



ASSOCIATION  
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LIBRARIANS®

# Reference Point Summer 2014

## ***“But I am among you as the one who serves.” Luke 22:27 (ESV)***

Throughout my career, I'd see people in the library. If I said, "Can I help you?" they almost always said, "No." So I learned to say, "Are you finding what you need?" Sometimes serving others involves the challenge of knowing the need before you can figure out how to meet it. The words of Jesus could aptly describe many followers of Christ who are librarians. We rejoice in serving. As a reference librarian one of my chief tasks was to meet a student or faculty member at their point of need and lead them to a resource that would meet that need. Understanding our work in this light brings to mind D.T. Niles' assertion, "Christianity is one beggar telling another beggar where to find bread." We share what we know in service to those around us and to Christ.

Being a librarian has turned out to be great preparation for serving others in retirement activities. When I first retired from librarianship, the Lord provided an opportunity for me to serve in a foster care agency in spite of my lack of formal qualifications. (What a tremendous ministry Christian foster parents have!) And I have had the opportunity to be a Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA)—"the eyes and ears for the court and the voice for the child." Searching for information in a library prepared me for tracking down information that a judge could use in deciding a child's future. I also served as a hospice volunteer. Our church's visitation program provided opportunities to enter homes and pray for a variety of needs.

I currently serve with Helping Hand—a local ministry to poor people in our community. My involvement with this ministry provides continuing opportunities to enter the homes of non-churched people and to pray with them about their needs. Sometimes we hear how Christians cannot openly pray or witness in the course of their work, but all of these activities allow, even encourage, openly serving our Lord.

I have to confess that my performance in some of these activities has ranged from poor to mediocre. I am reminded of G. K. Chesterton's words, "Anything worth doing is worth doing badly." But being aware of my limitations and inadequacies has made me more aware of how much the Lord loves me. My performance isn't what determines His grace, love, mercy and compassion. In His loving wisdom He has provided opportunities where He has seen fit to use me, and I am able to follow "in His steps."

I no longer do all of these activities—I find I do need some time to look out the window. I'm sure that Christ had joy in His serving and that was why He made the statement recorded in Luke: "But I am among you as the one who serves." Librarians follow Christ as ones who serve both God and neighbor.

--Roger Phillips

*Roger retired in 2006 after more than 30 years in librarianship. He served at Taylor University, Wheaton College, and Calvary Bible College.*