

Spring 2013

# ***CHRISTIAN LIBRARIAN***



The Journal of the  
Librarians' Christian Fellowship

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BEYOND LIBRARIANSHIP CONFERENCE IN COVENTRY***
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- ***INFORMATION NEEDS AND INFORMATION SEEKING  
BEHAVIOUR OF NAMIBIAN PASTORS***

## EVENTS AT A GLANCE

### ●SATURDAY 28 APRIL 2013: LCF ANNUAL CONFERENCE: "BEYOND LIBRARIANSHIP"

Methodist Central Hall, Warwick Lane, Coventry. Speakers: Prof. Donald G. Davis, Jr., Heather Lewis. Details: pp. 8-10.

### ●WEDNESDAY 22 MAY 2013: LCF VISIT TO DR. WILLIAMS'S LIBRARY

14 Gordon Square, London, WC1H OAR, from 5.30.p.m. Details: p. 11.

### ●TUESDAY 2 – WEDNESDAY 3 JULY 2013: CILIP UMBRELLA CONFERENCE

University of Manchester, Oxford Road, Manchester. Details: p. 12.

### ●SATURDAY 19 OCTOBER 2013: LCF ANNUAL PUBLIC LECTURE

New Road Baptist Church, Bonn Square, Oxford. Speaker: Rev. Dr. Michael Ward on C.S. Lewis. Details: p. 12.

## PRAYER NOTES FOR SPRING 2013

### PLEASE PRAY FOR

●LCF's Executive Committee as it considers the response of members to the recent postal ballot on changes suggested by our review group.

●Our forthcoming activities including the April annual conference and October annual lecture.

●Various activities and publications planned to mark the fiftieth anniversary of the death of **C.S. Lewis**.

●Library and information staff in an era of reductions in spending, cutbacks, re-organisations, redundancies and other challenges.

●The Christian communications media and the work of booksellers and suppliers represented in *Christian Resources Together*. Pray for this April's Retreat at Swanwick and for a positive reader response to the new **Together** magazine.

●The work of **Robert Hicks** and his *Creative Publishing* and other publishing activities.

●Those involved in meeting the information needs of pastors in Namibia and other African countries.



# **LIBRARIANS' CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP**

**CHRISTIANS IN LIBRARY, INFORMATION AND ARCHIVE WORK**

*An organisation 'in liaison' with the Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals.  
Affiliated to: Christian Research Association; Christians at Work; Evangelical Alliance; Transform Work  
UK; Universities' & Colleges' Christian Fellowship.  
Web Site: [www.librarianscf.org.uk](http://www.librarianscf.org.uk)*

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**22:Janice Paine: Membership Matters**

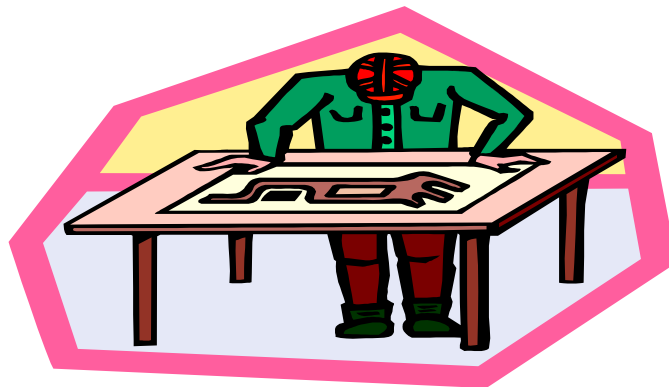
**23:Robert Hicks: Lost Christian Letters of the First Century**

**35:David Matsveru: Information Needs and Information Seeking  
Behaviour of Namibian Pastors**

## THE FIRST WORD

**MARGARET KEELING** looks at the contribution that good architecture can make to library services and suggests that similar principles have a bearing on the work of our own Fellowship

# ***A SHAPE FOR THE FUTURE***



New library buildings regularly feature in our professional press; producing reactions of envy - if only - or scepticism about exaggerated claims of success.

Recently, I caught just a snippet of a radio programme on the nature of new libraries, and was fascinated by the claims being made about the effect of buildings on their users. People found the original library unwelcoming and were nervous about entering a closed space without knowing what to expect. This particular library attracted many socially disadvantaged people, to the extent that other users didn't feel comfortable in the building. But, the design of its replacement library had created an atmosphere of openness, welcome and security – and although the same number of socially disadvantaged people were using the space, they were integrated and unthreatening.

A big claim for a structure! Can the design and use of space really have this much power to change attitudes and perceptions?

The library in question was the *Seattle Public Library* (not quite so new -

opened in 2004) Its eleven storey building of *'floating platforms, wrapped in steel net enclosed in glass'*, still attracts comments such as *'the most impressive building I've ever set eyes on'* with *'an awesome Reading Space'*. But, in spite of its size one user wrote *'I can still find my own spot'*. Is it true that: *'our brains and bodies are affected by good architecture'*?

The same programme went on to talk about the new *Canada Water Library* (2011) described as *'an indoor public space open to everyone where you find wonderful things you weren't necessarily looking for'*

Just serendipity? Or a justified comment on the ability of library spaces to welcome, include everyone, satisfy known needs and go further in creating an awareness of lots of possibilities. Maybe at a time of growth of virtual services in an age of social media, the physical library is fighting back!

My church, here in Woodbridge, is currently out of our church building while work is going on to extend and create better worship and community space. So I find myself applying the above concepts as a prayer and vision of what our church buildings could be, especially to people in our community to whom the inside of a church building is unfamiliar.

How does this equate to LCF? We don't have 'buildings' but we too we have our virtual structure. Is it hard to enter? Or a place where people feel welcomed – whether it's through the website, in casual conversation, at events, visits, or in the printed space – our own or others.

In 2013 as we seek to move from LCF to become *Christians in Library and Information Services*, we are looking at the ways we can 'adapt in order to meet the challenges of the future' (as our subscription renewal reminds us).

How should our structure look to people who aren't aware of what we do and stand for? There are powerful new opportunities to include, to support, to challenge, to encourage Christians in our profession, setting out clearly who we are, yet at the same time, if we get it right, to also allow individuals to *'find their own spot'*

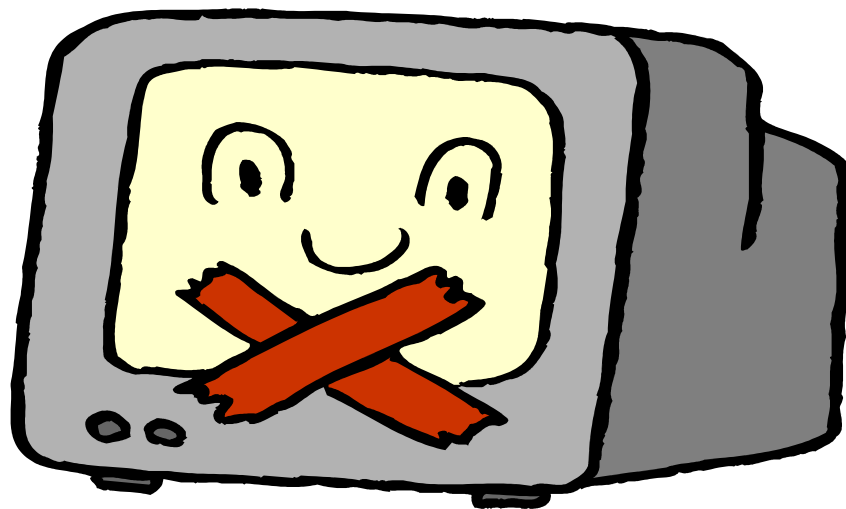
Please pray for our Officers and Committee, for God's guidance, as they look at changes- such as the logo and web site - that need to take place. Pray too, for all of us as members – that we will find our own role and contribution within this structure. May God bring about something *'awesome'* through *Christians in Library and Information Services*, and do wonderful things we weren't necessarily looking for in and through us

Margaret Keeling, BA, MA, MCLIP, PhD, was elected as President of the *Librarians' Christian Fellowship* at the annual general meeting on Saturday 2 April 2011. She worked until her retirement as Head of Services for Libraries, Culture and Adult Community Learning for *Essex County Council*.

## THE SECOND WORD

**LOUISE MANNERS** comments on misleading reports in the news media; reflects on the findings of the 2011 Census; and notes some spoof predictions for 2013

# ***SEEN IN THE MEDIA***



On 10 January 2013 an employment appeal tribunal ruling was published to reveal that the employment tribunal on 13 December 2012 upheld an earlier ruling of a lower tribunal that, in the specific case of a care worker called Celestine Mba, the *London Borough of Merton* was entitled to sack a care worker for refusing to work on Sundays. Mba had not been promised that she could have every Sunday off. The judgement was not that Christians have no right to not work on Sundays.

Unfortunately the employment tribunal had already been reported by news media as ruling that Christians have no right to not work on Sundays. Employment tribunals should issue judgement and a

written version of the ruling at the same time.

2011 census data reveal a population of England and Wales of 51.6 million, an increase from 54.4 million in 2001 of 3.7 million (seven per cent). That increased population is less keen to tick the Christianity box than in the past. The religion question is the only voluntary question in the census. The question was not answered by 7.2 per cent of respondents. In 2011 59.3 per cent identified as Christian, 25.1 per cent identified as having no religion and 3% identified as being Muslim.

In Knowsley 80.9 per cent identified as Christians, meaning that the Knowsley local authority has the highest proportion identifying as Christians. The Norwich local authority has the highest proportion identifying as having no religion, at 42.5 per cent. Back in 2001 in England and Wales 71.7 per cent identified as Christian, 25.1% identified as having no religion and 4.8% identified as being Muslim. The future for Christian congregations in England and Wales is bleak with a shortage of priests and pastors and maintenance bills for churches and church buildings to pay.

The 21/28 December **Bookseller** humour column, *Daisy Frost's Diary*, featured spoof predictions for 2013 with an increase in religiosity in celebrities and in the general population and increased sales of religious literature. I remembered the spoof predictions when I noted that a new version of G.K. Chesterton's **Father Brown** was to be broadcast on BBC1 with the actor Mark Williams playing Father Brown admitting to enjoying wearing Father Brown's cassock and hat!

