ROLES OF INFORMATION PROFESSIONALS AND LIBRARIES IN FAITH INTEGRATION IN A TECHNOLOGY DRIVEN AGE

by

[1]FAGBE, Abimbola O.; [2]FAGBE, Tubosun & [3]FOLORUNSO-AKO, Ayorinde

fagbea@babcock.edu.ng
08081439200

ABSTRACT

Libraries and services they provide are an essential element in information resource management. They are the major hub of information and are considered to be the heartbeat of any educational system of which Babcock University is a reference. However, in order for information professionals employed in these library systems to fulfil the obligations of library services in a technology driven age, it is important for their roles to be redefined and their skills updated if they would exert any significant impact in both leadership and management positions. Informational professionals are expected to be proactive with the utilization of technology in order to drive their organizations forward. They are expected to make information available and accessible to people in timely manner. Thus in order for information professionals to remain relevant and important in meeting the demands of patrons in an accurate and timely way, certain information tools and skills are essential or even indispensable. Information Professionals are service-oriented while the libraries are service-centered, thus it is expedient for information professional in the technology driven age to be agents of faith integration in the course of delivering services to the patrons. It is against this backdrop, that the paper critically reviewed the role of information professionals and libraries in faith integration in a technological driven age. The goal of this paper was to make inferences and draw conclusions from existing literature and personal thoughts. The paper highlighted possible barriers that militate against the effectiveness of information professionals and libraries in imbibing faith integration in a technology driven age. This paper made some recommendations that may help information professionals and libraries in the process of faith integration in a technology driven age.

KEYWORD: Information professionals, libraries, technology driven age

INTRODUCTION

Faith integration has become paramount and a major point of emphasis in many Faith-based institutions of higher learning in this contemporary time, The general notion of the Christian worldview is the idea that, faith, and practices of the student should be deeply connected within the learning experience. These notion has caused different Faith-based institution of higher learning as well as its educators to build their own visions and missions around their educational system through the process of inculcating faith and practice in the students.

Thus, faith integration in learning is not a process that is strange, old-fashioned, unusual, or unique to many faith-based institutions. Faith integration is the process of acquiring formal knowledge of truth embedded in the word of God. Faith integration is an activity that should be performed by everyone (in a faith-based Institution such as Babcock University) who understands the need for a clear Christian worldview. Faith integration is fundamental when it comes to spiritual formation of everyone in the faith-based institutions and therefore, whatever activities takes place must be guided through biblical principles of "thou says the Lord".

In an age of information explosion and the world becoming a global village, faith-based institution ought to beware of the type of technology the students and educators are exposed to in the process of learning, studying and engaging in research. Technology usage in the process of acquiring information can affect the spiritual formation of both students and workers in the faith-based Institution if their thoughts are not guided through faith integration. Faculty and staff members are thus, faced with this herculean task of building up individual with Christ like character.

According to Rubel, (2014) citing International Federation of Library Associations (IFLA), in affirming that "libraries serves an important function as a gateway to provision of access to

information, ideas and works of imagination in these present day society. As a result of this, it is expedient to provide access to all necessary electronic, computer and audiovisual equipment." IFLA also indicated that work stations with computer and its accessories with internet as well as public access catalog should be made available and freely accessible. IFLA went further to specify that library space should provide the flexibility essential for changing and emerging technologies and should apportion space for small-group or formal classroom teaching using instructional technologies.

Libraries and services they provide are an essential element in information resource management. They are the major hub of information and are considered to be the heartbeat of any educational system of which Babcock University is a reference. However, in order for information professionals employed in these library systems to fulfil the obligations of library services in a technology driven age, it is important for their roles to be redefined and their skills updated if they would exert any significant impact in both leadership and management positions. Information professionals are service-oriented, while the libraries are service-centered. Informational professionals, are therefore, expected to become more proactive with the utilization of technology in providing unrestricted access to information in order to drive their organizations forward.

