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The Fear of the Lord is the Beginning of Librarianship

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ABSTRACT
Terminology plays a critical role in understanding any discipline. The terms data, information, knowledge and wisdom are key terms when working with library and information science, thus how they are defined underpin a librarian's philosophy, which is manifested in service. This article will look at these four key terms through a rigorous Christian intellectual framework, suggesting that the fear of the Lord provides a foundation upon which library services should be based. After providing this framework, this article will provide some examples of how the fear of the Lord can be applied in library services.

Introduction

Data. Information. Knowledge. Wisdom. How researchers define these terms profoundly influences how we conceptualize the field of library and information science. Indeed, foundational definitions always prove key, unsurprisingly, but such definitions have not usually been proffered through a Christian worldview, one that pays careful attention to Scripture and the Christian tradition. This study remedies such a neglect. It considers what librarianship might look like if and when we place the key terms – data, information, knowledge, and wisdom – within a rigorously Christian intellectual framework.

Defining Terms

Scholarship often refers to the DIKW hierarchy when defining data, information, knowledge and wisdom (Ackoff, 2010; Bernstein, 2009; Cleveland, 1985). This hierarchy suggests a stiff interrelationship between these four concepts, arguing that data is undigested observations or unvarnished facts; information is organized data; knowledge is organized information; and wisdom is integrated knowledge, information made superuseful by theory (Cleveland, 1985). However, not all scholarship is in fervent agreement with such a strict linear relationship (Floridi, 2005; Frické, 2009; Zins, 2006). And others argue that these terms have become so ambiguous in 21st century dialog that defining them is near impossible (Rowley,

2007). Given this spectrum, we might begin by asking a couple of simple questions: how does Scripture's use of these terms inform modern scholarship, if at all? Secondly, does the function of these four terms in Scripture align with any scholarship?

Data

The term "data" is a plural form of "datum." Neither datum nor data appear in any modern translations of the Bible. However, the Greek text transliterates the Latin word "datum," which means "gift" or "present," as dedomenon. This word is from the root didomi, meaning, "to give." Literally translated, data refers to an item given. An example of this is John 3:27, where John the Baptist responds to the fact that Jesus is now baptizing individuals: "A person cannot receive even one thing unless it is given (dedomenon) him from heaven."

Didomi and its variants have a wide range of use in the New Testament and early Greek literature (Louw & Nida, 1989). The term is noticeably fluid and difficult to define apart from context. Similarly, in modern day English, the word "data" also has a variety of meanings. However, a common definition of the term, if not the most common, is "facts, especially numerical facts, collected together for reference or information." ("datum," 1989)

Information

"Information" occurs 23 times in the New International Version and translates 14 different Greek, Hebrew, and Aramaic words, suggesting variance and ambiguity. Because of this and its relative rarity throughout English translations of the Bible, a word study will not assist in defining the term "information."

Scholarship reflects the ambiguous nature of information to which Scripture alludes (Belkin, 1975; Buckland, 1991; Cornelius, 2002; Dretske, 2008; Floridi, 2005). Zhang Yuexiao indicates information's ambiguous nature:

> Information is really an elusive and controversial concept. It boasts of an extensive literature but suffers from diversification of its definitions. It has been estimated that more than 400 definitions of information are presented by researchers from different fields and cultures. Misunderstandings in scientific and cultural communications are unavoidable under such circumstances. (Yuexiao, 1988, p. 479)

In spite of this ambiguity, Yuexiao observes that scholarship tends to divide information into two broad categories: semantic and nonsemantic. Nonsemantic information, he explains, is information lacking immediate meaning to an individual. Included in the nonsemantic milieu are things such as binary code, computer language, and a variety of other modes of information that, while carrying meaning, are nonsemantic because of their non-instinctive nature (Yuexiao, 1988). Yuexiao

maintains that almost all information conveyed by humans tends to be semantic in nature, conveying meaning (1988). While it is possible, Yuexiao argues, for machines to carry semantic information, a vast majority of that which they do carry is nonsemantic in nature (1988).