**Louise Manners**, *DipLib, MA, MCLIP*, works as a **Subject Librarian at the Ealing, Hammersmith and West London College** and serves as Chair of the *Librarians' Christian Fellowship*.

NEWS

BOOK NOW FOR THE ANNUAL CONFERENCE OF THE  
LIBRARIANS' CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP

**“BEYOND LIBRARIANSHIP”**



**SATURDAY 20 APRIL 2013:  
EADON HALL, METHODIST CENTRAL  
HALL, WARWICK LANE, COVENTRY,  
CV1 2HA, from 10.30.a.m.**

**SPEAKERS:**

**HEATHER LEWIS**

*Am I Just a Librarian?  
Preparing to Make a Change in Career Path*

**Prof. DONALD G. DAVIS, Jr.**

*Retirement: What Good Is It?*



## CONFERENCE THEMES AND SPEAKERS

- **Beyond Librarianship** is the title of the annual conference of the *Librarians' Christian Fellowship* which is to be held on **Saturday 20 April 2013** in the **Eadon Hall, Methodist Central Hall, Warwick Lane, Coventry, CV1 2HA**, from 10.30. a.m – 4.45.p.m.

The Conference fee is £25.00, including lunch and refreshments, with a reduced rate of £20.00 for unwaged delegates. Members and non-members are welcome.

- **Heather Lewis**, Librarian, *HMP*, The Mount, Bovingdon, Hertfordshire, will speak on the topic "*Am I Just a Librarian? Preparing to Make a Change in Career Path*".

Heather Lewis will explore some of the issues relevant to dealing with the possibility of redundancy or the need to change jobs. She will suggest that thinking and planning beforehand can help so that practical ideas can be put into action once the situation is a reality. This may also be a useful exercise for anyone wanting to review work/life balance and future plans particularly ensuring that as Christians we give priority to seeking God's will for our lives.

- In the second major session of the day, **Donald G. Davis, Jr.**, Emeritus Professor of Library History at the *University of Texas at Austin*, USA, will be considering the question "*Retirement: What Good Is*

*It?*"

Professor Davis' theme will be that since 'retirement' is a fairly recent phenomenon, we are still grappling with it. There will be some rest, some slowing down, to be sure, but it is also a time when satisfying avocations can become fruitful new vocations. He will suggest that if we have no or few useful pursuits beyond our professional work, we will likely struggle more with retirement.

- **Heather Lewis** has been employed in library and information work for most of her career.

Following redundancy in her forties she explored fields of work outside librarianship before becoming a prison librarian in 2009.

Outside of part-time paid work her interests revolve around church life and music and practising to be retired by spending time with a wide circle of friends and drinking coffee.

- **Prof. Donald G. Davis, Jr.**, has been Professor Emeritus of Library History at the School of Information and Department of History, *University of Texas at Austin*, USA, since 2005.

After various appointments in libraries Donald joined the Texas faculty in 1971, teaching courses in professional foundations, book and library history, collection development and publishing. He has also taught in the UK at the Department of Librarianship at the former *Birmingham Polytechnic*.

Donald Davis has been an active participant in professional and

scholarly societies since the mid-1960s and has been awarded many honours by relevant organisations.

From 1977 to 2005 he edited the journal ***Libraries and Culture*** and he has written and edited many books, articles and book reviews. A festschrift in his honour ***Libraries and Culture: Historical Essays*** was published by the *Library of Congress* in 2006.

## **ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**

The Annual General Meeting of the *Librarians' Christian Fellowship* will be held on **Saturday 20 April 2013**, from 11.20.a.m., at the **Methodist Central Hall, Coventry**, as part of the annual conference programme.

Nominations for office and notice of any motions to be put to the meeting should be in the Secretary's hands not later than *Saturday 23 March 2013*.

Nominations for the following executive committee posts are invited: Secretary, Overseas Secretary, Web Site and ***E-Newsletter*** Manager, Library Assistance Manager, Midlands regional rep., Southern regional rep., Western regional rep., Irish regional rep., Members Without Portfolio (two positions).

Each nomination will require a proposer and seconder and each candidate should indicate their willingness to serve in writing.

Some existing committee members may be willing to stand for

re-election but we are always keen to attract newcomers onto the committee.

Our recent Review Group report also envisaged the creation of new committee roles – including Recruitment Officer and Prayer Secretary. If you think that you might have a contribution to make in either of these positions, please get in touch.

A formal agenda for the meeting will be circulated to members not less than two weeks before the meeting.

## **SENT TO COVENTRY**

Coventry should prove to be a convenient location for delegates coming by road since it is situated at the hub of the national motorway system. Rail travellers can get there in just over an hour from London Euston or in a couple of hours from our Midlands, Northern and Western regions.

The Central Hall is within a short distance of the railway and bus and coach stations, and there are car parking facilities nearby. Further directions will be sent to delegates nearer the time.

Please send your conference bookings, or requests for further information, to The Secretary, Graham Hedges, 34 Thurlestone Avenue, Ilford, Essex, IG3 9DU. Tel. 020 8599 1310, E mail [secretary@librarianscf.org.uk](mailto:secretary@librarianscf.org.uk) Web site [www.librarianscf.org.uk](http://www.librarianscf.org.uk)

# **LIBRARIANS' CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP NEWSLETTER**



**From The Secretary: Graham Hedges, Hon. FCLIP, MCLIP, 34 Thurlestone Avenue, Ilford, Essex, IG3 9DU. Tel. 020 8599 1310**  
**E-mail** [secretary@librarianscf.org.uk](mailto:secretary@librarianscf.org.uk);  
**Web site** [www.librarianscf.org.uk](http://www.librarianscf.org.uk)

## **WEDNESDAY 22 MAY 2013: VISIT TO DR. WILLIAMS'S LIBRARY**

We have arranged an early evening visit to **Dr. Williams's Library, 14 Gordon Square, London, WC1H 0AR** on **Wednesday 22 May 2013, beginning 5.30.p.m.**

This will be the first evening event that we have organised for some years and we hope that it will be especially attractive to those who work in Central London although, needless to say, all members and friends of LCF will be welcome to take part in the visit.

It may be that some members of the LCF group will be able to

remain behind and have a meal together in a local restaurant immediately after the visit.

Please let me know if you would like to book a place or places on the visit, and indicate whether you would like to join us for a meal afterwards.

**Dr. Williams's Library** is described as the pre-eminent research library of English Protestant non-conformity. It was established by the will of Dr. Daniel Williams, a leading London non-conformist minister of his day, who died in January 1715/6. The collections were greatly enlarged over the years with many important gifts, and Dr. Williams's original benefaction of about 7600 books forms only a small part of the modern library.

The present collections include about 300,000 titles from the earliest years of printing to the present, and many thousands of manuscripts from the thirteenth to the twenty-first century. Although the Library's strengths are in Protestant non-conformity, the collections include printed works and manuscripts of national and even international significance.

The Library serves a very wide readership, not only ministers and lay people of all denominations and faiths, but academics, independent scholars, family historians and research students.

You can find more information about Dr. Williams's Library, its collections and opening hours on the web site at <http://www.dwlib.co.uk>

## **FAITH UNDER THE UMBRELLA**

CILIP, the *Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals*, will be holding its next *Umbrella* Conference from **Tuesday 2 – Wednesday 3 July 2013** in a new venue at the *University of Manchester* campus in Oxford Road, Manchester.

Long standing readers will know that for more than thirty years we have organised a *Service of Thanksgiving* for delegates to major conferences organised by the *Library Association* and CILIP.

This year, however, we have been informed that it will not be possible to include a Service during the Conference programme. This change of policy is due to “*room restrictions, budgetary constraints and other conference activities*”.

However, CILIP would like to ensure that all faiths are given the opportunity for quiet reflection or prayer at the *Umbrella* Conference. To allow this, CILIP will arrange for a room to be allocated to delegates so they can spend time whenever it is convenient for them during the Conference.

Although we are disappointed that it will not be possible to schedule a Service at the 2013 Conference, we are keen to support *Umbrella* in other ways and to ensure an LCF presence at the event. We have asked, therefore, whether it would be possible for us to donate a Bible and book of prayers to the prayer room, provide

prayer notes that some people might wish to use, or possibly leave a small quantity of our information leaflets in the room.

At the time of writing, we have not yet received a formal reply to these suggestions but we hope that there will be a positive response from CILIP in due course.

In the meantime we would encourage our readers to remember *Umbrella* in their prayers, attend the Conference if possible, and make use of the promised room for prayer and reflection.

Details of *Umbrella* are available from Jason Russell at CILIP, 7 Ridgmount Street, London, WC1E 7AE. Tel. 020 7255 0544. Web site [www.cilip.org.uk/events](http://www.cilip.org.uk/events)

## **ANNUAL PUBLIC LECTURE**

2013 will mark the fiftieth anniversary of the death of the famous apologist and novelist **C.S. Lewis** and our Annual Lecture will take a new look at the enduring influence and legacy of this noted Christian writer.

The Rev. Dr. **Michael Ward**, Senior Research Fellow at Blackfriars Hall, *University of Oxford*, and author of *Planet Narnia*, and *The Narnia Code*, will be our guest speaker and the lecture will be held on **Saturday afternoon 19 October 2013** at the **New Road Baptist Church, Bonn Square, Oxford**.

## **PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL NEWS**

- Our Colchester member (and 2012 Conference speaker) **Sara Batts** continues to be active alongside her daily work as a law librarian based in the City of London.

Sara led a workshop on the topic *Finding Your Feet in a Church Full of Families* at last summer's **Greenbelt** arts festival in Cheltenham.

She also delivered a paper at the *New Media Conference* organised by *Premier Christian Radio*. Drawing on her recent PhD research, Sara posed the questions: How are churches actually using the Internet? What can we learn from best (and worst) practice?

- Our Dublin bookseller member **Louis Hemmings** was a sponsor of the television documentary *Old MacDonald's Farm* televised by *BBC Scotland* on Sunday 23 December 2012. This programme from Norman Stone's *1A Productions* told the story of Donald MacDonald, a Scottish businessman who moved with his wife and daughters to Zambia to lead the comfortable ex-pat life but ended up fostering thirty street children in their family home.

*Holly: a story of stillbirth* by **Louis** and **Liz Hemmings** is now available as a download in Kindle format on [www.amazon.co.uk](http://www.amazon.co.uk)

- Past LCF speaker **Tony Jasper** was recently interviewed about his work as an actor,

broadcaster and playwright for the **Culture Footprint** newsletter produced by the *Evangelical Alliance*.

