

Christian Engineers' Association

Perspective
Winter 2009



The Journal of the CEA

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Aims of the Christian Engineers' Association

1. To link Christian engineers and help them to maintain a consistently Christian stance in their work.
2. To enable Christian engineers to develop a thought-out Christian approach to professional issues.
3. To encourage Christian engineers to exert a constructive Christian influence in the engineering profession.
4. To support and encourage Christians who are entering the engineering profession.
5. To supply insight to engineering related missionary work.

Please send contributions for the next issue of the Journal to Mike Cowan at the address above before 15th April 2010.

CEA Perspective – Winter 2009

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Chairman's Remarks

The king is dead... Long live the king! That announcement has been made throughout history as monarchies change hands. It could have been said when our Lord Jesus was crucified: he allowed himself to be put to death for our sakes, but death couldn't hold him and he rose again, never to die again! But this was not a new Christ, it was the same one: he had overcome death and removed its power forever!

We are approaching the time of year when we celebrate Christ's birth, some 33 years before his death and resurrection. But when we think of him as a 'helpless baby' we must always see through the Christmas trees and tinsel and remember that the significance of the Christmas story is that this was the Prince of Peace, the Lord of Life, the King of kings – the one who was and is God, and therefore overcame death and its power.

With this copy of the CEA Perspective you will receive a letter that may at first glance indicate that the CEA is dead... but it is not! There are changes afoot that the letter will explain, all with a view to becoming more effective in realising the vision that Christian engineers can make a difference. A difference in our workplaces; in our communities; in our churches; even a difference to the kind of world we leave for our children and grandchildren.

Is this over-ambitious? History is littered with ordinary men and women who took the Lord Jesus seriously and sought his resurrection power to get his will done in their little part of the earth as it is in heaven. May we follow their example.

I wish you the Grace and Peace of our Lord Jesus Christ, this Christmas and throughout the coming year.

Paul Darley
Chairman

Editorial

Mike Cowan

As noted in the Chairman's Remarks above, change is upon us. A delayed Journal has allowed us to include a letter and revised standing order form in this mailing. Some further details of the changes can be found in 'Membership Matters'.

However, the aims of the CEA have not altered. If I have a 'hobby horse' it derives from my own sense of missed opportunities to witness effectively to my Faith during my professional career. The interview with J. John recorded in this edition encourages us to 'gossip the gospel' in a non-confrontational way.

Three members of the committee attended the first national conference of Transform Work UK (TWUK). I found the conference inspiring and the subsequent press release is included in this Journal. Next year's conference is being planned for 12-13th November; so mark your diaries!

'Creation' continues to be a live topic in the media and here in Guildford a local church hosted a conference in which the different strands of Christian understanding were represented. The need for integrity in Christian teaching was underlined when Jules Gomes, an Old Testament scholar from the London School of Theology, remarked that many of the young people who have been brought up as Christians and drop out at the age of about 14 will cite the fact that 'they met Darwin'. I make no excuse for reviewing a further book on the subject.

I would identify 'Management' as a subject seldom covered in our Journal, though Tony Fletcher has written a short piece in the book review section. Any offers to provide a full article?

Please feel free to offer comments on our journal and to provide articles for future editions. You may contact myself – mike@christianengineers.org.uk, but large picture files for the website should be sent to paul@christianengineers.org.uk.

“Faith, Hope and Love”

Mike Cowan

Where is Love going without Faith or Hope? St. Paul in his letter to the Corinthians proposes three fundamental dimensions to the spiritual realm: Faith Hope and Love.

This idea parallels some physical situations. A three -legged stool does not wobble because it forms its own plane. When working in three dimensions three coordinates are required to identify a position. So – if any one of these dimensions is lacking what is the result?

Without Hope I have no reason to get up in the morning. As Paul put it, “If the dead are not raised, let us eat and drink for tomorrow we die”. Is that why so many turn to drugs and binge drinking? Coming nearer to home I recall a period of depression when the joys of the weekend were lost during my journey to work as my mind fussed over the coming challenges. Looking back on that time I see how my lack of hope weakened both my witness and my work.

Without Faith I have no comprehension of where I am, who I am, or where I should go. Science cannot give meaning to my experience and thoughts – it can only describe them. To be human we have to form a view of ‘the world’ and our place in it, for without such a view our decisions will be made on the basis of feelings alone. The secularist might call it a myth, and has his or her own myth. The Christian forms a view of the world from the teaching of Jesus. As Jesus put it “I am the Way and the Truth and the Life” and the Christian experience includes an exercise of Faith that gains access to specific guidance, as promised by Jesus to his followers.