Data and Information

While Scripture is quiet when it comes to describing these two terms in relation to each other, it is noteworthy that scholarship is not. Scholarship agrees that there is a relationship between data and information (Belkin, 1975; Cornelius, 2002, 2004; Floridi, 2005; Zins, 2007). However, there is abundant scholarly disagreement on their relational structure (Cornelius, 2002; Qvortrup, 1993). Some contend that information is simply data with meaning (Floridi, 2005), while others argue that when data is given, the natural result is information (Belkin, 1975). Other scholars argue that whether something is data, information, or knowledge is completely dependent upon what the user does with it (Zins, 2006). Still others suggest that the differences between data and information has more to do with how it is being used (Frické, 2009). With the abundance of incongruity, it appears that most scholars disagree with a critical element of the DIKW hierarchy: that information is organized data.

Knowledge

Scriptural perspective

The Bible has little to say about the terms, "data" and "information." However, when it comes to "knowledge," Scripture speaks volumes. Proverbs 1:7 states a key element of Scripture's dialogue about knowledge: "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge; fools despise wisdom and instruction." Indeed, the idea that the fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge permeates Scripture (Job 28:28; Psalm 111:10; Proverbs 9:10, 15:33). Most scholars understand fearing God as respect or reverence, not intimidation or anxiety (Childs, 1974; Hamilton, 2011; Murphy, 1998a; Reno, 2009). Many scholars also equate the Old Testament concept of fearing God with the New Testament concept of accepting Christ (Barth, 1960; Blocher, 1977; Hartley, 1988).

Proverbs 1:7 begins by stating, "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge." Scholarship agrees that this phrase does not mean that fearing God is an entrance point to knowledge, but a foundation to knowledge (Calvin, 1557; Fuhs, 1990; Kidner, 1964; Murphy, 1998b; Ross, 2006). This suggests a connection between one's reverence or respect for God, manifested in one's acceptance of Christ, and knowledge (Fuhs, 1990; Kidner, 1964; Murphy, 1998b; Ross, 2006).

With these two premises, one can say that the foundation of knowledge is one's acceptance of Christ. With the connection between knowledge and one's acceptance of Christ, another question arises: What is knowledge?

Philosophical perspective

Full-time professional philosophers cannot agree on a definition of knowledge (Spender & Scherer, 2007). Plato suggested three definitions, each of which he rejected (Chappell, 2012). In spite of this, a common understanding of knowledge is justified true belief (Moreland, 2003), one of the three definitions that Plato rejected. Justified true belief can be stated as a subject S knows that proposition P is true if and only if:

1. P is true, and

2. S believes that P is true, and

3. S is justified in believing that P is true

For example, if it happens to be a cloudy day and if an individual believes that it is a cloudy day due to hearing a weather forecast on the radio, then that individual is justified in believing this because he heard it from a reliable source. According to this model, the individual has knowledge that it is a cloudy day.

But there are several problems with this model. Its validity begs questioning when one acknowledges the critical role that an individual plays in his or her own development of knowledge. In other words, it is difficult to view knowledge from a third-person perspective (Polanyi, 1958). The example of the weather forecast emulates third-person epistemology, which is the basis of justified true belief. Third-person epistemology looks at knowledge from a third-person perspective. Polanyi (1958) argues quite convincingly that this is an improper perception of knowledge, because one can only see knowledge from a first-person perspective. An individual can only know what they themselves know. Polanyi entitles this as first-person epistemology (1958).

However, the basis of justified true belief comes from a third-person perspective, and thus is third-person epistemology:

> On the standard analysis, if you know that p, then it is true that p. If, therefore, it is false that minds are brains, then you do not know that minds are brains. It is thus misleading to say, e.g., that astronomers before Copernicus knew that the earth is flat; at best they justifiably believed that they knew this (Moser, 1995, p. 274).

Based on this standard, an individual can only know propositions that will not be false at any time in the future. This makes knowledge very difficult for two reasons: (a) there is no way to determine which propositions will not be false in the future; and (b) individuals claim to know things and act on their knowledge in ways that influence their environment and others. Individuals often base actions on what they know, not on what they think is justifiable, but on what they are certain about (Straw, 2013b).

Librarians know how to do research. They are often involved with doing research for various projects and teaching students how to do research. A librarian's knowledge of research methods drives how they do research. Is there any way a librarian can know that their knowledge of research today will not be false in the future? Platforms will change. Methodology will change. However, does that change influence my current knowledge? Does it make my knowledge any less certain or correct? According to a third-person epistemology, the answer to all of these is "yes." In other words, according to classical third person epistemology, because things will change, a librarian cannot claim their research methodology as knowledge.

