there are other critical doctrines that comprise what a Christian believes, most believers in Christ would agree that these components of truth are critical to the Christian faith. Critical, but not by any means, exhaustive. This is simply a sample of what most Christians would agree with, if not embrace.

These aspects of truth drive our faith and our actions to a certain degree. For example, most Christians take a stand against abortion. This comes down to the fact that we believe that God created. God not only created the universe, but His act of creation continues, in many respects, to the modern day. Most Christians feel that a child's conception is a manifestation of God's creation. To disrupt this act of God by abortion, many would argue, is equivalent to taking a life. There are many different manifestation of this belief, one of which involves participation in a right to life march; another involves voting for politicians who agree with this stance on abortion. This is an element where faith drives the actions of a believer.

There are several other elements where this takes place. In fact, some would argue that all of our actions are in some respect driven by our faith. Even though not all of our actions may reflect our faith, such as our reaction when someone cuts us off in a driving scenario, our belief system clearly drives other actions and reactions.

The question then arises: "How is Christian faith manifested in librarianship?"

There are some contexts where this demonstration is obvious. Librarianship is a service profession. The fact that librarians serve their colleagues, their community, and just about anybody who walks into a library is, for believers in Christ, a clear manifestation of the love of Christ. Most would argue that even when clouded by ulterior motives or treating certain patrons with priority over others, an aspect of the love of Christ is present.

Information literacy, another aspect of librarianship that many academic librarians embrace, can also be seen as a manifestation of one's faith. Information literacy, when

influenced by a Christian faith, should not simply be to evaluate information as to its validity, the goals when seen from a Christian perspective should be much loftier than this. When looked at from a Christian perspective, information literacy should be seen as a tool to assist individuals in navigating through the many voices they will hear in the course of their life, enabling them to discern truth, God's truth.

These two examples are great ideas that deserve further exploration and elaboration. There are several other scenarios of librarianship that could be seen as manifestations of the gospel of Jesus Christ, which could be seen as expressions of ACL's vision, integrating faith, mission, and academic librarianship.

As believers in Jesus Christ, each of us has distinct spiritual gifts, and many of us chose librarianship as a profession because we felt that we could manifest those gifts through it. With the variety of spiritual gifts mentioned throughout Scripture, one would naturally expect a manifestation of those gifts through a variety of differing venues, even among librarians. For example, an individual with a spiritual gift of helps (1 Corinthians 12:28) likely enjoys the reference interview and strives to aid the patron in finding exactly what he or she needs, and perhaps even has a tendency to provide more than the patron was originally looking for. On the other end, a librarian gifted with a "message of knowledge" (1 Corinthians 12:8) may find more fulfillment in research and various means of expressing that research, such as teaching or writing.

There are some whose spiritual gifting and mind of inquiry calls them to look at librarianship, particularly Christian librarianship, a bit differently. As noted earlier, there are several ways to integrate faith, ministry and academic librarianship. I would like to suggest that Christian librarians with an intellectual passion should consider pursuing what librarianship might look like if developed with a theoretical framework based upon the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Some thoughts to consider: What does it look like to incorporate one's gifting, manifested through librarianship, into the gospel of Jesus Christ? Is this even possible? I would like to argue that this is definitely possible, and even go as far and suggest that we, as Christian librarians, are called to do exactly so.

With the variety of manifestations of the Holy Spirit's work in and among believers, it should be obvious that how one librarian in one institution follows God's calling to manifest the gospel of Jesus Christ through their work is likely quite distinct from another. Would you consider sharing, through *TCL*, what this exhibition of the gospel looks like for you? As an editorial team, we invite contributions of this nature.

Secondly, if you feel God has bestowed upon you the spiritual gifts of knowledge or wisdom, perhaps it is time to take a further look at integrating the gospel of Jesus Christ into librarianship. All disciplines, including librarianship, have a philosophical base. While some works have analyzed and reviewed this philosophical base, much of this analysis and the philosophical base of librarianship itself, has been from a non-Christian perspective. What would librarianship look like if biblical and theological truth were its foundation? What would librarianship look like if its ground pinning were a philosophical perspective that aligned with the Christian faith? What could librarianship look like if it were based upon the gospel of Jesus Christ? Again, as an editorial team, we invite contributions and dialogs of this nature.

If you feel that writing does not align with your spiritual gifts and talents, please consider other means to join the conversation of *TCL*, such as book reviews, columns, or annotated bibliographies. As an editorial team, we desire *TCL* to be a tool reflecting the entirety of ACL bringing glory to God.

The editorial team desires to see *TCL* utilized to manifest ACL's vision: "to be an influential, vibrant, growing community that integrates faith, ministry, and academic librarianship through development of members, services, and scholarship." Please consider joining this endeavor by considering future contribution to *TCL*.

Soli Deo gloria



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