Without Love the human heart will never be satisfied. Some have defined mental health as “the ability to give and receive love”. Princess Diana is an icon for those who are searching for a love that will fully satisfy and prove to be faithful. Jesus taught that such complete fulfilment, which he describes as eternal life, is found only through a living relationship with him.

As engineers we find fulfilment when a project has satisfied all three stages – design, manufacture and use. So, for fulfilment as Christians, we need Faith, Hope and Love.

Breaking the Good News

So why are people scared of being witnesses?

Speaker and Author J. John has travelled to 54 countries around the world to share the Word of God. Kirsty Wilkins caught up with him at his office in Chorleywood to chat about evangelism, rugby huddles and world religions.

How do you define evangelism?

If you were to simplify the word ‘evangelism’, it means giving out an invitation to a party that is out of this world. Jesus’ strategy was to go into Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria and the ends of the earth. What does Jerusalem represent? Our family, friends, colleagues and neighbours. So the way in which we are going to reach the world, is to reach our world through cultivating the web of relationships we’ve already got.

How would you recommend sharing your faith with others?

Through praying, caring and sharing. We pray for people we know that they may encounter Jesus. But we also care for them and seize opportunities to share the gospel.

Praying, caring and sharing should be interlinked. Sometimes people pray but don’t actually do anything. Some people care a lot but they don’t share or pray. Others are eager to share but that’s it. I think if we embrace all three aspects the potential is phenomenal.

In addition, it’s not just about what we say, but it’s also the manner in which we say it that’s important. The Apostle Peter reminds us to always be prepared to give an answer to those who ask, but do this with gentleness and respect.

If we are all witnesses, does that mean we are all evangelists?

Not everyone is an evangelist, but everyone is a witness. In a court of law, you have a lawyer who takes the facts and presents them in a convincing manner. As an evangelist, that’s what I do. I take the facts and try to get people to the point where they are convinced that Christianity is true. An evangelist will communicate much more of the substance of Christianity.

But if you are a follower of Jesus, then you are a witness. And a witness in the court stands up and says, ‘Well I don’t know very much, but let me tell you my story.’ Everyone that’s a follower of Jesus has a testimony of what Jesus has done for them. Therefore everyone can answer. It’s not hard at all.

So why are people scared of being witnesses?

Often fears are based on misconceptions on how best to communicate and convey the message of Christianity. They may have seen bad models of evangelism and it’s created a barrier.

Friendship is also a factor. With a lot of our friends who don’t know Jesus, our friendship has taken over to the point where we don’t articulate anything. I think people are more receptive than we think they are. I’ve been a Christian since 1975 and very few people have been hostile towards me.

What can churches do to combat this fear?

Now this is interesting. Our ministry interviewed the senior pastors of 1,000 churches. One of the questions was: Have you, in the last 10 years, taught your church how to evangelise? The answer? Only 36 had.

If we’re not very good at evangelism, we should take some lessons. That’s why I produced *Breaking News*, a six-session study guide on how to evangelise, and *Breaking the News*, a more personalised version. They’re about putting evangelism back on the agenda.

We also need to review how our churches look to those on the outside. Often the church seems like a rugby huddle. People know that conversations are taking place, but all they can see are backsides – it looks like there’s no way in. The church is supposed to be the way, but it’s got in the way of evangelism.

How do you approach people of other faiths?

I don’t get defensive. Rather, I ask questions such as: In what way does your faith help you in your life, give you confidence for the future or help you face death? I reveal cracks in their philosophy and show them that in Christ, we have confidence and a hope. But I wouldn’t ever put people down. All we

have to do is lift Jesus up.

Can you expand?

There are only four major world religions based on an individual, on a personality. All other religions are based on a philosophy. These four are Christianity, Islam, Buddhism and Judaism.

The way in which we are going to reach the world, is to reach our world

You can travel the world and you won't find a Jewish person claiming that Father Abraham is alive and they can communicate with him. Likewise, you wouldn't find a Buddhist saying that of Buddha, or a Muslim saying that of Muhammad. But you can go to every country in the world (except for about seven) and you'll meet someone who says that Jesus is alive and they can communicate with him.

If you are walking down the street, get to the end of the road and find that it branches into two, you may not know which way to go. There is one man lying on each road; one is dead and one is alive. Which one would you ask for directions?

Do you see? Sometimes we need to be persuasive without being destructive. If you know them as a friend and are praying, caring and sharing, it will make a difference.