He described his vision for the arts as “*assaulting and confronting, energising and growing in people's lives, letting loose ways and means for us to focus on the many gifts God has given ...*”. The full interview can be read on the EA's web site at <http://www.eauk.org>

Tony produces an on-line arts magazine **Crisis** which can be read on the web site of his *Jasperian Theatre Company* at <http://www.jasperian.org> Recent issues have included articles on the fiftieth anniversary of The Beatles and the decline of the Christmas record plus a review of Bob Dylan's most recent album **Tempest**.

- Past LCF speaker **Alan Millard** was one of the scholars interviewed as part of the documentary *Joanna Lumley: The Search for Noah's Ark* first broadcast on ITV1 on Sunday 23 December 2012.

Alan is an Emeritus Professor and Honorary Senior Fellow at the *University of Liverpool* where he specialised in Hebrew and other ancient Semitic Languages. He is a former Librarian at *Tyndale House*, Cambridge and served as guest preacher at LCF's *Service of Thanksgiving* in Manchester in 1995 held during that year's *Umbrella* conference.

- Since his retirement our member **Kenneth Whittaker** has

had time **to** write hymns and carols and to compose music for some of them.

Kenneth has now published some of his Christmas songs in an A4 pamphlet ***Ken's Carol Time***. This includes the words of the carols, musical notation, and suggestions for existing hymn tunes which match the words.

Kenneth says that he has a few remaining copies of the pamphlet available and that anyone interested in receiving a copy should contact him at 193 Lumb Lane, Audenshaw, Manchester, M34 5RX.

## **RECORDS MANAGEMENT**

Helen Precious, a member of a church in Lindfield, West Sussex, reports that her church is starting a new development project and they need to record all the ongoing documentation associated with it and keep a chronological log. Helen thinks that what they need is some kind of records management system.

Does anyone have recommendations of good (preferably free) ones that would meet this small scale need? Also, are there individuals out there who might offer this service as a business or on a voluntary basis?

If you can help, please contact Helen at [helen@helenandjoe.co.uk](mailto:helen@helenandjoe.co.uk)

## **LION FICTION**

Leading Christian publisher *Lion Hudson* is launching a new range of

fiction titles in March 2013 with a special emphasis on crime, women's fiction and fantasy novels.

The *Lion Fiction* list will mark a return to the imprint by three established authors: **Stephen Lawhead**, **Fay Sampson** and **Pam Rhodes**.

The latest novels from Stephen Lawhead are ***The Skin Map*** and ***The Bone House***, the first two titles from his ***Bright Empires*** science fiction series based on parallel universes and quantum physics. Lion will also be publishing Lawhead's ***Avalon*** which transposes the familiar story of King Arthur into a contemporary setting.

Fay Sampson, author of both popular fantasy and historical novels, is working on a new crime series and the next title ***Death on Lindisfarne*** will appear in the Spring.

Popular ***Songs of Praise*** presenter Pam Rhodes will be launching her new women's fiction series.

Other writers represented in the list will include past LCF interviewee **Donna Fletcher Crow**, with her ***Monastery Murders*** series.

Commissioning Editor Tony Collins says that *Lion Fiction* titles will “draw, subtly, upon the great narrative themes of transformation, growth, sacrifice, redemption, the power of guilt and the possibility of forgiveness”.

Readers may recall that *Lion Publishing* stopped publishing fiction some years ago. However, some time later the company acquired the *Monarch* imprint, whose list included

some fiction titles. The new *Lion Fiction* list will include some re-packaged novels first published by *Monarch*, including titles from popular authors **Frank Peretti** and **Francine Rivers**.

## **LEWIS AT THE ABBEY**

A memorial stone to writer and scholar **C.S. Lewis** is to be placed in Poets' Corner in *Westminster Abbey* in 2013. A service will take place on 22 November 2013 to mark the fiftieth anniversary of his death. Lewis will join such greats as John Keats, William Blake, and T.S. Eliot in a tradition going back six hundred years.

**Vernon White**, Canon Theologian at the Abbey, says that Lewis was an “*extraordinarily imaginative and rigorous thinker and writer*” who “*was able to convey the Christian faith in a way that made it both credible and attractive to a wide range of people*”. For further information, please see: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/entertainment-arts-20426778>

Canon White tells me that he expects that the Lewis service will be open to the public and that the Abbey will also be organising a symposium on Lewis around the same time. Watch the Abbey web site at [www.westminster-abbey.org/](http://www.westminster-abbey.org/) for details.

## **CHRISTIAN RESOURCES DIRECTORY**

Does anyone have any experience of using the **Christian Resources Directory**, the on-line replacement for the **UK Christian Handbook**, launched by the *Bible Society* a year or so ago.

I was surprised to find, on a recent visit to the **Directory** site, how many well known Christian organisations are still not listed. A few random examples include the *Evangelical Alliance*, the *London Institute for Contemporary Christianity*, *Scripture Union* and *Lion Hudson*.

Incredibly, organisations such as *The Salvation Army* and *The Lawyers' Christian Fellowship* are listed alphabetically under “*The*” rather than under *Salvation* or *Lawyers*.

As it stands, the **Directory** does not seem to be a wholly satisfactory substitute for the printed UKCH of former years.

You can find the **Christian Resources Directory** at <http://directory.biblesociety.org.uk>

## **NEW TECHNOLOGY**

Author and priest **Jonah Lynch** is a big fan of technology but he also believes that, for all its marvellous gifts, technology is stealing something special from us in the twenty-first century. His concerns

about some of the negative aspects of the Internet and social media are expressed in a new book ***The Scent of Lemons: technology and relationships in the age of Facebook***, published by Darton, Longman, and Todd, price £9.99, ISBN 978-0232529586.

The negative and positive aspects of the Internet are also explored by **David Clark** in his ***You, Your Family and the Internet***, published by Day One, price £5.99, ISBN 978-1846253409. The author explains how Christians can understand the dangers and opportunities offered by the Internet and encourages readers to draw on biblical principles to help them to apply these to the dangers at hand.

## **WESTMINSTER CENTENARY**

The **Methodist Central Hall**, Westminster, celebrated its centenary in 2012 with special services and activities including a broadcast service on BBC Radio Four and two "Gatherings" - a "*Songs of Praise*" style service with Pam Rhodes and a "*Good Sports*" evening before last summer's Olympic Games.

A centenary booklet ***Remember, Rejoice, Renew*** includes contributions from members of the Central Hall staff and short articles on the various aspects of the church's work. These include its healing ministry, its mid-week services, its alternative worship group, its children's work, and its conference centre.

**Paul Moynihan** and **Frank Waller** contribute an article on the *Epworth Archive*, now also known as the *Book Room*, the Central Hall's small library of books from the former *Epworth Press* and *Methodist Publishing House* which closed down several years ago. The article records that two volunteer librarians supplied by the *Librarians' Christian Fellowship* - Janet White and Elizabeth Williams - catalogued and classified the books using the Dewey system. The collection was visited by the then President and Vice President of the *Methodist Conference* - the Rev. **Lionel Osborn** and Mrs. **Ruth Pickles** - on Sunday 8 January 2012.

Now that the library is up and running it is available by appointment for the use of researchers, scholars and other interested persons. LCF members may have a further role to play in bringing the existence of this unique collection of Methodist history and theology to the attention of friends, colleagues or library users likely to be interested. For more information please contact Frank Waller at [fwaller@c-h-w.co.uk](mailto:fwaller@c-h-w.co.uk) Tel. 020 7654 3826.

## **TOGETHER AGAIN**

LCF readers will be interested to know that a new magazine for the Christian book trade was launched in January 2013 to replace the earlier ***Christian Marketplace*** which ceased publication in September of



last year.

**Together** is to be a forty-eight page, A4, bi-monthly magazine published by *Christian Resources Together*, organisers of the annual retreat for suppliers and booksellers within the religious book trade. The magazine has been launched following discussions with retailers and suppliers who expressed a desire to see the continuation of an independent printed trade magazine.

The team behind the new publication are **Steve** and **Mandy Briars**, of *Christian Resources Together*, **Clem Jackson**, former Editor of ***Christian Marketplace***, and LCF associate member **Eddie Olliffe** (who is also a trustee of the *Christian Book Promotion Trust* and its *Speaking Volumes* library scheme).

The first issue of the magazine was a free of charge twenty-five page preview issue. LCF readers in the United Kingdom should find a complimentary copy included in this mailing courtesy of the publishers.

The first issue of the full forty-eight page publication will follow in March 2013 and will be available on subscription. Although ***Together*** is intended primarily for Christian booksellers and publishers, the contents will be of interest to Christian librarians interested in keeping abreast of Christian books and media and developments within the Christian book trade.

Details of how to subscribe are included in the first issue and further information is available from Steve Briars, Christian Resources

Together, P.O. Box 995, Aylesbury, HP20 9HU. E-mail [steve@christianresourcestogether.co.uk](mailto:steve@christianresourcestogether.co.uk)  
Tel. 01296 489860.

## **A WORD FROM THE SPONSORS**

Most readers will be familiar with the *Christian Book Promotion Trust* and its *Speaking Volumes* project in which churches are encouraged to donate popular Christian paperbacks to their local public and school libraries and other institutions.

This year *Speaking Volumes* will be taking on a new role as one of the main sponsors of *Christian Resources Together*, the annual conference and retreat for members of the Christian book trade. The other main sponsors are the *Bible Society* and *Christian Copyright Licensing International*. Additional sponsorship is provided by *Hodder and Stoughton*, *Kingsway Publications* and *Integrity Music*.

The next retreat is to be held from **Monday 29 – Tuesday 30 April 2013** at the **Hayes Conference Centre, Swanwick, Alfreton, Derbyshire, DE55 1AU**. Speakers will include Dr. **Tom Wright**, **Jeff Lucas** and **Tony Horsfall** and worship will be led by **Nikki Fletcher** of *Holy Trinity Brompton*.

Details of *Christian Resources Together* can be obtained from Steve Briars at the address above.

