

WORDWISE NEWSLETTER - DECEMBER 2018

Dear WORDWISE supporter,

this NEWSLETTER is larger than usual as, in addition to our usual news items, we are paying tribute to our dear friend Derek Gilchrist. You will see below several tributes from colleagues who knew him and worked with him.

You will find more information on our website - <http://wordwisekingsbridge.co.uk>

DEREK GILCHRIST (1943 - 2018)



Derek was the catalyst who started up Wordwise. His late wife had had a vision of there being a Christian bookshop in Kingsbridge. In the Autumn of 2002 the lease on a bookshop at 41 Fore Street came up for sale. Faithful Derek purchased the lease and THEN came to the committee of Kingsbridge District Churches Together (KDCT) and asked for help to get it going. A working lunch of the clergy in the district took place in early December. Twenty three clergy attended and they were delighted to support this new venture!

Derek, having bought it, stepped aside and let others get on with it. It was a remarkable step of faith and also sacrificial. He was always there for matters pertaining to the shop but never pushy!

The shop opened for business in late March 2003. A myriad of matters had been dealt with in that period such as raising money to buy stock, hiring a paid manager, choosing a computerised till, applying for and getting Charity Status and so on. In all of it the hand of God was visible. Derek had interpreted it correctly!

Working alongside Derek at the Family Church as Church Treasurer was a pleasure. He was quiet and even tempered and had a great sense of humour. He was very reliable and always kept his word. He was always amazingly positive even when most people have given up! In more recent years Derek took a position on the team of Trustees and got involved! Derek is greatly missed. He was calm and apparently unflappable and a friend! *Rob Roberts.*

I started working as a volunteer at Wordwise probably ten years ago, and apart from the general camaraderie of working with lovely people with the same Christian focus, the prerequisite that was most evidently required for being involved, was a very strong faith. Derek had this in spades. Only committed Christians with a strong vision from the Lord would understand the courage and strength of faith it must have taken to "go out on a limb" as Derek and Rob Roberts did in taking out the lease on the shop. Later on when working as a trustee with Derek, and attending trustee meetings, where every time we would have to stop the meetings in order to pray for the Lord to meet our bills, I experienced the level of faith that all trustees worked with.

It was in this manner that Derek and Brenda lived their lives. I can only say what a privilege it was to have worked with him, and I'm sure he's sitting at someone's right hand right now, up where he belongs. With very loving memories,

Mac Carter.

It is always sad when friend dies but when the friend is good Christian, it is a comfort to know that he has moved to a better life. I first came to know Derek when he lived next door to me. I soon got into the habit of dropping in to “Bags of Choice” for a chat. I was surprised when I heard that he had discovered that the lease on the shop next door was up for sale and that he had taken an option on it with a view to opening a Christian bookshop which had been the dream of his late wife Carol. After the resignation of one of the original trustees I became a trustee and helper in the shop. And so Derek’s wish became a reality. He did not take an active part but was always in the background and took a keen interest in progress. During this period and for a good dozen years thereafter we remained friends.

It was with great sadness that I learnt of his illness and it was in subsequent years that I found it very uplifting to follow his struggle with cancer; a struggle he fought with fortitude and faith. I gained a great deal from his example over these latter years and from his constant optimism. In the end the cancer won and despite this I rejoice in his life whilst saddened by his departure. I trust that he is now rejoicing in heaven and praising God and I pray that Brenda will find comfort in the knowledge that she has her own special saint in heaven. Our loss - Heaven’s gain.

Brian Turnbull



I don’t think I ever saw Derek without a smile on his face. He was always up-beat about himself, the shop and his faith. While I was a Trustee, he always welcomed us warmly for the meetings at his house,

Coffee in town? The same smile! That’s how I will remember Derek. We’ll always be grateful for his legacy and his gift to the Christian community. Brenda was a Trustee at the same time as me, and we send our love and prayers to her for her care of Derek. *Robin Brett.*

Paul, a biography – by Tom Wright

If you want to get to grips with St Paul, his life, times and thought – without having to plough through a dry-as-dust tome of history and theology – this is the book. It provides a width of historical and religious background combined with a depth of Christian understanding, as one would expect from Tom Wright (Research Professor of New Testament and Early Christianity at the University of St Andrews, and former Bishop of Durham).

Prof. Wright spreads out the story of Paul like a good route map. He traces the root and growth of Paul’s zeal, first in Judaism and then Christianity. This is a book that makes good scholarship available to the ordinary person. Not only is it instructive, it’s also a good read.

Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks calls it, “an enthralling journey into the mind of Paul”. And it comes with endorsements from several highly acclaimed scholarly writers and professors. So you know the book is well researched and has much to teach about Paul.

Read it! I’m glad I did. (But please also note the poignant dedication at the beginning of the book.)

Book review by Sue Whiteway

Hardback copy in the shop, 460 pages, £19.99, SPCK

Winner in the Biblical Studies category, Christian Resources Together 2018-2019 Awards.

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