As a way of fostering faith integration in the libraries, information professionals must be able to draw the line between open and restricted access so that users will not be deprived the ability to get the necessary information needed to meet the demands of research. Nonetheless, for information professionals to remain relevant and important in meeting the demands of patrons in an accurate and timely way, certain information tools and competency skills are essential or even indispensable to the promotion of faith integration in the libraries, it is expedient for information professional in

the technology driven age to be agents of faith integration in the course of delivering services to the patrons.

It is against this backdrop, that the paper critically reviewed the role of information professionals and libraries in faith integration in a technological driven age. The goal of this paper was to make inferences and draw conclusions from existing literature and personal thoughts. The paper highlighted possible barriers that militate against the effectiveness of information professionals and libraries in imbibing faith integration in a technology driven age. This paper made some recommendations that may help information professionals and libraries in the process of faith integration in a technology driven age.

FAITH INTEGRATION

Faith can be described as "'life of faith' or 'body of doctrine'" (Badley 1994:28). Understanding the issue of faith is of essence because of the complexity of the subject. "Faith reflects: one's understanding and sense of the supernatural (believing); one's level of trust and commitment, relationship to the supernatural God (trusting and worship); and ethical and moral behavior, and interpersonal relationships (doing)" (Roy 2003:2). Faith involves understanding of God, one's trust in and relationship with God, and how that plays out in relationships. Faith is built and made complete when there is an understanding of the creation that God has produced in the world (Harris 2000:1). Faith involves the whole person, body, soul, and spirit. It is an expectation that "something good can happen because of one's faith in God's goodness and power" (Morton, (2004) &.Rosebrough 2002). Smith, (2004) citing Gangel, (2001: 366) defines the term integration as the teaching of all subjects as part of the total truth of God, thereby enabling students to see the unity of natural and special revelation.

According to Harris (2003), faith integration is such an important topic largely because too little of it seems to occur in academic settings. The bias in the academic and in the larger culture against Biblical principles and authority has the effect of disconnecting faith-based knowledge from other knowledge, even in the minds of some Christians. For that reason, faith integration must be undertaken deliberate actions. Christians must be intentional about making the connections between their faith and the knowledge claims they encounter and be careful to keep the Biblical framework in the foreground as the structuring principle of truth.

According to Kaak, (2016) a lecturer in Azusa Pacific University (APU) faith integration is defined as the informed reflection on and discovery of the relationship(s) between Christian faith and the academic disciples, professional programs and lived practices resulting to the articulation of Christian perspectives on truth and life in order to advance the work of God in the World. He went further to assert that faith integration in a Christian institution is interlinked and connected together by two words: Faith and Discipline. This connection helps to bring about the discovery of logical, relevant and appropriate relationship between Christian faith and what the students study. This discovery of the connections are interlinked through the following dimensions:

S/N	Faith	Discipline
1	Shalom (Foster and promote God's intent to have an organization where people experience and enjoy peace with one another in a healthy manner	Systems Thinking (Brings about the connection that is related to faith integration and discipline in the academic community which largely depend on leadership)
2	Prophetic Imagination (Helps to promote faith-based orientation)	Social Justice (it should be seen from the faith-based orientation perspective and not from the social context
3	Literacy (Helps to understand that it is not just the ability to read that is important but that learning to read in order to gain wisdom is actually necessary. Reading with the eyes of faith in the light of Faith-based education	Literacy (Helps to improve reading ability and increases knowledge acquisition)

	is germane)	
4	Practices (There are traditional faith-based practices that are considered to be legacies such as honesty, kindness, hospitality and many more)	Practicing (Many of the discipline's end result for the students is to engage in practices that they have been training for
5	Vocation (The idea of the total being, where one is expected to engage his/her hands in doing something worthwhile. For instance when students decide to engaging in work-study)	
6	Exercising (the idea of physically disciplining the body must occur through spiritual exercise of the body, mind and soul)	

Source: An adaptation from Kaak, (2016)

Covrig, (2014) in explaining faith integration, used the ideas of connecting one point to another. For instance, linking one dots to another in order to make it more visible. The whole idea is connecting the invisible to become more visible. Covrig submitted that making faith connection is about making links between the spiritual and physical realities. In doing this, both faith and discipline become more evident, visible, meaningful to the students. Thus, the essence of faith integration is to bring about meaning and a firm foundation in the spiritual formation of the students. It is a process of creating a network between faith and disciple. A typical example is the joining of two materials together with a needle and thread in order to have a full interwoven material. Faith integration according to Smith and Smith, (2011:140) is more than just the transfer of knowledge; it is about the overall transformation of the knower. Faith-based education is not just about the transfer of information but the task of spiritual transformation of the students through what they study and read.