What if you don't know them as a friend?

Encounters with strangers are much harder, because it's ad hoc. In that sort of situation, you'd need prophetic insight into their life. Jesus' encounter with the woman at the well is an example. There were four barriers between them:

- A moral barrier: she was living in adultery, Jesus was sinless.
- A social barrier: men didn't speak to women in public.
- A racial barrier: she was a Samaritan, he was Jewish.
- A religious barrier.

But he could see into her soul; through insight he pointed out certain things to her and before she knew it she had run back to get her neighbours. If I met a stranger on the seat next to me on a plane, I would ask the Lord for any insight that I could convey to this person.

However, as mentioned previously, I would encourage the church to cultivate the web of relationships we've already got. I'm not saying that we don't have a responsibility for people we bump into, but that's not the norm. The norm is that we are constantly interacting with people we know. Start with them.

So finally, what do you love most about your work?

People meeting Jesus. There is rejoicing in Heaven over the one that decides to follow Jesus, discovering for themselves forgiveness for the past, new life today, and a hope for the future. That's what it's about really, isn't it?

J. John has a new book titled "Breaking the News".

For further information about J. John visit

www.philotrust.com

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What's in a name?

David Kay

Introduction

I found a Gideon bible in my room whilst staying in London in March, and came across two small pieces of paper inserted at the pages containing Exodus 6 and Psalm 83. They highlighted respectively Ex 6, v3, and Ps 83, v18, which verses referred to “the Lord” as a name. Both pieces of paper carried the same message: “the Lord” is a title, not a name, and God’s name is Yahweh. The author of these comments obviously held strong views about the matter, so I investigated it later, and found that the King James (Authorised) version of the bible uses the name JEHOVAH in these two places in the bible, and elsewhere, whereas the text in the Revised Standard Version (RSV) and some other more recent versions is “the Lord”.

There is a footnote to Ex 3, v15, in the New International version (NIV) that refers to the Hebrew word for *Lord*, although this Hebrew word is not stated; the footnote may be an attempt to justify the use of “the Lord”.

There are actually many Hebrew names for God. The use of the name Yahweh in particular is a very controversial matter, and can even cause offence to some Jewish people, as it is deemed so holy that it must not be spoken or written down in its entirety.

The word *name* is one of the most common entries in the concordance at the back of the NIV. There are many different contexts for the use of the word *name* in the bible, so what exactly the word *name* signifies is not at all clear without some careful consideration.

A change of our own name is not something that many of us would be happy about, unless the context is marriage, and only the lady’s surname is changed. In biblical times name changes did sometimes occur. Abram became Abraham, Simon (Peter) became Peter, and Saul became Paul.

These changes signified a change of role, purpose and direction. This idea reinforces the concept that a name has great significance.

The word *name* in the bible

name is one of the most common entries in the concordance at the back of my NIV. Some of the different contexts in which the word *name* is found are discussed below.

Early references include Genesis 4, v26, which describes the naming of Enosh by his father Seth. Secondly, in this verse the idea of “calling on the name of the Lord” is introduced. This phrase, rather surprisingly, is more common in the Old Testament than the New. Similarly, the phrase “minister in the name of the Lord” (see, for example, Deuteronomy 18) is an Old Testament concept. Nevertheless, both phrases could be used in communications within Christian fellowship today.

“In the name of the Lord” is one of the most common phrases containing the word *name*. It is used in a shortened form (“in the Lord’s name”) as an ending to many prayers uttered in groups or gatherings. It is important to recognise what the phrase really signifies; otherwise, it can just form a nice ending to a prayer. Asking for something in the Lord’s name or in Jesus’ name means, for example:

- Recognising God’s willingness to answer the request
- Being in harmony with all that the Jesus stands for
- Staying within God’s will and His Word, the bible
- Putting spiritual energy into a prayer

“In the name of Jesus” is a similar phrase to that discussed above, and is found particularly in the book of Acts, with reference to baptism, healing and commanding evil spirits to leave troubled people.

In Matthew 6, v9, the well known “hallowed be your name” occurs in the Lord’s Prayer, and reminds us to proclaim the holiness of God as we pray.

Finally, there are also numerous references to the naming of people. However, these references often include not just the naming process, but also give an explanation of the choice of name. *John the Baptist* was in line to be named *Zechariah* (see Luke 1, v59), but his parents intervened, so that the angel’s command would be fulfilled (see Luke 1, v13).

Maybe the name *Zechariah* would have left too strong a link with Old Testament ideas. Joseph was commanded to name his son *Jesus* (see Matthew 1, v21) because of the latter's future ministry of bringing salvation to the lost.