Students also know how to do research. Most librarians would agree that students do not know as much about research as a librarian, but most students argue that they know how to do research. Their knowledge influences their research methodology. Even though some of their propositions about research may be false, students still act upon what they claim to know. To students, their research methodology, regardless of whether or not it is correct (i.e. "true" or "justified true belief") is knowledge.

Polanyi (1958) notes a problem with third-person epistemology by observing that "the word 'true' does not designate, then, a quality possessed by the sentence p, but merely serves to make the phrase 'p is true' convey that the person uttering it still believes p" (p. 305). Polanyi defined epistemology as first-person epistemology: "Epistemology reflects on knowledge we ourselves believe we possess" (p. 365). He contrasts this with third-person epistemology where someone "studies knowledge which he believes to have been acquired by another individual and studies also the shortcomings of such knowledge" (p. 365).

He thus restated the standard third-person epistemological approach in a more accurate first-person epistemological form. Third-person epistemology, therefore, is simply projected first-person epistemology. Therefore, all knowing is grounded in acts of first-person epistemology. (Straw, 2013b)

That is, first-person epistemology weaves the personal into personal knowledge, acknowledging that knowledge is influenced by both internal and external elements, and is strongly biased towards integrating new knowledge into what individuals claim to know (Straw, 2013a).

Acknowledging this personal element of all knowledge assists in understanding how the fear of the Lord, a personal loyalty to the Lord with the corresponding honor due to him (Murphy, 1998a), can serve as a foundation to first-person epistemology, or knowledge.

Practical perspective

Scholarship not only agrees that the "fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge" hermeneutically, but extensive qualitative evidence also points in a similar direction. Scholarship, in an effort to retain neutrality, uses the concept of morality when referring to outcomes manifested by an individual's fear of God. In other words, morality plays an intricate role in developing knowledge.

In their research, Pasupathi and Staudinger argue compellingly for a firm connection between morality and knowledge (2001). To define morality, Pasupathi and Staudinger turn to previous research by Walker and Pitts (1988). Walker and Pitts discuss morality in two phases. First, the development of values based on reflection of "external moral guidelines" and "internal workings of conscience." (Walker & Pitts, 1998, p. 414) A Christian has both of these elements: Scripture and church community serve as external moral guidelines and the Holy Spirit functions as an aid in developing a sincere conscience.

Second is action that follows suit with these values (Walker & Pitts, 1998). A natural byproduct of fearing God is obedience (Murphy, 1998a; Stock, 1986). If one bases values on God and Scripture and then lives according to those values, that individual is walking in morality (cf. Walker & Pitts, 1998).

A third element of morality is community, characterized by other-oriented compassion (Walker & Pitts, 1998). Other-oriented compassion is a trademark of individuals who fear God (Christensen, 2001), of which community is a byproduct (Barth, 1960; Murphy, 1998a). Walker and Pitts' definition of morality aligns well with the biblical concept of fearing God.

Pasupathi and Staudinger define knowledge as "wisdom-related knowledge and judgment" (2001, p. 402). They argue that wisdom-related knowledge and judgment can be broken down into five criteria: rich factual knowledge about life; rich procedural knowledge about life; consideration of past, current and possible future life contexts that this decision will impact; consideration of the variation in values

and life priorities that will change in each context while maintaining universal values that are oriented towards the good of others; and awareness and management of uncertainty. Each of these elements, in one facet or another, reflects sapientia, a contemplative understanding of divine and eternal things, which the fear of the Lord plays a critical role in developing (Levering, 2013).

Thinking and acting in a manner aligning with God's eternity, truth, and charity is near impossible when lacking sapientia. Without sapientia the mind focuses on selfish goals that fail to align with God's plans (Levering, 2013). Aligning with God's truth enables the individual to have a rich factual and procedural knowledge about life, which involves looking at life with both breadth and depth. Breadth enables one to be aware of numerous life situations, whereas depth is comprehensive enough to be aware of the variation in values and life priorities (Botterweck, 2003). These align with the first two elements of Pasupathi and Staudinger's criteria of wisdom-related knowledge and judgment (2001).