For details of *Speaking Volumes*, please contact Paula

Renouf, P.O. Box 1070,  
Whittlesford, Cambridgeshire, CB22  
4WX. E mail  
[info@speakingvolumes.org.uk](mailto:info@speakingvolumes.org.uk) Web site  
[www.speakingvolumes.org.uk](http://www.speakingvolumes.org.uk)

## **FROM THE SECRETARY'S MAILBAG**

LCF Chair **Louise Manners'** *Second Word* comments on Justice Jeremy Cooke in the Winter 2012 ***Christian Librarian*** (p. 5) attracted the following forthright response from our long standing reader **Barbara Gilman**:

*"I was surprised by Louise's short article in the Winter 2012 issue.*

*I looked up the judge in question on the Internet. It is not his experience which is very worrying, it is his existence in the role of judge which is worrying!*

*The Lawyers' Christian Fellowship gives me cause for concern and undoubtedly could risk compromising the independence of the judiciary. In this instance, what the National Secular Society had to say was absolutely spot on, and quite fair to Christianity. I do not want a Christian state any more than I want an Islamic one. Apparently even mainstream evangelicals regard the Lawyers' Christian Fellowship as extreme. It does not bode well for other Christian professional organisations when someone in Louise's position appears to be defending people who wish to impose their own concept of*

*Christian law and practice on a secular society thus displaying precisely the same attitude as those wishing to establish an Islamic state, albeit by different means.*

*My feeling is that some Christians have been panicked into taking such a stance because of the perceived threat of Islamisation on the one hand, and/or secularism on the other. But our own LCF does not need to go down that route."*

What do others think? Send me your comments and we will debate Barbara's points in these pages.

## **CURRENT AWARENESS**

- (LCF member) Sara Batts describes her PhD research into church web sites, supervised by the Department of Information Science at *Loughborough University*, in a recent article.

Sara surveyed one hundred and forty seven church web sites and also interviewed church leaders. She found that sixty six percent of English churches currently have web sites. However, the information on these sites is not always kept up to date and twelve per cent have information that is three months out of date.

Five per cent of church web sites fail to provide the times of Sunday services while twenty-two per cent do not include a map.

Only nine of the sites surveyed include material specifically for visitors, and several of these include

unexplained church language or jargon.

Eight per cent of the web sites visited have a blog and six per cent are linked to some kind of social-media service for the local church.

*What's the Point of a Web Site* appears in the **Church Times** for 30 November 2012, p. 35.

- Olly Grant's *Clued-Up Confessor on the Box* explains the background to a recent television series based on the classic detective stories of G.K. Chesterton.

BBC1's **Father Brown** took some liberties with the originals by moving the stories from the Edwardian and inter-war periods and placing them in a Cotswold village in the 1950s.

However, the makers of the series were keen to retain the sense of spiritual vocation that motivated the work of Chesterton's famous priest detective.

Chesterton created Father Brown after realising that priests who spend much of their time listening to men's sins are unlikely to be wholly unaware of human evil.

Unlike other detectives, Father Brown investigates crimes in the light of eternity. He realises that, if someone has committed a crime, their soul is in peril and they need to seek salvation.

The article appears in the **Church Times** for 11 January 2013, pp. 20, 30.

- Wm Paul Young believes that the popular success of his novel **The Shack** (Hodder, £7.99, ISBN 978-

0340979495) is "one of the funniest things that God has perpetrated on the human race".

The book was rejected by twenty-six publishers before being self-published. Since then, however, eighteen million copies have been sold in forty-one languages.

**The Shack** features Mack and his life-changing encounter with God after the tragic death of his youngest child.

The follow-up novel **Cross Roads** (Hodder, £16.99, ISBN 978-1444745986) has more humour and a larger cast of characters. It tells the story of a multi-millionaire, Tony, who, while in a coma, is given the opportunity to review his life and make choices about the future.

Although millions of readers have embraced **The Shack**, some church leaders have denounced it as sacrilege, largely because of the author's unconventional portrayal of the Trinity.

Sarah Meyrick's *Moving on from the Shack* appears in the **Church Times** for 4 January 2013, pp. 16-17.

- Writer Francis Spufford talks about his Christian faith in a recent interview.

Although brought up in the *Church of England* he dropped out of religion for a number of years. He returned to faith at the age of thirty-five when Christian talk about sin, forgiveness and redemption started to make sense.

His book **Unapologetic** (Faber, £12.99, ISBN 978-0571225217) was not written to

make converts but to ask people to recognise that Christianity makes surprising emotional sense.

Spufford does not regard himself as a “*Christian author*”, in the sense of someone who writes within a world of specifically Christian books, but as a writer who happens to be a Christian. He expects to write future books on subjects where God is not explicitly present.

*Why I Am a Christian* appears in ***Christianity*** for January 2013, p. 25.

- Novelist and historian A.N. Wilson talks about his “*lapse back into religion*” and return to the Christian faith in a recent interview.

Wilson still finds difficulty in understanding certain Christian doctrines and finds it difficult to reconcile the merciless nature of the world with belief in a loving God. However, he finds that his doubts about religion are not as great as his doubts about materialism.

Wilson speaks with appreciation of the parish church that he currently attends but dissents from the official position of the *Church of England* on such questions as homosexuality.

He remains an admirer of the Enlightenment, with its scientific quest and innovation, but believes that it was too optimistic about human progress.

His latest novel ***The Potter's Hand*** (Atlantic, £17.99, ISBN 978-1848879515) is inspired by the life of the craftsman and industrialist Josiah Wedgwood.

Mark Oakley's *Ready to Live in*

*a Poem* appears in the ***Church Times, Books for Christmas***, 23 November 2012, pp. 11-12.

- Rachel Mann's *Twilight and the Story to Live By* marks last year's release of the fifth and final film based on Stephenie Meyer's ***Twilight*** series of teenage novels.

Mann suggests that these vampire books and films play with Christian themes and challenge the Church to re-discover its own true narrative.

Religion is rarely mentioned explicitly in the stories, but Stephenie Meyer is a committed Mormon and faith is the barely disguised sub-text of the books.

The cover image of the first novel, showing a woman's hand holding a shiny apple, is an obvious reference to the Adam and Eve story and the theme of forbidden fruit.

The love story of the human girl Bella and the vampire Edward could be seen as an exposition of Isaiah 11 in which natural enemies, the lion and the lamb, are reconciled and lie down together.

However, some features of the books are disturbing. The books have an old-fashioned, even oppressive, view of male/female relationships and the portrayal of Edward's family of good vampires verges on a celebration of the worst excesses of consumerism and capitalism.

The article appears in the ***Church Times*** for 16 November 2012, p. 16.

- (Past LCF speaker) Dave Roberts looks at the response of the Christian community to the success of the *Twilight* novels and films.

An extreme view is provided by the American pastor, Mark Driscoll, who writes "*Twilight is for teenage girls what porn is for teenage boys: sick, twisted, evil, dangerous, deceptive and popular*".

Past history would suggest that a combination of Christianity, fantasy horror stories, sex and alternative spiritualities has always been a successful publishing strategy.

The *Twilight* stories promote the idea of powers that are latent within the human personality rather than spiritual gifts that come from the Holy Spirit.

The vampire, Alice, is obsessed with material goods and embodies the values of consumer culture. The heroine, Bella, is obsessed with physical beauty in contrast to the Christian message that our identity can be rooted in something more beautiful and mystical: God's unconditional love.

*Twilight Out of the Shadows* appears in *Christianity*, January 2013, pp. 14-15.

- In *Pilgrim's Progress Receives a Twenty-First Century Makeover. Was this a good idea?* Simon Parke describes some of the factors that influenced his attempts to update John Bunyan's classic story.

Society has changed since Bunyan wrote his book in the

seventeenth century. Changes have included the growth of technology and social media; a growing awareness of psychology; and the rise of explicit atheism and secularism.

These are all reflected in Parke's *Pippa's Progress: a Pilgrim's Journey to Heaven* (Darton, Longman and Todd, £9.99, ISBN 978-0232529458) where the central character visits the city of Socialmeja, encounters the Sea of Identity and the Rock of Hidden Self; and debates faith with a character called Millicent Atheist.

The article appears in the *Church of England Newspaper*, England on Sunday, 25 November 2012, p. E1.

## **EBSCO PUBLISHING**

The *Librarians' Christian Fellowship* has an electronic licensing relationship with *EBSCO Publishing*, "the world's most prolific aggregator of full text journals, magazines and other sources". The full texts of our two main publications - the *Librarians' Christian Fellowship E-Newsletter* and *Christian Librarian* - are available on *EBSCO Publishing's* databases. Subscribers are able to retrieve articles from our publications and the Fellowship will receive a small commission for each article.

# MEMBERSHIP MATTERS

**News from the Membership Secretary:  
Janice Paine, MCLIP, 22 Queensgate Gardens,  
396 Upper Richmond Road, Putney, London,  
SW15 6JN. Tel. 020 8785 2174**

A warm welcome to one new member.

We would like remind current members that subscription renewals are now due for 2013. It would be greatly appreciated if payment could be sent **before the end of April**. Minimum subscription rates for 2013 are: £26 (full rate), £16 (retired, unemployed and students), £16 each for two members at the same address; overseas (outside Europe) please add £5 for postage.

If you have **changed address, job, etc.**, please let us know as soon as possible.

## NEW MEMBER

[Redacted]

## CHANGES TO MEMBERSHIP DETAILS

[Redacted]

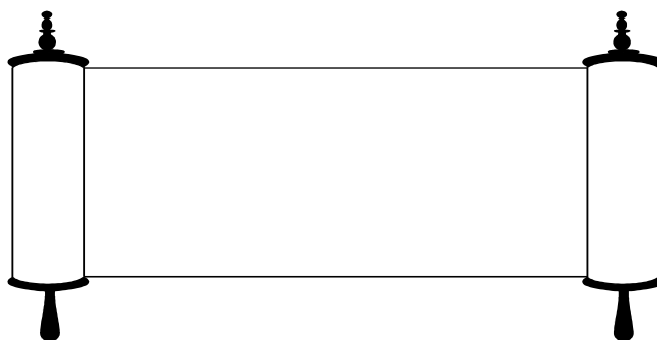
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## ARTICLES

**ROBERT HICKS** reminds us that that many documents from the time of the early Church are no longer available. He suggests that a knowledge of how our present New Testament was written and compiled can help us to understand and interpret the biblical texts

# ***LOST CHRISTIAN LETTERS OF THE FIRST CENTURY***



The Annual Public Lecture of the Librarians' Christian Fellowship held on Saturday 6 October 2012 in the Redcliffe Anglican/Methodist Church Centre, Prewett Street, Bristol, BS1 6PB.