Overall, biblical references to the word *name* go beyond merely the allocation of a name for the purposes of identification, and some study of all the references would be an interesting and worthwhile exercise.

The word “name” in hymns, songs and choruses

Whole phrases containing this word have found themselves in various hymns, songs and choruses.

The well known hymn “At the name of Jesus every knee shall bow” (see Philippians 2, v10) highlights the fact that a *name* stands for much more than a means of identification. This hymn also contains the phrase “Humbled for a season, to receive a name from the lips of sinners”. The idea that Jesus should receive a *name* makes little sense when taken literally, so there is some poetic licence here. The real meaning concerns sinners' response to Jesus' call, and their subsequent worship of Him.

Another well known hymn “O worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness” contains the phrase “the Lord is His name”. This phrase is in direct contradiction to the concept that “the Lord” is a title, not a name, but “the Lord” is consonant with the rhythmic structure of the hymn, and the overall idea expressed in the hymn is clear.

Thomas Kelly's hymn “Look, ye saints, the sight is glorious!” is not quite as well known, but contains the line “Own His title, praise His name”. It is unlikely that this line was written to correct anyone who was confused about the difference between a title and a name, but it certainly brings out this difference well.

The beginning of the chorus “In the name of Jesus, in the name of Jesus” is really referring to all that Jesus stands for, but in a dynamic spiritual context, as there is a subsequent reference, for example, to demons fleeing. Two other choruses worth highlighting are “Blessed be the Name of the Lord” and “Bless the Lord, O my soul” ... “Bless His holy Name”. The first chorus (see Proverbs 18, v10) includes the line “The Name of the Lord is a strong tower.”

A *name* cannot, of course, be a *tower*, physical or imaginary, but the song writer takes word-for-word the text in Proverbs to encourage the development of unshakeable faith in the Lord. The second chorus has a rather more meditative character, but with a similar context for the use of the word *name*.

There is often so much more to discover in scripture, and in hymns and songs, than we may at first realise. However, some effort is often required to unravel the meaning – effort that will bring rewards!

Practical steps – effective use of names

The first step is taking care with people’s names, using their names whenever you can, and putting some effort into memorising their names to reduce the likelihood of mistakes later on. Even a surname can have great significance to a person. Engineers are frequently involved in dealing with physical things, and may need to make a special effort in this area when dealing with people. In foreign countries different conventions are adopted for the use of names, and these conventions need to be respected.

Secondly, recognise the significance of names in the bible, and make an effort to pronounce them correctly. By way of illustration, in the name Barabbas, “Bar” means “son of” in the Aramaic language, so rolling the letter “r” into “abbas” does not reflect the construction of the name. Also, consider the many different biblical uses of the word *name* by tracking down a few bible verses that include it, and studying their meaning. Changes of name in biblical times reflected changes of role or purpose in life. Some companies, charities and government organisations change their name nowadays to project a new image. In addition to a focus on names in the bible, study, if time permits, hymns, songs and choruses containing the word *name*.

Thirdly, avoid misusing any of the names that signify God as Father, Son or Holy Spirit. Many Christians are offended when they hear others casually use any such word or name. (Christians are not, of course, immune from such practices.) However, not all such uses are equally lamentable. The exclamation “O Lord” actually uses only a title, and “O my god” may grind in the ears of many Christians, but in my view is hardly full-blown blasphemy.

On the other hand, “Why in God’s name?”, which I heard on the radio a few weeks ago, is rather more sinister. The incident a few months ago reported in the news involving a British teacher in Sudan who allowed pupils to name a

teddy bear *Mohammed* illustrates how people of other religions may also feel about names.

Be aware that when we offer a prayer that ends “We ask this in your name” (see also earlier paragraph), we should do so recognising who God is and what the name signifies, so that we worship Him in reverence and awe. The words we speak have more power and effect than we may realise. Such an end to a prayer, sincerely expressed, really does stamp it with authority.

Engineers – names and titles

The question “What’s in a name?” may direct our thoughts to some famous names in history. It is a sad fact that famous engineers do not stand out as people of faith. Scientists probably score better! So it is encouraging to hear of well known engineers today who are believers and who are making a major contribution to engineering.

As far as titles are concerned, the international qualification *Eur Ing* is used by professional engineers as a title in many European countries. The use of *Chr Eng* (signifying “Christian engineer”) may seem initially attractive as a form of witness, but would cause puzzlement, and therefore cannot be commended. The author of this article even declines to use it here!

