



Volume 57 | Issue 1

Article 2

2014

Letter from the Editor

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Recommended Citation

Trott, Garrett (2014) "Letter from the Editor," *The Christian Librarian*: Vol. 57 : Iss. 1 , Article 2.
Available at: <http://digitalcommons.georgefox.edu/tcl/vol57/iss1/2>

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Letter from the Editor



**Garrett Trott, Reference/Instruction Librarian
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My first exposure to the Association of Christian Librarians was through the journal: *The Christian Librarian*[®] (*TCL*). I had just started an MLS program and was not working in a library at the time. A friend who was in the same program, and was a sister in Christ, pointed out *TCL* to me and gave me a copy of it.

I was excited. To discover that there was a group of believers in Christ striving to integrate their beliefs into their daily practice of librarianship was very encouraging. I quickly joined ACL, desiring to be a part of the community of Christian librarians. I got on the listserv, started receiving copies of *TCL*, and even did some book reviews. It was encouraging to see individuals passionate about manifesting the gospel message through librarianship.

After a couple of years, I finally got around to attending my first ACL conference at Cedarville University. The opening reception for that conference was at the ACL home office, just a few blocks from Cedarville. I remember seeing on the walls of the office the core values of ACL:

We are dedicated to being a caring Christian community that integrates faith and academic librarianship, emphasizing ministry and service. We are committed to having members serve Christ as librarians in institutions of higher learning. All members are united by a common statement of faith, which controls what the Association will and will not do.

Although I had read it many times on the website, for some reason, it struck me differently at ACL's home office. I was encouraged to know that I was not alone in attempting to understand how to glorify God through my profession as a librarian. Especially since most individuals invest a good part of their lives into some kind of responsibilities, tasks, jobs, or profession. As I looked around the office, I was encouraged, because here I was among approximately 100 other librarians who desired to see God glorified through librarianship, each with their distinctions, but unified in their profession and their faith.

After the conference, I went home with a new enthusiasm for what ACL was doing and could do. I remembered that my first exposure to ACL was their journal: *The Christian Librarian*[®], which just extended my appreciation for it.

About 18 months later, I received an email from Frank Quinn, president of ACL, expressing that *TCL* was really at a crossroads. The future of *TCL* was uncertain. With the close association I had placed between *TCL* and ACL, I was also deeply concerned about the future of the association. In my opinion, much of the association's future would depend upon where the membership took *TCL*.

Convinced of the critical role *TCL* plays in ACL, I emailed Frank expressing my concerns. Shortly after, Frank asked me to lead a task force discussing where *TCL* has been, where it is at, and where it needs to go. I accepted. Through leading this task force, discussion with previous editors, and writing up a report that was submitted to the ACL Board, I learned a lot.

I noted the opportunity to be involved with *TCL* last fall. I was excited. I had an opportunity to advocate the truth of the Christian faith through librarianship at another level. I applied and was appointed Editor-in-Chief late last fall.

Let me share with you regarding some of the transitions *TCL* will be making through the next couple of issues. First, I want to point out what is obvious to all: *The Christian Librarian*[®] is the journal of the Association of Christian Librarians. If you are a member of ACL, this is your journal. While I have been appointed Editor-in-Chief, and I have appointed an editorial team, and we will write articles (you will note, for example, that two of the five articles in this edition are from individuals on the editorial team), the sustainability of *TCL* is dependent on the membership. The editorial team will be doing some soliciting for content. If you are asked, please prayerfully consider submitting. If you have an idea of what would make *TCL* better, or would like to submit content that is not so much an article, but you think ACL membership would find it helpful, please contact the editorial team and we would be happy to work with you.

Secondly, we have dropped the peer-review component. Our appreciation extends to Ron Jordahl, who led the peer-review component of *TCL* for several years. However, by dropping this component, we have no intention to drop either excellence or scholarship. We desire content at all levels: scholarly, practical, how-to articles, opinion pieces, reviews and everything in between. The membership survey taken last spring suggested however, that with the number of library related peer-reviewed journals available, that it was not in the best interest of the membership to provide another peer-reviewed journal.

Third, we desire content covering a number of issues related to librarianship: research, methods, trends, issues, theories, opinions, reviews and anything that ACL members are doing that might help others.

The gospel message at its core is very simple. I was able to explain it to my six-year old son a few years back and he understood it quite well. Because of this and because librarianship is a service-oriented profession (and service is a key element in the gospel message), many of our practices reflect the gospel message. Because of this, we ask that whether you have had deep thoughts about what it means to be a Christian librarian or simply want to share how you have resolved an issue you faced (sharing your ideas is, again, another manifestation of the gospel message), please consider sharing your thoughts through *TCL*.

There will be more changes to *TCL* in future editions. As an editorial team, we are excited about the opportunity to serve Jesus Christ through ACL.

I first became aware of ACL through *TCL*. As an editorial team, we understand the critical role *TCL* plays in advocating Christian librarianship and we desire to further understand how we can glorify God through our daily practice of librarianship.

Enjoy reading the content of *TCL*. Please feel free to share your thoughts with us regarding *TCL*.



Soli Deo gloria

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