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## What ACL Means to Me

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The first time I ever heard of the Association of Christian Librarians was in 1983. After just completing my MLS, I took a position as Reference Librarian at Olivet Nazarene College. A group of us drove up for the day for the Wheaton conference. I heard a speaker that day – I have forgotten most of the details – but she said that women were “the crown of creation.” I had been laboring under the impression that women were second-class since Eve sinned and brought the curse on mankind. This speaker told of God’s progressive creation. I’ve felt better ever since! After all, Adam was right there beside Eve and went along with the whole thing.

Many life events followed, and ten years later, I found myself working at the Kokomo campus of Indiana University. All the librarians there work under a tenure-track contract, and I realized that there were important requirements such as research and publication and professional service in which I needed to excel in order to be awarded tenure. I had earlier been much disenchanted with the shenanigans of ALA. Casting about for an alternative professional organization, I found ACL in the *Bowker Annual*, researched the organization, and applied to IU’s promotion and tenure people to see if they would accept membership and service in this organization. They did, and I enthusiastically registered for my “first” conference at Bethel College in 1993. I brought along one of my co-workers. We blew off steam and job frustrations on the ride there, which was one of the most therapeutic parts of the event. We were feted and made welcome as first time attendees by Clyde Root and all the leadership and came home thinking we were pretty special. I’m eternally grateful for the opportunity to fulfill my tenure requirements through presenting workshops, publishing an article in *The Christian Librarian*, indexing a title for *Christian Periodicals Index* and serving in various leadership positions. It has been challenging and fun.

One of the best things about going to conferences the next five years was getting there. IU didn’t give us much money for travel, so I would try to hitch a ride with other librarians. These folks became my dear friends, mentors, sisters and brothers in Christ. Lois Lehman, Eva Kewitt, and Lois Luesing, the crowd from Indiana Wesleyan in those days: Jule Kind, Alice Wills, Steve Brown, Patty Ashby, Paul Alford, and Wenda Clement. On the various trips we talked about everything, even the Ugaritic language. I learned wonderful, marvelous things. Some of us sang hymns and goofy songs. I love these colleagues and all that they gave me. Once, Anita Gray and I made a side excursion during the 1998 Taylor Conference and returned to campus to find everyone underground riding out a tornado. What *doesn’t* happen at ACL?

Sometimes, when the conference was held at a place we had never been before, my husband would join me at the end of the conference and we could tack on an inexpensive mini-vacation. California, Tennessee and South Carolina were neat tourist spots for us. I am grateful that the members of ACL have accepted my non-librarian husband as one of us, and he has made friends, too.

ACL has truly been life changing for me. I was privileged to go with the Commission for International Library Assistance on a teaching trip to Jamaica in 1996. We worked hard for five days literally locked in for safety on the grounds of the Caribbean Graduate School of Theology in Kingston, and on the sixth were treated to a trip to the beach at Ocho Rios. A hair-raising drive brought us to the beach in a downpour. Oh well, it was warm, so we spent our day on the beach anyway. It is definitely warm in Jamaica. I was never so hot in my life, but the warmth of the Jamaican people is what I remember most. It was my first immersion experience in a culture not my own. I loved every moment of it and received much more than I gave.

My work with CILA was great fun. We planned the CILA programs and once acted out a comedy skit that my husband wrote for us to promote our work. My CILA service also resulted in a great, new career opportunity. Richard Schuster and I were both Directors-at-Large for CILA. At one planning meeting, he showed us pictures and plans for the new library building that Mount Vernon Nazarene College was building. He was the director there and justly proud. I asked him, half in jest, to let me know when he retired as I’d always loved the campus of MVNC. True to his promise, one day I received an invitation to his retirement party. Now, I serve as Director of the Library at Mount Vernon Nazarene University. Yes, ACL has been very good to me.

I strive to give back to the Association by serving on the Executive Board. Yet, the members of the Board still give to me. I think we have a very special association; each individual member contributes a strength and a gift. The early Christians were known by their love for each other. I think that is true of ACL as well.

So what does ACL mean to me? Affirmation, spiritual insight, acceptance, professional growth and recognition, fellowship, fun, creativity, stretching, conquering fears, career mobility, networking, collegiality, giving back, and love. What *doesn’t* happen through ACL?

Edythe Feazel, Director of the Library, Mount Vernon Nazarene University

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