When a believer begins to see life through a Christian worldview, he or she begins to utilize Pasupathi and Staudinger's third element of knowledge: consideration of past, present and future contexts. When looking through this lens, knowledge takes into consideration all the circumstances, including past, present and future contexts, that may impact the decisions they are going to make (Botterweck, 2003).

The fourth element of knowledge, maintaining universal values that are oriented towards the good of others, aligns again with Christian ideals. When someone asked Jesus what was the most important commandment, his response was twofold "Love the Lord your God," and, "Love your neighbor as you love yourself" (Mark 12:30-31). By looking through the lens of the commandment to love your neighbor, knowledge with love considers values held by others and how a decision will impact individuals holding those values (Botterweck, 2003).

When looking through the lens of God's eternity, one can manage the uncertainties of life. While one may not see exactly what God is doing through particular circumstances, the lens of eternity enables one to trust God's love and sovereignty in all circumstances (Botterweck, 2003). This allows wisdom-related knowledge and judgment to be eminent in the life of a believer.

Pasupathi and Staudinger (2001) used these terms in a study that examined 220 adults ranging in age from 20 to 87. The study asked all participants to perform tasks that required wisdom-related knowledge and judgment, participate in responsibilities that required moral discernment, and partake in a number of cognitive and personality assessments.

Pasupathi and Staudinger discovered a scarcity of high levels of wisdom-related performance in individuals who had very low levels of moral reasoning ability, i.e., individuals who justified immoral actions (2001). Their results suggest that the fear of the Lord (reflected in one's moral reasoning ability) is a foundation to knowledge (2001). This suggests two possible relationships between morality and knowledge. First, knowledge, reflected in wisdom-related performance, has a linear relationship to the fear of the Lord; the more knowledge an individual has the more likely they are to follow a moral protocol. Secondly, the research suggests that peak levels of wisdom-related performance are not possible without some level of moral reasoning capability (Pasupathi & Staudinger, 2001; e.g. Shu & Gino, 2012). This study confirms the scriptural idea that the fear of the Lord is the beginning, or foundation, of knowledge.

Wisdom

Scripture also has much to say about wisdom. The parallelism used in the book of Proverbs (cf. Proverbs 2:6, 10; 8:12; 9:10; 14:6; 21:11; 30:3) suggests an intertwining of the concepts of knowledge and wisdom (Longman, 2006; Van Brummelen, 2009). However, scholarship tends to drive distinctions between them (Ackoff, 2010; Buckland, 1991; Cleveland, 1985; Rowley, 2007; Chaim Zins, 2007). In spite of the distinctions made, few scholars discuss wisdom and its implications upon defining knowledge (Frické, 2009).

Clark and Feinberg, in *To Know and Love God,* suggest that Augustine – in *On the Trinity* – argues for a distinction between scientia and sapientia (Clark & Feinberg, 2003). Scientia is active understanding of temporal and mundane things, such as finances or transportation, whereas sapientia is a contemplative discerning of eternal and divine things. They argue that this dichotomy reflects the important distinction between knowledge (scientia) and wisdom (sapientia). However, further observations of Augustine's work and consideration of Scripture's usage of these terms suggest otherwise.

In his work, *The Theology of Augustine*, Matthew Levering (2013) lays out the distinctions between Augustine's scientia and sapientia. He argues that one should not view these concepts as a dichotomy between modern understandings of knowledge and wisdom. Instead, sapientia should be seen as a critical component in undertaking fruitful scientia (Levering, 2013). One cannot merely pursue scientia, because when so doing, the individuals falls into a ridiculous and deadly pride, often misaligning their pursuit of knowledge.

Only the grace of God can enable an individual to shift from focusing on selfish goals. These selfish goals are not manifested in thinking about worldly things, which are necessary and good, but in failing to use those worldly things in light of God's charity, truth, and eternity (Levering, 2013).

A strategy of dichotomizing Augustine's scientia/sapientia and applying it to knowledge/wisdom does not fall in line with the parallelism expressed in the Old Testament (Kidner, 1964; Longman, 2006; Murphy, 1998b; cf. Proverbs 2:6, 10; 8:12; 9:10; 14:6; 21:11; 30:3; Isaiah 11:2). Perhaps, Augustine's sapientia is equivalent to ancient Israel's concept of knowledge/wisdom: effective knowledge about God, leading to a relationship of reverence and respect (i.e. fearing God), was the only element that enabled individuals to establish a right relationship with their sensory data. This relationship enabled individuals to ask questions more pertinently, take stock of relationships more effectively and generally have a better awareness of circumstances (Von Rad, 1972). This makes sapientia not only applicable to learning about God, but sapientia also enables the believer to apply the biblical concept of knowledge/wisdom in all of life's circumstances, scientia.