The Seventh-day Adventist philosophy of education is Christ-centered. Adventists believe that, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, God's character and purposes can be understood as revealed in the Bible, in Jesus Christ, and in nature. The distinctive characteristics of Adventist education is

derived from the Bible and the writings of Ellen G White that point to the redemptive aim of true education: to restore human beings into the image of their Maker. Seventh-day Adventists believe that God is infinitely loving, wise, and powerful. He relates to human beings on a personal level, presenting His character as the ultimate norm for human conduct and His grace as the means of restoration. (General Conference Working Policy, 2014/2015: 281)

FAITH INTEGRATION AND TECHNOLOGY

Technology in terms of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) tools and their integration in an academic environment is vital and keeping up with these development means embracing ICT and its associated benefits and challenges. ICTs are of huge importance to libraries. Not only as a boon but also as a detriment, since services are becoming available elsewhere which threaten libraries. Harris, (2009) perceives ICTs as a double-edged blade which on the one hand prove the importance of information and its significance in different aspects, and on the other hand it can act as an alternative to libraries which provides a service that might be inferior but quick to access and free.   There is no question that ICTs play a huge role in the function of the library.

Having a grasp on what it means to use these technologies and being prepared for the future has become a skill in its rightful sense. In order to nurture an institution of faith integration in this contemporary times technology as a tool for providing the gateway to quality print and electronic collections, must be up-to-date with trending technological devices: computers, and hi-tech mobile devices for the perusal and dissemination of relevant and accurate information that can meet the needs of the students. As part of the responsibility of faith-based institutions in preparing 21st-century citizens, Adventist universities must acquire adequate technology to ensure that students and teachers have ready access to the Internet and the library's electronic databases and resources.

The rapid digitization of all types of information makes the need for reputable sources of information even greater with so much information freely available on the World Wide Web, the idea that libraries will soon become unnecessary or if the digital technology will actually enable libraries and librarians to perform a more significant role in education has been the debate in recent time. Although, the World Wide Web provides access to much freely available information, some of which are good but, many vital research sources are not available on the Web. The vastness of the Web hides the fact that much of it is of questionable quality

FAITH INTEGRATION AND THE LIBRARIES

Trotti, (1982), citing Morris, (1964) said that few things shape the quality and style of an educational program more than its library. To no small degree, does the library determines the faculty an institution attracts and retains, the quality of instruction it provides, the character of the student body it recruits, and the kind of product the school produces. Indeed, few indices point more accurately to the health of an educational institution than its attitude toward its library, and the sacrifices it is willing to make for it. Any institution with integrity will give primary consideration to making the libraries all-encompassing in shaping the character formation of the students and faculty. He went further to state that according to an ATS study funded by the Carnegie Corporation it was opined that academic institutions often uphold that, 'the library is the center of the academic life just as the chapel is the center of the worship life in the community.' It is in support of this opinion that it has become pertinent for faith-based institution to take more seriously the attractiveness of their libraries as places for reading and studying. (Trotti, 1982:158)

Libraries change lives by providing models for various hobbies as well as impact individuals in their career choices as they enter the worlds of their professional pursuit. Libraries have the

potentials to help students in actualizing their educational goals and be transformed into efficient graduates who can fill their places in society. For instance, Carson, an erstwhile seemingly unpromising minority youth from the inner city in Detroit, Michigan, is one of several success stories in which libraries played a major role in transforming "the class dummy" into a world-renowned neurosurgeon today.