### Our Priceless New Testament

I've been interested in the incredible wonder, truth, inspiration and rareness of our New Testament for years. My first introduction to it came when, after having been tongue-tied and also dyslexic, the surgeon who carried out the operation advised me to find a big book and write it out. The only big book I could find was the King James Bible, all 1460 pages of it. It became my education and my school. Ever since I wrote it out fifty-five years ago it has become like a magnet to me, and I've found myself drawn to it. This story of how I encountered the Holy Bible of 1611 is told in two books: ***A Boy and His Bible*** and ***Thank You King James***.

## **The Sanhedrin Letter**

Something that has interested me is why our New Testament isn't larger than the twenty-seven documents. Why aren't there a thousand books or even a thousand articles? Why have we been left with so few? Look and you'll see that there were many pieces of writing around. We know for example, that Paul received letters from the Sanhedrin authorising him to persecute the church outside of Jerusalem. So Paul has this collection of letters, and there were many occasions when he would have used a letter to justify the route that he has taken, which was the opposite to the one they wanted. He could demonstrate the great zeal for the religion that he came from, just by showing them these documents. But the letters themselves are missing. So the first potential document which the New Testament refers to has been lost! It is possible we have echoes of the document which he took to Damascus, after the persecution in Jerusalem when Stephen was martyred, and we may have some grains of the things that might have been in the letter.

## **Acts 15 Letter**

Another letter which is perhaps surprisingly absent is the larger or actual letter which appears in Acts 15, where Paul has come back off his first missionary journey, beginning his second missionary journey to Jerusalem with Barnabas. He goes to the elders of the church in Jerusalem, including the Apostles, and says there is a big problem: there are many people who believe the Gentiles should practise the Jewish faith if they want to become Christians, or at least certain essential parts of the Jewish faith. To counter this, Paul was given letters from the apostles and elders (v.23). One would have thought that any time he entered a hostile situation where they held that the Jewish law must be upheld, Paul would have been able to show them the letter from Jerusalem. He may well have done, of course, but we don't have the letter itself. What we have is a synopsis of the letter composed by Luke, leaving us with an abbreviation of the letter in the Acts of the Apostles. If it weren't for his synopsis we wouldn't have any idea of the content of those longer and fuller letters.

## **Paul's Letters**

Much of the correspondence of Paul is similarly fragmentary. There were four letters to the Corinthians that we know about, which we might call A, B, C and D. Our 1 and 2 Corinthians are B and D. There are references to those two other letters in 1 and 2 Corinthians but we don't have them. Equally, there were two letters to Philippi, but we only have one. It has been



suggested that the missing letter was incorporated in the letters to the Ephesians or the Colossians, but this is conjectural. We don't have the letter itself. How many letters might the Apostle Paul have written during his life? He must have written many: as we know from the end of the existing letters he had different secretaries. It seems likely that Paul wrote a great many letters, and what we have is just the tip of the iceberg.

## **Apostles' Letters**

But there isn't just Paul to consider. What about the other apostles, in Jerusalem? Aside from the handful of epistles, we have nothing in the way of any correspondence. In the Gospels, a great deal of attention is given to the Twelve. The Gospel writers tell us that Jesus spends all night praying that he might select the right apostles; he spends time with them; he effectively gives them a manual (Matthew 10) so that they might go out after his death into the villages and towns and further afield; the Great Commission is given to them to go out and preach the Gospel into all the world. So is it not likely that there would have been some written communication by letter between them and other Christians? If so, a large amount of apostolic correspondence has been lost.

I discovered late in life that I had a sibling, a brother who worked with books in charity shops. In one of these he came across the eight volumes of John Wesley's writings, which contain over four thousand letters. It was an essential part of how John Wesley worked. In the same way, it seems inconceivable that when their task was one of communication, the apostles wouldn't have used the written word themselves.

I have read many of the Wesley letters, yet not one of them comes anywhere near the strength and spirituality of a single New Testament document ; not even the smallest.

## **City Letters**

Consider also the first centres of Christianity. First of all the Jerusalem church: why don't we have any letters from there? We know that just before the destruction of the Temple in AD 70, the people in the church there packed up their bags and left, as Jesus had instructed. God's light was going to shine from cities other than Jerusalem. But even in that situation one might have expected to find them keeping documents along with other treasures, as documents were highly prized. Did they decide that such things were too dangerous and disposed of them, or did they pack them up and they were subsequently lost? Whatever the cause, we have no surviving archive of letters sent to or from the Jerusalem church.

## **Ephesus Library**

The situation is paralleled in the non-Christian world at that time. For example, we know that all the documents from the great library of Ephesus were lost. There were thousands of papyrus scrolls there. The story goes that Antony wanted to give a love gift to Cleopatra, so he put the whole library into three ships at Ephesus to take them to the great city of Alexandria, which had the largest library in the world. A storm, though, caused the ships and their precious cargo to be lost. I don't know if this is simply a myth or if the story has some truth in it, but in the final result there was nothing left in Ephesus.

## **Antioch**

What of Antioch? This was the first great missionary church revealed to us in the Acts of the Apostles. Paul and Barnabas were commissioned and anointed there in Acts 13, and then sent out by those at Antioch to other parts of the empire, even as far as Rome itself. Did the church of Antioch not keep in touch with the new Christian communities? Yet there is nothing remaining in the way of correspondence either to or from that church.

## **Ephesus Again**

We've just mentioned Ephesus the city. But it was also a major Christian centre, with a mighty church. Some of the great Christian leaders of the first century ministered in Ephesus. Tradition says that the disciple John took Mary the mother of Jesus to Ephesus. I think there is a lot of truth in that. In any event, the church did become powerful there. Yet we don't have a single letter from that church. When I went to see Ephesus, what struck me was the number of cats around the place where Mary was supposed to have lived. But no letters!

## **Letters from Corinth**

We have nothing from Corinth to Paul. We are told they sent questions, and part of the difficulty of understanding Paul's letters to Corinth is that we have the answers but not the questions. I find it peculiar that our church leaders often want to debate the answers that Paul gives without knowing the questions. For example, Paul says at one point that women are allowed to pray and prophesy in the church (prophesying being another word for teaching). Two chapters later he tells them to keep silent in church. What is

he doing? He's answering questions. Was the problem he was addressing local or universal? Was it that the women were chatting while the men were engaged in a dull debate? We simply don't know because we don't have the necessary correspondence in that direction which would enable us to give a definite answer. Unfortunately, though, the church has used those words of Paul to put half the church at a psychological disadvantage, all because of a shortage of information. The silence of Scripture is a powerful thing, and there are quite a wide range of issues where we have to reckon with this silence. The wise teacher will always distinguish between a changing and transitional culture, in contrast to the abiding and permanent Gospel truths which are a reflection of the very nature of God.

## **Alexandria**

Another major centre of Christianity was the Egyptian city of Alexandria. A number of early manuscripts of New Testament books came from Alexandria, where the climate appears to have aided their preservation. Yet we have no letter from Alexandria itself, not even a fragment. Alexandria possessed possibly the greatest library of the ancient world and even though Julius Caesar tried on more than one occasion to destroy it, using the scrolls as fuel to heat his public baths, it was so vast that he failed. Today, we have only a few manuscripts from that library, many of them incomplete. However, we do have one complete volume, called ***The Septuagint***, which was a Greek translation of the Hebrew Bible. It was from this Greek translation that the New Testament quoted so often, and it was the Bible of the Christian church for a long time. Even today, scholars use it in a productive way by comparing it with the original Hebrew.

## **Key People**

So we have nothing from the major centres, and only a small number from a few of the apostles. Think of some of the New Testament people: Barnabas, Timothy, John Mark, Titus, Luke, Apollos, Aquila, Phoebe, and so on. Think of the long lists of names found at the end of some of these letters. Did nobody write to say thank you? Of course they did. It's the correspondence which is missing, not the thanks. When Paul did a collection for the poor people in and around Jerusalem, owing to the famine and the lack of help that Jews normally received from the authorities there, he asked that representatives of the different regions take the money they have collected to Jerusalem themselves. (Paul didn't want to be seen to having his hand in the bag, so to speak.) There simply must have been letters going back from Jerusalem.

I need to mention that while I long to read letters written by early church leaders or the apostles, and from church centres such as Jerusalem, I'm aware that many writers who wanted to give credibility to their writings attributed what they penned to the very people I wish I could hear from. The Gnostic Gospels are a good example – the Gospel of Thomas was not written by Thomas, for instance; the Secret Book of James was not written by James; the Gospel of Judas was not written by Judas and the Apocalypse of Paul was not written by Paul. These were called “*fictitious history*” by Irenaeus and Eusebius said they were “*the forgeries of heretics ...to be cast aside as altogether absurd and impious*”.

### **Priceless New Testament**

What does this teach us? Let me suggest a way of looking at this. If you were on the ship *Titanic* and you had survived, and all that you had to remember it afterwards was a printed menu from a dinner you had on board, would you have burnt it? Or would it be priceless document? Today people will pay extraordinary sums of money for a *Titanic* artefact. Consider then that twenty-seven extraordinarily rare, priceless documents make up our New Testament. My question to you as thinkers, and as members of the church, is do you read those documents and do you encourage others to do the same? If 99% of the first century documents are not with us what are we going to do with the 1% that we have?

### **Echoes in the New Testament**

Before moving on, it's worth stopping to pick out the echoes of possible lost documents embedded in the New Testament. Luke records Paul quoting a saying of Jesus: “*It is more blessed to give than to receive.*” (Acts 20:35) You will not find that saying anywhere in the Gospels, but Paul is quoting it from somewhere. Could there have been a document in circulation called '*The sayings of Jesus*'? And could this quote have come from that? Perhaps. Scattered throughout the New Testament are Old Testament prophecies, and if you pull them together into a table you will see that some of them are quoted again and again. It seems to point to there being a book of prophecies that people had access to, as well as the Old Testament itself. Two of them quoted regularly are Isaiah 53 and Psalm 118. Others would be the '*Being justified through faith*' and '*Righteousness with God*' verses. The latter is quoted three times. Psalm 118 is the most quoted passage in our New Testament. One has to ask why out of a large book composed over a period of fifteen hundred years by thirty to forty people, this bit in particular is quoted so often. One answer is that when Jews went up to Jerusalem for

Passover they would sing the Songs of Ascent, and one of these is contained in our Psalm 118. The children would have learnt it from an early age, and so we shouldn't be surprised to find this so prevalent. But it is strange that Luke also quotes from it too. It would not have been part of his upbringing. So it is quite plausible that Luke had access to another book of prophecies. The person who compiled it saw many references to Jesus in Psalm 118. Remember that verse which begins "*The stone which the builders rejected*", referred to five times in the New Testament. This comes from Psalm 118.