The fear of the Lord is the beginning of sapientia, which translates as both knowledge and wisdom throughout the Old Testament. While scientia can be used as a means to reach sapientia, when left by itself, scientia, dominated by the sin nature, cannot align itself with God's eternity, truth, and charity (Levering, 2013). Sapientia attempts to align all knowledge, including scientia, with God's purposes.

Summary

Scripture speaks volumes about knowledge and wisdom. Scripture suggests that the relationship between knowledge and wisdom proposed by the DIKW hierarchy has no theological base. The teaching of Scripture also influences an understanding of the relationship between information and knowledge. Knowledge is not simply organized information (cf. Cleveland, 1985). Scripture, aligned with scholarly findings, agrees that the fear of the Lord plays an intricate role with knowledge and wisdom. If this is the case, how should one look at information?

Information and Knowledge

Luciano Floridi argues "Polysemantic concepts such as information can be fruitfully analyzed only in relation to well–specified contexts of application." (Floridi, 2005) In spite of its ambiguity, when looked at in the context of Library and Information Science, scholarship agrees upon three basic components when it comes to defining semantic information (cf. Yuexiao, 1988).

First, information is an agent used to change or modify a knowledge structure. (Badke, 2012; Bawden, 2011; Belkin, 1975; Brookes, 1975; Buckland, 1991; Capurro & Hjørland, 2003; Cornelius, 2002; Dretske, 2008; Shera, 1972) A common purpose of seeking information is verifying apparently contradictory information, exploring the unknown, or learning something new. These are all aspects where the individual seeks information for the purpose of changing or modifying a knowledge structure.

Second, information has a close relationship both with certainty (Klir, 2005; Laurent & Van der Lubbe, 1992; Qvortrup, 1993) and uncertainty (Gleick, 2011; Kuhlthau, 2004; Marcum, 2002; Shannon & Weaver, 1962; Wersig, 1997; Wiener, 1961). Does more information assist in clarifying an issue (certainty) or does it muddy the water (uncertainty)? Perhaps, depending on context, it can do both.

When an individual begins the pursuit of a topic, the information they attain often clarifies the issue. Thus, the individual develops a level of certainty on this topic. This rests on an assumption that the information collected is in general agreement with the user's personal knowledge, their first-person epistemology.

However, information generates uncertainty when it conflicts with other information collected or with an individual's personal knowledge. This tends to happen when an individual collects too much information or the information collected from one source contradicts information from another. It also takes place when information gathered disagrees with personal knowledge. This generates either uncertainty in the collected information or uncertainty in the personal knowledge of the patron.

The relationship between the amount of information and certainty/uncertainty suggests that there is no particular correlation between the amount of information and certainty or uncertainty. There are times when more information will lead to knowledge (Laurent & Van der Lubbe, 1992), and there are also times when more information leads to greater uncertainty (Kuhlthau, 2004; Marcum, 2002; Shannon & Weaver, 1962) about a topic and thus plays a corollary role in an individual's lack of knowledge.

A third point of scholarly agreement regarding information relates to the dramatic changes of information through the past century. Neil Postman, in *Technopoly*, argues that technology has played a substantial role in the development of information from the middle of the 19th century, when it was often intimately associated with knowledge, to the late 20th century, when information became a separate commodity, "a thing that could be bought or sold irrespective of its use of meaning." (Postman, 1992, p. 68)

Postman uses the telegraph to illustrate this point. Prior to the telegraph, information could not travel much faster than the individual carrying it. The fastest information could travel at this point was approximately 35 miles per hour, the speed of a train. Because of this, information often retained continuity with its original context. However, the invention of the telegraph stripped context away from information. The telegraph communicated information with little to no accompanying context.

Technology made information context-free. In many respects, technology made the notion of access to information just as critical as knowledge itself. Because of this, access to information often becomes confused with knowledge, making it all the more difficult to integrate knowledge into a meaningful framework (Zimmermann, 2012).