Consequently, the role of information professionals (librarians) cannot be neglected because the library is not simply a warehouse for books. It is an information agency that provides intellectual access to needed information for a concrete community of information seekers. However, the library in a faith-based institution should be considered to be a ministering centre, not just a monument of learning, a repository of knowledge but people-centered where heart yeaning question relating to spirituality and the Creator of mankind can be satisfied. Its collections are to be broad and deep, its policies should serve the needs of people, while the staff are endeavor to be partners in the learning process.

Faith-based institutional library should strive to provide quality collections as a way of promoting faith integration in order to guard against students having access to information sources that maybe be considered as untrustworthy, unreliable, and unethical. For libraries to promote faith integration in this technological driven age with the vast availability of information on the World Wide Web (WWW), Apostle Paul vividly defines those things upon which our thoughts should dwell, using terms such as true, honest, just, pure, lovely, and of good report (Philippians 4:8 KJV).

This biblical benchmark provides a standard by which to measure the information resources to be acquired for students use in a faith-based institution libraries. Resources should also be measured against traditional collection standards, such as objectivity, expertise, faithfulness to factual truth, quality writing, and publication standards, as well as attention to beauty and functionality. Often,

free Internet resources do not measure up to these standards. Information professionals using their expertise can provide pre-selected, quality copyrighted sources for published researches and reference works, historical and archival materials, proprietary databases, and other authoritative sources in the process of acquiring materials to add to library collection, thereby following the principles and practices of collection development in the field of librarianship. It is essential to note that many of these online resources, though available electronically, may not be freely accessible.

Libraries in Seventh-day Adventist institutions must be different and stand out in the processes of resource acquisition for the library which should comprise of both disciplinary and faith-based resources. Unlike secular institution of higher learning, users must be able to attest to the fact that the library is embodied with a wholesome experience like Mejabi, (2016:23) in his book titled "Priceless thoughts on Knowledge" citing Michener (1971) summing his experience up when he said that "libraries have been a support in his life. They represent an individual's right to acquire knowledge; they are the sinews that bind civilized societies-the world over. Without libraries, I would be a pauper, intellectually and spiritually"

INFORMATION PROFESSIONALS AND FAITH INTEGRATION

Information professionals are skilled in creating systems using standard terms to describe the subject of the collections (subject cataloging), a set of short-hand for giving books local addresses on a set of library shelves (classification), and automated searching systems to hunt at the speed of electrons for particular books, specific subjects, or key words from the universal online catalog (Library of Congress Online Catalog). The information professionals' key role in the library is to be mediators between patrons and the universe of information, patrons may ask competent professionals (librarians) for assistance in finding the particular information needle they seek from

huge stacks of information. The idea that the adoption and application of "artificial intelligence", and other technologies (internet) will put information professionals out of work in some decades to come is still unrealistic because according Lincoln, (2004) the World Wide Web is much more like the "Fibber's closet" and far from being like a library. The swamp of electronic information potentially available to patrons makes the role of librarians as information professionals more important than ever because robots can never replace the "human brain."

As the importance of information literacy grows within the academia, so is the importance of the role of the information professionals (librarians) as integral members of the teaching and learning mission of the faith-based institutions. There is now a growing emphasis on teaching and learning as a fundamental component of the mission of the contemporary libraries. Which has also brought about a growth in collaborative endeavors involving information professionals (librarians) and faculty in the efforts to reach larger numbers of students.

Information professionals in a faith-based institution ought to be ministers and stewards working in the ministering centre (library). As ministers and stewards, information professionals are to meet the needs of the patrons through the acquisition of collection that will present the truth of Christ anew to them on daily basis. In addition to providing excellent collections in today's complex environment of Internet and social media, information professionals must play an increased instructional role, guiding students to appropriate resources and teaching them on how to evaluate those sources. The longing after the salvation of the patrons should be topmost in the heart of information professional and not just the provision of access to collection that will only edify the patron secularly without minding the spiritual formation of the heart though reading and studying.