## **Deeds of Jesus**

Think also of the deeds of Jesus. Looking at Mark and Luke we see an abundance of deeds referred to. Luke tells us that he did his research first and then wrote the Gospel. Did he use a document with the deeds of Jesus in? Could that have been written by Peter? Mark may also have used documents written by Peter, and perhaps he also used the same deeds document that Luke did.

## **Teaching of Jesus**

There is the teaching of Jesus too. Matthew puts the teaching of Jesus in five separate groups. One group is answering the question, '*How should one live as a Christian?*' and we call it the Sermon on the Mount (chapters 5 – 7). Another question is '*How should we be missionaries in an alien environment?*'. This is found in chapter 10. A third question, '*Where did Jesus get his authority from?*' is in chapters 8 and 9. There ten miracles are put together to demonstrate the authority of Jesus. It's quite possible that Matthew used further documents as well. Seven parables are collected together in chapter 13. If you wanted to know about discipline in the church, or about humility, forgiveness and unity in the church, you have a whole chapter (18) of teaching given to you in Matthew's Gospel. Incidentally if you want to know about future events just read the last few chapters before Jesus' crucifixion. In other words, we have the teaching of Jesus in documents in our New Testament loud and clear for us to read for ourselves.

## **Hymns**

Consider hymns. Do we have echoes of a first century hymn book? Philippians 2 is a clear example. In the letter to Ephesians it says "*Sing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs ... sing in your heart and make melody to the Lord*". Where is the hymn book for that? We know of a hymn book

from the second century, a collection of about forty-two hymns. If you search for them on *Google* you can find them very quickly. They are called the '*Odes of Solomon*'. Some of these may very well date from the First century, because a hymnbook will contain things which people are already singing. First century hymn books may well have been in existence then and we can pick out bits of them in our New Testament. Also, have you ever wondered why we only have the words to the one hundred and fifty Psalms and not their music!

## **Faithful Sayings**

Near the end of his life, Paul wrote three letters: 1 Timothy, 2 Timothy and Titus. Five times in these letters he introduces a quote by the phrase, "*This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance*". Here are a couple of those quotes: - "*They that believe in God should maintain good works*", "*Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners*". What is it that Paul is referring to when he gives us this handful of sayings? He is quoting from something. I think we'd all have loved to have seen the manuscript that he was quoting from. Imagine if there was a document called '*One hundred sayings worthy of acceptance*'! Well, we have five, so my advice is to meditate on those.

These sayings are both evangelistic and pastoral and I have profited many times from reflecting on them, which I always see as a privilege.

## **Scrolls**

I'd like now to consider the New Testament documents from the point of view of a first century librarian, a keeper of scrolls. How do you think a person wrote on the scrolls? Do you think he had a desk? We know he would have rolled it out a section at a time, exposing the next part of the papyrus. And we also know that papyrus was made of vegetable material, so it corrupted fairly quickly. It wouldn't have had a very long shelf-life. The way they wrote was on their laps. They had a board and put the scroll on that. The space opened in front of them equated to about two sheets of our paper, and they wrote with a heavy ink, which required a period of time for drying. So a scribe would have to put it down to dry, and in the meantime do something else. In other words, the writing out on scrolls was a process. Anyone who has seen the Dead Sea Scroll of Isaiah in the 'Shrine of the Book in Jerusalem' will immediately appreciate the process.

## **Units**

In the larger books, such as the Gospels, the process was made up of units. In Matthew (the teaching of the promised Saviour) you have around a hundred units. Which means the Gospel of Matthew could have been written in a hundred sittings. Mark is shorter (the deeds of an active Saviour) so that equates to seventy units, whilst Luke (the compassion of a universal Saviour) and Acts are longer – about a hundred and ten units each. John (the experience of a personal Saviour) could have been written in ninety sittings. Two points come out of this. Firstly, a unit is likely to follow a particular thought. Secondly, the units would not necessarily have been interlocking. So with Matthew for example, the process was not a matter of starting at chapter 1 and working all the way through to chapter 28. The author would have kept elements in his mind from one unit to the next but we must not expect the same continuity that we find in a modern book. A scroll then was made up of units of thought because of the style of writing.

## **Doctrine**

Many dogmatic interpretations of the Bible have been arrived at without reference to these units of thought, and if this had been taken into account it's likely that different conclusions might have been reached. Some of these conclusions have led to divisions in churches. It was not until the second and third centuries that books replaced the papyrus scroll. Then the page could simply be turned. This made a big difference. But this was not the way our New Testament books were conceived and that earlier style of writing must surely inform our interpretation of the New Testament. We have many different 'labels' in the way the book of Revelation is interpreted. Maybe, understanding the process the book had gone through, would have directed us to see an ever increasing circle of Gospel truths, rather than one particular way to interpret the entire book.

## **Paul's 'Urgent' Letters**

External factors necessarily affect the composition of a letter. Paul's letters, for example, can be broken into three categories. The first is the 'urgent' group, including Galatians (this letter was written to a number of churches in that region - Galatia covered a wide area and there were several Christian communities to be found there), 1 & 2 Thessalonians, 1 & 2 Corinthians (though larger) and Philipians. You can sense Paul's urgency in all of these when you read them. He intends to write back to them quickly, and that is reflected in the writing.

## **Paul's 'Thoughtful' Letters**

The second group is the 'thoughtful letters', and these include Romans, Ephesians and Colossians. Romans and Ephesians show no problems within those churches. They show Paul as a man of thought, in Romans demonstrating his academic thought and in Ephesians showing more emotional thought. Colossians combines his thought world with certain problems which had arisen in the Colossian church. 'Thoughtful' letters would inevitably have taken longer to write than the urgent ones, as many scholars of the Greek text are anxious to highlight for us.

## **Paul's Final Letters**

The last group, 1 and 2 Timothy and Titus, are the 'final' letters where Paul is concerning himself with how the churches should manage when he is dead and gone. Using this background helps us to understand and interpret Paul's letters. These 'final' letters cover a range of cultural and changing concepts, blended with the timeless truths of the Gospel which are for all ages. Wisdom is needed to discern between the two.

## **"Pilgrim" Letters**

The New Testament also includes what I call the 'pilgrim letters'. These are concerned with how the Christians are consistent in their faith and go on with the Lord Jesus. The long letter of Hebrews falls into this category as do those of James and Peter and Jude. Another style of letter is in creative cartoons, namely Revelation. It is quite brilliantly produced - and totally visual. You can see the realistic cartoons as you begin to read this amazing book.

## **Apostolic Letters**

You then come to the final letters of the New Testament written at the end of the first century, these being 1, 2 & 3 John, which are 'apostolic letters'. What these are doing is to remind Christians to hold on to the Gospel of Jesus Christ. You will see phrases like *'that which was from the beginning'*, and this idea of the 'beginning' is found regularly throughout. 1 John 1 tells us about something John experienced sixty years earlier: he heard something, he saw something, he found something, he handled something. He says this is what



he wants others to experience so that there can be fellowship between them, fellowship with the Father and fellowship with the Son. It's about that apostolic connection and there are many churches that want to go away from that. Whilst we can appreciate the rarity of the New Testament documents we must also try to understand how the New Testament came together as documents.

## **Paul's Letter to the Romans**

But I'd like to add a final thought on first century composition, and in particular the structure of the book of Romans. We find that it contains five self-contained articles. The first one deals with sinners; the second one deals with the Saviour; the third one deals with the saints; the fourth deals with salvation; and the last one deals with the living sacrifice of the Christian. The first has Paul talking like a prophet from the Old Testament (chapters 1 – 3). Then he speaks like a priest with the sacrifice of the blood of Christ, and the new humanity and community that is going to come about (chapters 3 – 5). In the third section he speaks like an apostle, where he takes them from baptism to glory in his teaching to them, showing them the rich blessings of God, the freedom from obligation to the Law and the freedom from death itself (chapters 6 – 8). In the next section he speaks of salvation where they that confess with their mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in their heart that God has raised us from the dead (chapters 9 – 11), making it clear that this is the same for Jews as well as for Gentiles - there is no difference. He makes it clear how the world can hear this wonderful news of salvation, how people will not be saved unless they hear and how beautiful are the feet of those that preach the gospel of peace; and finally this life of sacrifice, the transformed life which we have, presenting our bodies as living sacrifices, both individually and as churches in the community.

Paul's Secretary, mentioned at the end of Romans, may have helped with what I call the 'wrap around' personal letter of Paul, which is found in the first chapter verses 1 – 17 and then chapter 15 v. 14 to the end of the book.

## **Five Articles: One Document**

The question I am raising is how the five sections were linked. One might think that Paul said to himself: "*Well there is this person, Phoebe, who is making a journey (as is described in chapter 16) to Rome. I must write a letter quickly to make sure the letter goes with her, and if I can produce it in time she can carry it to them.*" What we possibly have in Romans is Paul writing documents for himself, to bring out of himself things that he believed. We do much the same. Most of the writing I have done is because I am

exploring something. It helps me to organise my thoughts and to get them into some kind of pattern. Paul was no different. So we have those five Gospel truth articles. It doesn't much matter if he wrote them all at the same time or over two years. He may have written them in a different context. They stand together as truth, but they are units of truth.

## **Conclusion**

I want to suggest to you that large parts of our New Testament are units of truth. If we understand it that way it will be a book that we are not afraid of. No part of it is too big that we can't get our heads round it. They are units of truth found in precious documents which we can read for ourselves.

Thank you for the opportunity to convey my love, appreciation and enthusiasm for our priceless New Testament. I hope my thoughts will inspire and motivate us all to regularly read this New Testament for ourselves.