Scholarship agrees on these three facets of the relationship between information and knowledge. This paper has argued also that there is an intricate relationship between knowledge and one's relationship with Christ. How does this understanding of knowledge influence an understanding of information?

Sinformation

Ian Cornelius, in *Theorizing Information for Information Science*, suggests that the primary need for semantic information arises when individuals are seeking knowledge. Cornelius argues that in a situation where perfect knowledge existed; there would be no need for semantic information (2002). This point is quite intriguing when looking at information and its relationship to knowledge, particularly when the fear of the Lord plays an intricate role with knowledge.

Christians acknowledge that they do not have perfect knowledge, and most recognize the reason for this is due to an embedded sin nature in all human beings. Imperfect knowledge is often the culprit behind forgetfulness. The sin nature is often the root of the necessity to continually change or modify knowledge structures. If everyone feared God, would there be any sin nature (cf. Durham, 1987; Hamilton, 2011)? Would knowledge be perfect? Would there be a need for information? This is a theoretical question, but its answer plays a critical role in understanding information and its relationship to knowledge from a Christian perspective. In agreement with Cornelius (2002), this essay argues that information, at least in its semantic sense (cf. Yuexiao, 1988), would not be necessary were it not for the sin nature.

As pointed out earlier, information has an association with uncertainty. God's immutability, the fact that God is unchangeable in his nature, counters any concept of uncertainty (Geisler, 2003). Because of this, anything that reflects God's image

(like human beings) or anything God creates will reflect God's characteristics (beauty, certainty, etc.). The sin nature permeates God's creation, resulting in chaos, uncertainty and ugliness, which counters God's order, beauty and certainty. Thus, the sin nature has created the need for information.

A gap between information and knowledge empowers the sin nature to be content with information, even at times substituting knowledge for information and not implementing the fear of God, a critical element in knowledge. Prior to modern technology, information and knowledge were close bedfellows (Postman, 1992). Knowledge followed close suit with the release of information. However, in today's information explosion, technology has played a role in the transformation of information's close association with knowledge. While technology is not an evil in and of itself, technology plays a role of extensively altering one's form of life (Groothuis, 1997). Technology has played a prominent role in expanding the gap between information and knowledge (Postman, 1992).

There is a need for information because, as a product of the sin nature, knowledge is faulty. Information often helps bring knowledge to maturity and completion (cf. Jones, 2010); however, once knowledge is at that point, information is no longer needed.

"Sinformation" can be summarized thus: one must pursue information to build knowledge. In and of itself, information can and often does create confusion and chaos. However, when one uses information in light of God's nature, counteracting any pride and used in light of God's charity, truth, and eternity, "sinformation" leads to knowledge. The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge. A critical foundation to knowledge is one's acceptance of Christ.

Application

The implications of this relationship between information and knowledge could be huge, particularly since this is a foundational component to library and information science. Is there an element of library services that an understanding of these terms will not affect?

Information Literacy

One often uses information, or "sinformation," as an agent in pursuit of knowledge. Information literacy is a tool that assists in mastering the transformation of information to knowledge.

A common description of information literacy is "the ability to know when there is a need for information, to be able to identify, locate, evaluate, and effectively use that information for the issue or problem at hand" (Association of College and Research Libraries, 1989). Scholarship agrees that information plays a key role in changing or modifying a knowledge structure (Badke, 2012; Bawden, 2011; Belkin, 1975; Brookes, 1975; Buckland, 1991; Capurro & Hjørland, 2003; Cornelius, 2004; Dretske, 2008; Shera, 1972). Therefore, enabling someone to find pertinent and correct information is critical for knowledge development. In this respect, information literacy plays a role in a Christian college or university by enabling students to use information to produce knowledge. This is the general purpose of information literacy that most colleges, Christian or not, would agree upon.

The purpose of many Christian institutions of higher education is not simply to have students attain knowledge, nor even to supply them with Cleveland's definition of wisdom: "integrated knowledge, information made superuseful by theory… [which] in turn enables [the user] to use the knowledge to do something." (Cleveland, 1985) Instead, Christian colleges and universities often have a higher objective: to teach students how to look at life from a biblical perspective, using the filters of Scripture and truth to live, to work, and to thrive.