Sun, Waves and Tides

Tony Fletcher

Following on from articles on Sustainability in previous issues of the CEA Perspectives (myself in the Summer 2007 issue, and David Kay in that issue and the subsequent Winter 2007/8 issue) I was hoping others would join in and give their views and experiences. It is not too late! If you have any suggestions to make, think that any of views expressed, or facts and figures are incorrect then please do write into the editor.

If you have any personal experience of renewable (or other) energy schemes either professionally or on a personal basis then please share them with us. For instance, I have not been professionally involved, but I did have the water heating type of solar panels installed on the roof of our house some 20 years ago. After installation I tried to estimate their effectiveness by noting the temperature rise in the hot water tank when heated by the panels and then when heated by an immersion heater.

I estimated (and it was only a fairly crude estimate) that the panels generated a minimum of about 300 watts at the 7-degree difference setting between the panel temperature and the solar tank, but the nett gain was only 200 watts as there was a 100-watt pump to move water around the system. Thus I could not justify the system on purely economic grounds. I will have broken even at best, but it did allow us to switch off the old gas boiler between May and September (depending on the weather), which prolonged its life. The system continues to work well. Have you tried solar panels, photovoltaic panels, wind turbines or any such?

With regard to larger projects, I have received some private correspondence that suggests that the Severn Barrage tidal power scheme I mentioned in my Summer 2007 article is so complicated and controversial that it would be genuinely difficult for any organisation or the government to make a decision. It would be undermined by the thought that a cheaper, more efficient proposal could come to light following any commitment to the project, thereby undermining its viability. For example, a short piece in *Professional Engineering*, 10 December 2008 suggests that a “12-mile tidal reef is ‘cheaper option’ to a Severn barrage”.

It may well prove to be correct that a Severn Barrage Tidal power scheme is just too complicated, controversial and expensive to ever come into being. Of course being big is its main motivation. I understand that if it were to be built it would have an installed capacity of over 8GW and be capable of generating about 5 % of the UK's electricity consumption as it stands in 2009, so it will take a lot of wind, wave or other renewable schemes to come close to the contribution that it could make. Given that there is currently renewed government interest in the scheme, it might be worth thinking about the advantages and disadvantages.

Advantages:

- 1) It would make a significant contribution to the UK's electricity needs.
- 2) Makes best use of the available tidal power.
- 3) Predictable generation times – it would not generate continuously but its capacity and generation times would be predictable for a considerable period into the future, as the tides are predictable, unlike wind power which unpredictable.
- 4) It should be possible to 'flex' the generation times to a small extent by starting generation a little early or late and thus provide a small degree of generation flexibility and storage capacity.
- 5) As the times of high and low tide vary around the coast, it would be possible to envisage smaller schemes in other locations that would fill in some of the power gap left by the main big scheme. At least one smaller scheme could be built first to gain experience in construction and operation.
- 6) Relatively cheap to operate.
- 7) Would provide considerable construction employment.

Disadvantages:

- 1) High initial capital cost (current estimate of £20 Billion for the largest proposed scheme)
- 2) Significant environmental cost - I understand that due to its shape the Severn Estuary provides a funnel effect and has a tidal range (difference between low tide and high tide heights) of up to 14 metres, in contrast to the norm of 2-4 metres. Depending on quite how it was operated a barrage would reduce the range and thus mud flat area would be lost upstream. Coast erosion and silting patterns could also change in the area.
- 3) There would be a degree of risk in the construction of such a large structure.

These advantages and disadvantages apply in their most extreme form to the largest proposed scheme that is for a 10-mile barrage across the mouth of the estuary, which could have an installed capacity of over 8GW. There are also smaller proposed schemes such as a barrage across the river in the Bristol area that generate less (installed capacity still about 1 GW) but have lower cost and environmental impact.

References: <http://www.reuk.co.uk/Severn-Barrage-Tidal-Power.htm>
<http://www.guardian.co.uk/environment/2009/jan/05/severn-barrage-consultation>

Tidal Stream schemes are an emerging alternative approach with some of the same characteristics of a barrage scheme, such as periodic rather than continuous generation and predictability.

Their advantages include:

- 1) Capacity can be added incrementally
- 2) Costs increase in proportion to capacity installed
- 3) Little environmental impact if only a few underwater turbines used though the impact would increase as the number increased.