**Robert Hicks**, is the founder and proprietor of *Creative Publishing* and a publisher of thirty five years' standing.

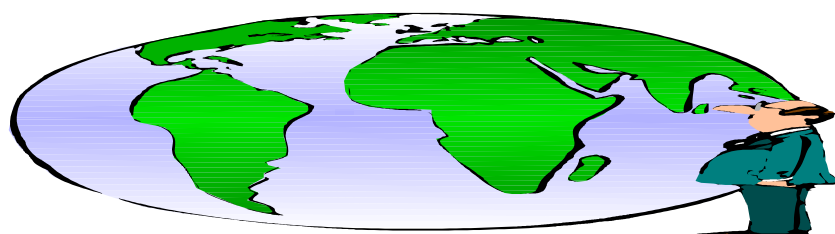
Robert's story is itself extraordinary. Born during a bombing raid in February 1941; born into the overcrowded slums of Birmingham; born severely tongue-tied and dyslexic; born into a family of ten siblings – four of whom he has never seen; deserted by his mother when he was eleven; physically and emotionally abused by his father; he was trapped in his own mind.

Leaving school at the age of fifteen, unable to recite the letters of the alphabet, he accepted the only job available as an errand boy for a family grocer. In spite of all these obstacles, he became one of the most successful retailers in the country, before becoming a publisher out of a “*love for books*”.

The story of Robert's life has been published as a paperback book, James Hastings' ***Thank You King James*** (Day One, £6.00, ISBN 978-1846252327).

**DAVID MATSVERU reports on his own ground-breaking research into the library and information requirements of church leaders in a leading African nation**

# ***INFORMATION NEEDS AND INFORMATION SEEKING BEHAVIOUR OF NAMIBIAN PASTORS***



## **Introduction**

This study investigated the information needs and seeking behaviour of pastors in Namibia. The purpose of the study was to establish the information required by pastors to carry out their work, how they seek information and the problems they encounter in doing so. Pastors devote their lives to serving God by imparting biblical wisdom and theological guidance to both Christians and non-Christians. Their responsibilities include administration, evangelism, preaching, directing prayers or services, community development, public relations, youth services, accounting, member care, teaching and counselling, which includes HIV and AIDS patients. They give people emotional support and comfort in times of sadness or joy. Individuals, families, and nations all rely on them in relation to a number of problems ranging from social to religious issues.

The Namibian President Pohamba in March 2007 called religious leaders to consult on the issue of moral decay in Namibia and in particular the issue of HIV and AIDS (Isaacs, 2007). This shows the importance government has placed on pastors. As pastors work with individuals, families and nations they definitely need information.

This study seeks to establish the information needs and information seeking behaviour of pastors in Namibia. An information need is recognition

that knowledge is inadequate to satisfy a goal (Case, 2006), while information seeking is that conscious effort to acquire information in response to that need (Eskola, 1998).

## **Orientation of the proposed study**

Research on information needs and information seeking behaviour of different information user groups has been carried out over the years, on university students (Eskola, 1998), on theologians (Gorman 1990), on women in small businesses (Mchombu, 2000) and recently on orphans and vulnerable children (OVC) (Mchombu, 2008). However, no studies on the information needs and information seeking behaviour of pastors were available despite the fact that 91.44% of Namibians are Christians (Mandryk, 2010) and pastors are serving them in one way or the other. Pastors play very important roles in the community and as such information service providers need to establish how pastors seek information and what problems they encounter. Verified information can then be used to tailor-make information services to meet pastors' information needs.

## **Statement of the problem**

Pastors train in different institutions and serve in denominations and congregations that vary socially, economically, politically and spiritually, and hence their information seeking behaviours could be affected by their different contexts. Although pastors in Namibia are performing their pastoral roles, it is necessary to know how well equipped and informed they are to deal with pastoral issues.

## **Objectives of the study**

To attain the above broad objective the research will be guided by the following specific objectives:

to establish the information needs and information seeking behaviour of pastors;

to determine perceptions of pastors on how well prepared they think they are for sermons, counselling, teaching etc.;

to establish the information sources used and how they are used; and

to investigate factors affecting pastors' information seeking behaviour.

### **Significance of the study**

The findings of this research will be significant in that they will:

- lead to a better understanding of the pastoral information needs;
- identify the information sources pastors already have access to and the existing gaps in information;
- influence policy and decision makers (churches and Bible colleges) and religious information service providers (theological libraries); and
- contribute to academic knowledge on the subject of information needs and seeking behaviour of pastors.

### **Literature review and the theoretical framework**

A number of databases were searched (LISA, LISTA, and JSTOR). The researcher noted that a number of studies have been conducted on information needs and information seeking behaviour in general. However, nothing was found on information needs and information seeking behaviour of pastors in Namibia or Africa. For this reason, researches conducted elsewhere (Australia, Canada and the United States of America) were considered. In their studies on the information seeking behaviour of theologians, Gorman (1989) and Wicks (1999) found that theologians rely heavily on '*invisible colleges*'. An invisible college refers to a situation where theologians depend on each other for the exchange of ideas. This is the same concept Crane (1972) has referred to as a '*social circle*' or '*social network*'.

According to Wicks, even though pastors use libraries, in most cases they build their personal collection during their time of training. When they go to a library they tend to function independently of librarians. He goes further to say that pastors seek information by themselves; and enjoy browsing shelves and scanning journals. Wicks' study does not give an exact setting of the pastor serving in a local church. It focuses on lecturers and students in a seminary setup. However, the researcher finds this study helpful as it shows how information seeking behaviour is developed in the lives of pastors-to-be. Tanner (1994) argues that it is congregational rules and regulations that govern the pastors' selection of information sources. In other words, Tanner is saying that before a pastor uses an information source he/she evaluates it to see if it does not contradict the doctrines and teachings of the denomination he/she is serving.

In wrestling with HIV and AIDS especially in the African context, issues of spirituality and religion cannot be ignored and this is why on several

occasions the Namibian government has called the pastors to play a role. However, pastors differ in their approach in regards to this issue. Some pastors say HIV is God's judgement on the immoral people while others proclaim AIDS is curable by faith (Dube, 2003, p. 3). Hence the importance of researching on how well equipped and informed they are to deal with these important issues.

Michels (2005) in his qualitative study focused on informal information seeking behaviour of seven biblical studies scholars. The participants turned to other professionals for confirmation and affirmation as they became more self-confident as researchers. This research tends to be very narrow since pastors are involved in numerous activities in the life of a community and not just biblical issues. How one behaves in a class set-up may be different from the way he/she behaves in the field. In a research conducted in America by *Fuller Institute of Church Growth* (1991), 70% (1050) out of 1500 of the pastors revealed that they did not have friends despite the fact that they belonged to a denomination.

While there are no studies found on information needs and information seeking behaviour of pastors in Namibia or Africa, these few studies found from other countries may due to globalisation have a bearing on Namibia. Studies conducted in America reveal that there are gaps in information, in the delivery of services by pastors. In the same study referred to above carried out by *Fuller Institute of Church Growth*, 50% (750) out of 1500 pastors indicated that they were not able to meet the demands of their jobs while 90% revealed they were inadequately trained to cope with ministry demands and hence 33% (495) out of 1500 pastors are resigning every month in America. The failure to meet job demands by these American pastors could be because of various reasons such as lack of knowledge, technological limitations and possibly their level of education. Access to, and awareness of the rightful information is of major importance to the carrying out of pastoral duties.

## **Theoretical Framework**

The study of information needs and information seeking behaviour is known to scholars as user studies (Carr, 2006; Eskola, 1998, Mann, 2005). These studies have resulted in a number of information seeking models. A model is a framework for thinking about a problem and attempts to describe an information-seeking activity, the cause and consequences of that activity (Wilson, 1999). Some of these models are Wilson's (1996) model of information seeking behaviour; Dervin's (2003) sense-making theory; Ellis's (1993) behavioural model of information seeking strategies and Kuhlthau's (1991) model of the stages of information-seeking. Behind these models is the belief that information seeking is a result of the recognition of some need

perceived by the user.

This research is grounded in Wilson's (1996) model of information seeking behaviour and partly in the sense-making theory developed by Dervin (2003) and others. Wilson proposes that information need is not a primary need, but a secondary need that arises out of needs of a more basic kind. In the effort to discover information to satisfy a need, the enquirer is likely to meet with barriers of different kinds. Wilson notes that the context of the needs may be the person himself/herself, or the role demands of the person's work or life.

The central idea of the sense-making theory is that, as people move through time and space, they develop unique points of view from personal experiences and observations, and at some point they come to a gap, where sense runs out, and then needs to be bridged. It is this gap that also causes the information seeker to behave in a certain way in trying to bridge the gap.

When pastors are confronted with information demands in their different roles, they use the information they have accumulated over the years, but when that information becomes inadequate, they look for more information elsewhere.

## **Research Design and methodology**

A survey research design using both quantitative and qualitative methodologies was employed to meet the objectives of the study. The quantitative approach will be used to obtain personal data (gender, level of education, age, denomination etc.), while the qualitative technique will be used to obtain data on knowledge, awareness, feelings, attitudes, and opinions relating to the information seeking behaviour of pastors.

## **Population**

According to Calvin (2011), there are approximately over 1400 trained pastors presiding over congregations in Namibia and these were used as the research population for this study.

## **Sample**

A stratified sample of 200 pastors was taken from different denominations using Walpole's formula for proportions as explained below (Walpole, 1982):

$$i.e. n_i = (N_i / N) n$$

Where:  $n_i$  represents Quota size required,

$N_i$  represents Number of pastors in each denomination

N represents Total study population,  
n represents Total sample size used.

The formula helps to determine the number of pastors that should be taken from each denomination to participate in the research.

### **Data collection instruments**

Two data collection instruments were used in this study: a questionnaire (quantitative) and an interview guide (qualitative). Interviews allowed the researcher to have a deeper and fuller understanding of the feelings and attitudes of the pastors. The questionnaire was used to collect data from the 200 pastors scattered throughout Namibia, while the interview guide was used to gather information from sixteen key informants in Windhoek. The development of the questionnaire was also guided by concepts found in Wilson's Information Behaviour model (1996).