Information literacy plays a key role in developing this filter. It does so through a two-step process. First, information literacy enables students to do good research, so that students learn good things, fulfilling the educational goals of their professors. However, learning in Christian higher education goes much deeper than this, and information literacy plays a much more critical role.

Information literacy develops a way of thinking that goes beyond simply finding the right resources and properly integrating them into a project. An individual who is information literate can encounter a point of view, acquire relevant information, and use that information effectively to determine the truthfulness of an argument, and if it has errors, provide counterarguments based on good information (Badke, 2007).

This is a goal for every student in higher education, but it is much more pertinent for a Christian. Many students come to higher education with either their minds made up on most everything or with lots of questions and little certainty. One of the essential goals of Christian higher education is to enable students to navigate among the many voices they will encounter and to discover truth in the midst of bigotry and competing versions of reality. The ability to address the issues of the day with the appropriate information is clearly one of the life skills of a graduate from Christian higher education (Badke, 2007).

As argued earlier, the fear of the Lord is a critical component of developing knowledge. Information literacy is a tool that particularly enables one to learn, thus attaining knowledge from information. Information literacy, established with proper underpinnings, can teach students to use Scripture and truth as foundations by which to assess, evaluate, and use information. Information literacy, in this regard, is a critical life skill for any graduate from a Christian college or university.

Reference Services

Another place where the fear of the Lord plays a role in knowledge development is reference services. Reference services involve leading a person from "sinformation" to accurate and reliable sources that convey truth so students can attain knowledge. Understanding the critical nature of knowledge and the differentiation between knowledge and information can help librarians to direct patrons on a path that leads to knowledge and away from simple "sinformation."

An individual's fear of God, a foundational component to knowledge, serves as a dire element to successful reference services. Humility is a critical component when librarians interact with patrons. Librarians do not just spit out every ounce of information they may have on a certain topic; instead, they attempt, with humility, to discover the patron's need and their point of interest, and then work at resolving the issue from the patron's angle (Kluegel & Ross, 2003).

Additionally, timing is a unique and key element in reference services. Most classroom teaching for librarians is scheduled; reference transactions, for the most part, are not. An element of humility becomes evident when librarians drop what they are doing at a patron's inquiry and focus their attention solely on the patron and his or her needs. A librarian's focus on the patron and the patron's needs through the entire reference interaction, not interrupted by cell phones, e-mails, or other communication, is a manifestation of the librarian's denial of self, a component of humility (Paris, 2009).

A good reference transaction involves open-ended, conversation-generating questions (Kluegel & Ross, 2003). When dealing with a patron, instead of asking: "Are you looking for an encyclopedia?" which is an easy question to ask, but only allows for a yes/no answer, a librarian should ask an open-ended question, such as, "Could you explain to me the project you are working on?" Open-ended questions reflect that the librarian's interest is more than just answering a question and completing assigned responsibilities. The librarian's interest is in the patrons themselves (Fine, 1995).

Humble reference transactions can engender authentic relationships, thus reflecting the fear of God. This relationship counteracts relational alienation and deterioration, an innate result of the sin nature (Knight, 2006).

With the fear of the Lord integrated into one's actions, the patron experiences interaction going beyond a simple utilitarian relationship. Brief and authentic interactions display the gospel when a librarian applies the fear of the Lord to a reference interview. This small taste of humility and integrity has the potential to leave a patron longing for more: more interaction with a librarian, and more transformations of "sinformation" to knowledge. When the reference transaction happens in this context, the knowledge learned, coupled with humility, can potentially bring the individual closer to harmony with God, with others, with their deceptive selves, or with natural creation (Knight, 2006).

Conclusion

Proverbs 1:7 states, "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge, but fools despise wisdom and instruction." This concept has immense impact on library and information science. When one perceives knowledge in this manner this insight influences information, and subsequently the traditional DIKW structure on which many scholars establish their understanding of key concepts in library and information science.

When building library practices upon a biblical and theological foundation, services that glorify God emanate. A critical element of library services involves leading a patron to knowledge. With a biblical and theological foundation, this act is more than just providing access to knowledge so that a student can complete an assignment. It involves leading that individual from "sinformation" to knowledge, with a foundation that involves reverence and respect for God. With a foundation such as this, library practices have an enriched biblical and theological underpinning. This enables library services to be not only beneficial to the student and the institution they serve, but also to the development of God's kingdom. ☩

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