Their disadvantages include:

- 1) Only extracts a proportion of the available tidal power
- 2) A new technology, relatively untried and immature at present

So I provisionally conclude that a large-scale barrage is probably not the correct place to start. It would seem to be better to start off with some smaller schemes first, such as across the mouth of the River Dee, or some other river with a medium sized estuary, to get capacity on stream more quickly and to gain constructional and operating experience. The building of further and larger schemes would then rightly depend on the experience, and power requirements of the UK. The possibility of Tidal Stream schemes sounds exciting as it should be possible to site turbines in many places around the coast and in river estuaries providing a geographically distributed resource, and predictable generation from somewhere throughout each 24 hour period. Apparently there are alternative proposals for the Severn, and possibly other places too, for a series of lagoons which could build up to a large capacity system on a par with a barrage but with less environmental impact.

I feel that we need a variety of approaches. Energy conservation and efficiency schemes at point of use must surely have a role to play. Nuclear, coal, oil and gas are all needed until we can put in place sufficient alternative and reliable capacity.

Wind power is already making a contribution, but it has planning and environmental issues of its own (particularly the ‘not in my back yard syndrome’) and lacks predictability and therefore at present can only be used for a certain proportion of the total requirement. Further large capacity storage schemes such as the Dinorwig pumped storage scheme would ameliorate these problems. Wave power holds promise for the future but requires much further development before it can make a practical contribution. It also will be essentially unpredictable in terms of the amount of electricity generated at a given time in the future. Other ideas for electricity generation schemes welcome!

Although oil prices have decreased as at first quarter of 2009 from their peak in mid 2008 the long term trend has to be upwards and when the world’s main economies start coming out of recession the oil price could move up quite sharply again. Thus the need would seem to be getting on with something practical rather than just endless studies (with apologies to the consultants amongst us!).

So what does all this have to do with us as Christians? Well, I am open to help on that point!

I feel that as Christians we should be interested in seeking out the truth. We should also be doing what we can to serve the communities in which the Lord has placed us by using the skills he has given us. We should also have a God given concern for our environment. As engineers we do not seek unattainable perfection, but practical solutions that work (or are likely to), provide what is required and seem to make sense given all the considerations we are aware of. In my article in the Summer 2007 issue, I suggested that the world population is actually the biggest issue currently facing humanity in terms of a sustainable future, and that the second was finite resources for food and energy, with climate change coming in third, in my opinion. Experience seems to show that generally if a population has a good standard of living, then the population increase will fall and level off. Some would advocate a simple life style as the solution to the world’s energy problems. Now I respect those who go down that path and think that there are lessons there for us, but I also think that it is not a realistic solution for the world as we currently know it. Thus I feel we are being good Christians, good citizens and good engineers by seeking out and then advocating and implementing practical solutions to energy provision. What do you think? What can we, as a concerned group of Christian Engineers, do?

A Construction Engineer in Sudan

This article originally appeared in the CMS Mission Update of November 2009 and is used with permission

The recent completion of a primary school and of a communications centre in Southern Sudan are just two examples of how Sudanese people are rebuilding their country, and how mission partner Garry Ion is helping.

As a construction engineer, Garry works alongside the church in Sudan. “It’s all about building relationships. We sit together, draw up plans and I help them understand how much they can do for themselves, using local resources.”

Garry, who has worked in Uganda and Sudan for 15 years, says there’s much pressure on the church in Sudan to take a lead role in reconstruction: “Displaced people are moving back to Sudan and discovering that their schools, churches, hospitals are gone. Communities are looking to the church to rebuild schools and hospitals, as Christians, particularly CMS, have done in the past.

“There are many organisations coming in to try to rebuild the infrastructure,” he continues, “but it’s crucial for Sudanese people to get involved, do the work themselves and take ownership of what they’ve built; it raises their self-esteem.”

Garry often helps a church or a diocese get started and then makes periodic visits to check progress. In the case of the school mentioned above, which was completed in July, he helped draw up plans, estimate costs and figure out how many bricks were needed. The community – students included – made the bricks.

“I don’t have a bunch of money in my back pocket,” Garry explains, “but I’m able to take time to get to know the people, listen to their needs, pray with them and encourage them, whether they are renovating a building or starting from scratch. As one church or diocese completes a project, it encourages others to do the same. The church of Sudan is key to the future of Sudan.”

Give thanks for Garry’s long-term commitment to Sudan and for the dozens of buildings he’s helped create. Please pray for Sudanese Christians as they work to transform their communities and their country.

“Does God Work Here?”

TWUK Conference of 27th November 2009 – Report

Transform Work UK, a national charity with the aim of inspiring Christians to transform their workplaces, hosted a conference and exhibition on 14 November 2009. The conference was held after wide consultation and in response to the growing issues faced by Christian Workplace & Professional Groups.

