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A SCRIPTURE BANK FOR READING TEACHERS AND RESEARCHERS

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Scriptural perspectives of academic fields have been encouraged by leaders in LDS higher education. Statements by Wilkinson (1959), Bergin (1979), Maxwell (1976), and others are supportive of scholarship that considers both revelatory religious truth and the best of secular knowledge.

The purpose of this computer study was to identify scriptures useful to reading professionals. In a two-part study, Bible scriptures were first considered. They were extracted from 4,800 passages generated from student papers, concordances, 49 reading-related key words and a computerized text of the King James Bible. After a culling process, 415 scriptures were organized under 17 topic headings familiar to reading teachers. More recently by the same computer process, a second list of about 1,400 scriptures was extracted and compiled from the LDS Triple Combination.

The 17 topic headings include the following: (1) Reading Teachers; (2) Importance of Reading; (3) Reading Purposes and Promises; (4) Effects and Results of Reading; (5) Reading Difficulties; (6) Reading Comprehension; (7) Language and Vocabulary; (8) Reading Readiness; (9) Reading methods; (10) Research, Writing, Publication, Dissemination; (11) Readability; (12) Reading and the Savior; (13) Reading and Censorship; (14) Reading Preservation; (15) Miscellaneous; (16) Reading Comprehension; Questions and Answers; (17) Content Descriptions of Reading.

Two publications intended for non-LDS academic audiences based on reading related Biblical passages have been generated by the Bank (Cranney, 1981, 1982). A second as yet unpublished paper (Cranney, 1982) has also been written based on the LDS Triple Combination and references from the life of Christ.

Prospective uses of the Bank are as follows: identify priority ideas and principles of reading; generate ideas for student papers, theses, and dissertations; assist students making bridges between their religious faith and the reading profession; provide teaching and illustrative materials for teachers; help adult basic students whose primary motivation in learning to read is religious; and clarify the role of reading in an LDS context.

Cautions are noted in reading into scriptural references ideas that are unwarranted when the total context is considered. Problems of finding publication outlets were also encountered. In presenting ideas in language and tone acceptable to the profession, the LDS author must sometimes write in a less than totally authentic manner to communicate creditably with scholars not of his own faith.

Difficult to describe but important is the cognitive and affective experience of the author in compiling and working with the Bank. A gentle, absorbing excitement seems to accompany the work with the scriptures. Patterns, associations, and ideas emerge that suggest teaching units, papers, research, and a kind of writing atypical of most academic publication. The author has found such activity to be attracting and fulfilling, especially when a topic is given sustained attention for a period of several hours. To express it another way, a saturation in scriptures on a given topic seems productive of ideas in a way not normally experienced when the academic context is considered alone. Since significant ideas are the substance of research and teaching, use of the Bank is recommended to interested reading professionals. They, in turn, could contribute to it from the perspective of their discipline and the experience of their faith.

An existing model in longtime use at the Brigham Young University Counseling Center is a counseling psychology scripture corpus compiled by Burton Kelly (1981). It, too, generated teaching techniques, a small amount of research, and a counseling approach that by the report of its principal user has strengthened the process of psychotherapy. The Reading Scripture Bank then represents a similar resource to the reading professional, one that can provide a dimension to teaching and research not usually considered in traditional scholarly approaches to the field.

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