Wilson's model begins with the "*person-in-context*". The context can be the person himself or herself, or the role that the person plays in work, life or the environment. Intervening variables such as psychological factors, demographic background, factors related to one's social role, environmental and information source characteristics might motivate or hinder information seeking. The risk or reward involved may lead to an active or passive information seeking behaviour. The information obtained is then processed and becomes an item of the user's knowledge, and is used directly or indirectly, to influence the environment.

### **Data analysis**

The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) basic level descriptive statistics was used to organise and analyse quantitative data collected through the questionnaire. Qualitative data from the interviews and review of denominational documents was analysed using content analysis.

### **Research findings**

The aim of this investigation was to answer the question: "What are the information needs and information seeking behaviour of pastors in Namibia?" With the many challenges of HIV and AIDS, social and moral decay and other challenges, the Government is turning to religious leaders for assistance. To handle these challenges, pastors need access to up-to-date, reliable, and relevant pastoral information.

The summary of findings is presented according to the following thematic areas: background of the participating pastors; information needs of pastors; information seeking behaviour of pastors; information sources used and how they are used; factors affecting pastors' information seeking



behaviour; levels of information accessibility; perceptions of pastors on their preparedness for their pastoral duties; and suggestions by pastors on improving information service provision.

## **Background information of the participating pastors**

One hundred and thirty-eight pastors participated in the questionnaire and 16 key respondents in Windhoek took part in the interviews. The study showed that the majority (93.48%) of the pastors in Namibia are male, aged between 41 and 50. The study revealed that 57.25% of the pastors have a post-secondary certificate or diploma in theology, and that the Catholic and the ELCRN churches have the highest number (7.97%) of pastors compared to any other single denomination. The study has also shown that the majority of the pastors (53.62%) are relatively new to the pastoral ministry, with less than 10 years of experience.

## **Information needs**

Pastors in Namibia need information for counselling (47.83%), community development (50.72%), administration (45.65%), evangelism (86.96%), preaching (81.16%), directing prayers (75.36%), leading Bible study (74.64%), member care (62.32%), teaching (76.81%), public relations (39.13%), leading a service (71.74%) running a youth programme (65.22%) and for personal growth.

## **Information seeking behaviour of pastors**

Pastors use church documents (46.38%), the Internet (50%), and personal libraries (76.81%), as well as visit places of social gathering to get information about their communities.

## **Information sources used by pastors**

Pastors use formal sources of information such as Bible concordances (65.22%), Bible translations (68.12%), theological works (66.67%), background information to the Bible (55.07%), devotional books (50.72%), books on missions (62.32%), books on pastoral theology (68.12%) books on worship (61.59%) “*very often*”. If they fail to find information in formal sources, they turn to informal sources such as experienced pastors and the Holy Spirit (prayer and fasting). They also use church manuals, lectionaries, writings of

their founders, radio and television.

### **Factors affecting pastors' information seeking behaviour**

The study revealed that information sources are expensive (47.10%); the information is not available in local languages (49.28%); and many pastors have no access to the Internet or computers (55.80%). Pastors generally find it difficult to ask other people for information (42.03%). Other factors include unavailability of good Christian books, information overload, lack of skills to evaluate authenticity of information on the Internet, unavailability of commentaries on some Old Testament books, tribalism, lack of theological libraries, lack of relevant and contextual information and lack of funds to buy the needed information sources.

### **Level of information accessibility**

The study revealed that only information on evangelism (44.20%), preaching (57.25%), directing prayers (49.28%), leading Bible study (47.10%), teaching (47.10%) and leading a service (55.07%) were ranked as "highly accessible".

### **Perceptions of pastors about their preparedness in carrying out their duties**

The study revealed that pastors are only highly prepared to preach (68.12%), direct prayers (54.35%), leading Bible study (58.70%) and teaching (56.52%). During the interviews pastors indicated that it was difficult to measure their effectiveness.

### **Suggestions by pastors on improving information service provision**

The study revealed that pastors suggest that existing information sources be contextualised, re-packaged into local languages and into information sources that are easily accessible. Pastors also indicated that there is need for them to be trained in the use of technology for easy access of pastoral information.

## **Conclusions**

The main objective of this study was to establish the information needs and information seeking behaviour of pastors. This was attained through the achievement of the following specific objectives: establishing the information needs and information seeking behaviour of pastors; determining the perceptions of pastors on their preparedness for their pastoral duties; establishing the information sources used and how they are used; and investigating factors affecting pastors' information seeking behaviour.

### **Information needs and information seeking behaviour of pastors**

Three primary pastoral duties that pastors need information for are preaching, teaching and counselling. They also need information on community development, administration, evangelism, directing prayers, leading Bible study, member care, public relations, leading a service, running a youth programme and for personal growth. The nature of the information seeking of pastors in this study varied depending on the duties that the pastor was carrying out.

### **Information sources used and how they are used**

Pastors consult a variety of sources ranging from books to the Internet when they need information for duties related to teaching or preaching. They consult denominational sources when they need to carry out administrative tasks. They consult other pastors when it comes spiritual healing. The information sources used include reference books such as Bible translations, Bible concordances, Bible commentaries, and the Holy Spirit. The pastors use books, other pastors, and the Internet although they are sometimes limited by costs and lack of skills. Most of the time, the pastors turn to their personal libraries for two reasons: firstly, because they trust their information sources and secondly because they can easily access their libraries. In the absence of information in formal sources, most pastors turn to more mature and experienced pastors. They also resort to prayer and fasting as a way of finding information.

## **Perceptions of pastors on their preparedness for their duties**

There are no systems in place for pastors to measure how well they are performing their duties. Out of the possible 13 duties, pastors indicated that they are highly prepared in only four duties (preaching, directing prayers, leading Bible study and teaching). This shows that there is a gap in pastoral information provision in Namibia.

## **Factors affecting pastors' information seeking behaviour**

Information seeking behaviours of pastors are affected by their doctrinal views and the vision and mission statements of their denominations. Namibian pastors face social and economic barriers to information, such as lack of money to buy computers, newspapers or access the Internet. Inability to ask other people for information is another factor affecting pastors' information seeking behaviour. Some pastors use their church members in the areas they are not qualified to deal with, for example finances and professional counselling. However, it can be concluded that pastors do not have sufficient reliable, up-to-date and relevant pastoral information for the duties that they perform.

## **Pastors' suggestions for improving pastoral information services**

The findings have revealed that most existing information is not in local languages and is not contextual. Pastors feel that the existing information needs to be re-packaged into local languages that the majority of them can understand and in formats that they can easily access. Experienced pastors are trusted and relied upon for information on issues that may be difficult for the younger pastors.

While this study can be generalised to all pastors in Namibia, the researcher acknowledges that denominations in Namibia have different concepts of worship and as a result, pastors in different denominations have different information seeking behaviours. The churches are also serving different contexts and hence they have different objectives. Their information needs and information seeking behaviours differ greatly. It is for this reason that the researcher suggests that future research should focus on specific denominations or local churches in specific geographical areas.

## **Recommendations**

### **Information needs and information seeking behaviour of pastors**

It is recommended that in order to keep pace with the dynamic nature of the pastoral environment and varying information needs, those involved in pastoral information services (theological colleges and church denominations) need to repeatedly examine and identify the needs of the pastors. Assessment of the pastor and his or her congregation helps to evaluate the information sources available in the pastor's personal library or in any other library he or she might be using.

The use of informal sources needs to be supported by some formal information sources to ensure reliability and usability of the information. The use of formal information sources should be encouraged, keeping in mind that informal sources also have a role to play. Pastors should be encouraged to use more formal information sources as these provide tested and more reliable information compared to simply saying, "*God, or the Holy Spirit told me*".

There is no comprehensive web-site for sermons, teachings and life experiences of Namibian pastors. It is recommended that such a website be created for use as a pastoral information source by pastors in Namibia.

### **Barriers to information seeking**

The researcher recommends re-packaging English information sources into vernacular languages. The information could also be repackaged in the form of, for example, drama, stories, or songs. Theological colleges could be tasked to help with the repackaging and translation of these sources into formats that are accessible to the pastors.

ICTs can also be taught to member pastors during workshops. Pastors will not only be taught how to use ICTs but to evaluate the authenticity and reliability of websites. In order to achieve consistency in the building of a pastoral information collection, the researcher recommends that churches and theological colleges should work together and develop collection development guidelines that will provide the scope of collection as well as the depth of information coverage. This helps the pastors to focus on specific areas rather than collect any type of pastoral information that comes their way.

The researcher recommends that pastors, churches and theological colleges work together and hold strategic planning workshops to determine suitable approaches and the development of pastoral information. A co-

ordinated approach to pastoral information services would greatly enhance pastoral information services in Namibia. Concerning costs, it is recommended that a unified group of churches could approach the Government for rebate on all pastoral information sources imported into the country, thereby easing the cost and accessibility of pastoral information sources in Namibia.

## **Perceptions of pastors**

The researcher recommends that pastors should put in place an evaluation system to guide them. In the context of this study, their congregants should be able to give them feedback on how knowledgeable they are instead of just assuming that they are meeting the needs of their congregations.

## **Conclusion**

This study has achieved its aim of examining the information needs and information seeking behaviour of pastors in Namibia. It has shown the importance of gaining a fuller understanding of pastors' information needs and seeking behaviour. The study has demonstrated the importance of reviewing pastoral duties and the information sources pastors have access to in order to identify gaps in information provision.

The provision of pastoral information services to pastors is one of the important areas that theological colleges and churches in Namibia should consider if pastors are to be successful in the execution of their pastoral duties. Sometimes pastors fail to execute their pastoral duties because of lack of information. Access to pastoral information is very important in that it opens pastors' understanding. However, the issue of accessibility of information should not be discussed in isolation. There are other issues that need to be considered; for example, training in the use of computers, costs and the repackaging of information.

While information is important for pastoral duties, information service providers need to know the contexts in which the pastors are serving and their levels of education.

Pastoral information service provision can be enhanced when pastors, local churches and theological colleges work together so that the services are well coordinated. With a coordinated approach, pastors can be constantly provided with the information and training necessary for accessing pastoral

information.

Pastors are well respected and many people - church members and non-church members - seek advice from them. Sometimes government leaders seek their advice on the social, moral and/or spiritual life of a nation. If these pastors are equipped with the right information, they will become more effective in their ministry to the church and the Namibian population at large. In other words, the nation will benefit since most people use pastors as sources of information.

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