“Does God Work Here?” was an action-packed day of keynote speakers, hands-on workshops and fringe sessions that left delegates from all over the UK responding with comments such as “God was glorified and the workplace exemplified”, “the conference way exceeded my wildest hopes” and “marvellous conference, I enjoyed it so much – very refreshed and fired up. Still buzzing”.

Salient Christian leaders provided keynote addresses on 24/7 church, politics and leadership. They included David L’Herroux, Executive Director of UCB, one of the UK’s leading multimedia charities, Caroline Spelman, MP for Meriden and Shadow Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, and Chan Abraham, Founder of Leadership International and Group Chief Executive of Luminus Group, successful in the 2008 and 2009 Sunday Times “100 Best Companies to Work For”.

The conference began with a video commendation by Archbishop of York Dr John Sentamu, who encouraged delegates by saying “When you are at work, do not act as some people would suggest, as if the Bible is somehow to be divorced from work, politics, the environment, questions of justice. No, the Bible is a love story of God’s involvement and engagement”.

Chan Abraham, the conference Chairman, asked “Has the 21st century workplace become a no-God area, populated by cynics, with Christians often feeling under siege?” In referring to the transforming nature of inspired leadership he went on to say, “It takes time to build an organisation where people are both motivated to high achievement, while also feeling part of a family.”

The conference also heard the testimony of Council Worker Duke Amachree, sacked earlier this year for discussing his faith and whose story appeared in many national papers.

Two of the most popular workshops were ‘The Effective Workplace Group’ led by Ros Turner, who said “An organisation’s Diversity Framework may well provide great opportunities for Christian groups to engage with employers and make a difference and be the good news for their workplaces”; the second was ‘Work Life Balance’ led by Dr Adrian Miles. He said, “Workplaces with the greatest pressures do not necessarily mean they have the highest levels of stress. What is most crucial is how individuals and teams cope with these pressures”.

TWUK have supplied the above report to the press and added the information below. Their website is www.transformworkuk.org

BACKGROUND INFORMATION ABOUT TRANSFORM WORK UK

Our Vision is to inspire Christians to transform the workplace and the nation. Our Aim is to see the UK workplace transformed, locally and nationally, by every Christian living out their faith in effective workplace ministry, leading to transformation over time in the nation’s culture, values and spiritual environment.

Our Strategy is to work supportively with individuals, workplace Christian fellowships and wider professional groups to:

- Support and build vibrant and effective workplace Christian groups through mentoring, consultancy and training.
- Facilitate networking that brings tangible benefits to local and national associations through local, regional and national events.
- Collate and disseminate good news of what God is doing in the workplace.
- Proclaim with unity and clarity Christian values concerning the workplace by working with the media and influencing policy makers.
- Provide an Internet portal where we provide: free resources and workplace Bible studies to help individuals and fellowships actively pursue the Christian lifestyle at work; information on the latest events servicing Christians at work; free access to directories of workplace fellowships, professional sector fellowships and other workplace ministries.

Book Reviews

Slide Rule – Nevil Shute, 1953

How do engineers manage during a financial downturn? While reflecting on the question I remembered this autobiography by the writer of many good novels, a number of which, such as ‘No Highway’, have been made into films. This is not a ‘Christian’ book as such, but is by a gifted writer and engineer. He shares his joys as an engineer working under Barnes Wallis in the design and construction of a successful airship – the R100. (It was the R101 that crashed and burst into flames). He shares his challenges and frustrations when later he became the founding Managing Director of Airspeed during the financial downturn of the 1930s. The technical interest remains as he describes the pioneering introduction of a retracting undercarriage. As his company turned to the city for capital and moved into quantity production he left, intending to concentrate on his writing, but continued as an engineer through the second world war.

A very readable book for anyone interested in engineering, management or aircraft. When I looked on Amazon copies were available.

Mike Cowan

Servant-leadership across cultures – Fons Trompenaars and Ed Voerman. ISBN: 1905940998

Extracts in Engineering & Technology 11 April – 24 April 2009 vol 4 issue 6 pages 80 & 81

I am fortunate in being able to use bicycle and train to get to and from work. One late afternoon in July I was travelling home on the train as usual and reading an April edition of the IET Engineering and Technology journal. (Yes, I always seem to be several behind and never able to catch up!) I suddenly realised that I must be dozing, looked around and then looked back at what I was reading. No it was definitely there and I was not dreaming! I was reading about servant leadership in a worldly, hard nosed scientific and business journal! If I had been reading a Christian magazine I would not have been surprised – it was the setting that took me aback.

The article, which is a summary of the book detailed above, denigrates the ‘Power’ style of management where the manager tries to exert power and control over subordinates and extols an alternative management style in which the manager seeks to equip and enable his team. The new approach is termed ‘Servant Leadership’. Now I am not a Christian scholar by any stretch of the imagination, so I cannot guarantee that what I read fully squares with the example Jesus sets before us. Nor am I a ‘management guru’ so I do not know how well established and respected the approach is in professional management circles. However, as a Christian I recognise Jesus as the pre-eminent example of Servant Leadership. Not just the feet washing bit, but the whole way he selected, trained and led his disciples. Jesus led by example. He encouraged his team. He trusted them, whilst recognising and allowing for their limitations. He sent them out to try for themselves and coached them again on their return.

You might like to get hold of a copy of the journal, or the book that are referenced above.

Tony Fletcher

Editor’s note: Comments from those who read the article or book would be welcomed.

God’s Undertaker – John Lennox, 2007

The misleading title masks a book that clarifies what science is and exposes the roots of current atheistic argument. John C Lennox is a professor in Mathematics at the University of Oxford and Fellow in Mathematics and the Philosophy of Science at Green Templeton College. He has debated with Richard Dawkins and has a particular interest in the History of Science. I do not find the book, with its detailed arguments, an easy read. As with the pure mathematics I had to study for my engineering degree course, I am taking my time to cover the ‘syllabus’. However, just as a book by Francis Schaeffer strengthened my faith intellectually in the 1970s, so this book exercises my intellectual muscles in the 2000s. Here are some of the pearls I have found so far:

- There is no real conflict between science and belief in an intelligent creator. Both expect to find order within the universe.

- Both the scientist and the theist should be willing to ‘go where the evidence takes them’. I note that that the atheist is no less prone to suppress ‘inconvenient’ evidence than the doctrinaire theist. Dawkins conveniently dismisses the evidence presented by human belief systems as ‘delusion’.
- A quote from Eugene Wigner (a Nobel Laureate in Physics) should warm the heart of any engineer: “The enormous usefulness of mathematics in the natural sciences is something bordering on the mysterious, and there is no rational explanation for it ... it is an article of faith”.
- Reductionism is self destructive. John Polkinghorne is quoted – “thought is replaced by electrochemical neural events ... and the world of rational discourse dissolves into the absurd chatter of firing synapses. Quite frankly that cannot be right and none of us believes it to be so”.

Recommended as an insight into some of the deeper levels of debate in academic circles, including the application of mathematics to the ‘language’ of genetics.

Mike Cowan

Membership Matters

Committee Meeting Reports

The Committee met twice this year, on 21st March and 24th October.

Membership

- Paul Darley has agreed to become Chairman, for which we are grateful.
- Nick Stroud has resigned from the Committee owing to his current commitment to study for an MSc. We thank him for his committed work over many years.
- David Burgess is our Mission Contact and may take over the duties of Treasurer when the new arrangements detailed below are in place.

Change of Administration

‘Christians at Work’ have decided to reduce their external commitments and your Committee have approached ‘Transform Work UK’ (TWUK) for assistance with our administration. Three members visited their offices in Huntingdon earlier in the year and established that TWUK could provide administrative and other services to replace those provided by Christians at Work. A second visit has been planned to agree and sign a contract for the services to be provided from the beginning of 2010.

General

Discussions were centred on the practicalities of the transfer of administration and ongoing updating of documentation and the website. Thanks to the work of Tony and Paul the website now carries copies of previous editions of the Journal.

Our conclusions and plans for the future are summarised in a letter from our Chairman mailed with this letter.

Mike Cowan

Accounts

Figures for the year 2008 are:

Income	£930.00	Expenditure	£1,380.00
Loss for year	£450.00	Balance at end of 2008	£3,037.00

Application for CEA Membership

Any Christian who studies, works or has worked in the engineering professions can become a member.

Joining us

- An annual donation of £20 is requested (£10 for students, first-year graduates, retired or unwaged).
- Please complete the form below and send it to Tony Fletcher at 35 Wimborne Avenue, IPSWICH, IP3 8QW, or via e-mail to admin@christianengineers.org.uk

Cut and keep

Application For CEA Membership

Name

Address

e-mail

Tel (home)

Tel (work)

Occupation

Place of work

Interests

My annual donation is enclosed to value £
(Minimum £20, £10 under concession)

christianengineers.org.uk