Just like James wrote in his letter (James 3: 1) to the early church, this a clarion call of reflection to information professional to take this admonition seriously because we have a responsibility to be role models either consciously or unconsciously to the students in our institutions especially when they visit the libraries for research and studying purposes. According to the General Conference Working Policy, (2014/2015), a statement about teachers being role model is summarized as following:

> "The Christian teacher functions in the classroom as God's minister in the plan of redemption. The greatest need of students is to accept Jesus Christ as their personal Savior and commit to a life of Christian values and service. The teacher holds a central place of importance. Ideally, the teacher should be both a committed Adventist Christian and an exemplary role model of the Christian graces and professional competencies."

Information professionals are saddled with the responsibilities in assisting student in defining who they are and who they will become in the near future. Apostle James declares that information professionals as teachers "will be judged more strictly." White, (2000) buttress what James said with this words: "As teachers, we share in the responsibility of guiding human beings for good or for evil by our actions, our words and our looks." The General Conference Policy Manual (2003) went ahead to state that "the Christian teacher functions in the classroom as well as in the library as God's minister in the plan of redemption." In line with this, Leavitt, (2013) citing Akers (1995), opined that one should never "underestimate the impact of a teacher". They explained that the young one in our faith-based institutions are 'hero-worshippers' by nature, and the influence of godly teachers on their emerging characters is incalculable"

BARRIERS TO FAITH INTEGRATION

There are barriers that militate against the information professional in actively joining forces in faith integration. Some of the barriers are:

1. Lack of interest and commitment to the mission and vision of the institution could be considered as a major barrier which can make it difficult for information professionals as teachers to be seen as role models that they ought to be as earlier mentioned.

2. Another barrier is the inability of the information professional to picture themselves as partners and collaborators in helping their patrons to experience the nature of Christ while using the libraries in order to be able to model them after Christlikeness which is the whole essence of faith integration.

3. Information professionals sometimes sense that they are less important compared to their fellow teachers in the faculty, thereby, the task of teaching faith integration is often wrongly perceived as the duty of the teacher in the classroom only rather than on all stakeholder at large.in the faith based institution.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

Information professionals in this technological driven age can be successful in faith integration as they deliver quality services to the patrons in the libraries when they depends on a thorough, accurate, and carefully thought through understanding of the Bible, together with a good understanding of how academic knowledge claims are made and the worldviews underlying those claims. Skillful interpretation in both areas is a key factor. Information professionals must note that according to the General Conference Working Policy, (2014/2015) that all learning is grounded on faith in a certain set of presuppositions or worldview. The Christian worldview recognizes a supernatural as well as a natural order. Adventists define knowledge more broadly than that which is merely intellectual or scientific. True knowledge encompasses cognitive, experiential, emotional,

relational, intuitive, and spiritual elements. An acquisition of true knowledge leads to understanding which is manifested in wisdom and appropriate action.

In summation, the role of information professionals cannot be overlooked in faith integration in the libraries in a technological driven age because patrons need skilled specialists to assist them in streamlining and handling pertinent information. In conclusion the following recommendations are proffered for the information professionals to join forces with other stakeholder in faith integration in this technology driven age:

1. **Role Modeling:** Information Professionals must become role models in the discharge of service to patrons. The vision and mission of the institution must be part and parcel of their daily activities. Information professionals must represent Christ aright in their daily dealings with the users. When patrons see that the Information Professionals are practicing what they say, it will be easy to transform their lives for eternity.

2. **Collaboration:** Instead of relying only on the provision of front desk reference service and giving formal library instruction in the library, information professionals must collaborate with faculty and other stakeholders in the institution as an effort to integrate faith-based information literacy into the curriculum. Once faith integration programs are inculcated in the curriculum, patrons will definitely seek for the help of the information professional in sourcing for genuine and reliable information. As the patrons study this faith-based information, their spiritual lives will be transformed and their thoughts will become guided. Therefore, the role of information professionals as partners in faith integration in the libraries along with faculty members must be intensified.

3. **Recognition:** The leadership of any faith-based instruction must recognize the importance of the information professional and the libraries as ministering agents and agencies. The

information professionals must be appreciated at all times because in providing information to the patrons, they also help to guide against misuse of information as well as protect the image of the institution. This will prompt the information professional in joining forces with the teachers in producing students who will reach their highest potential and fulfill God's purpose for their lives in this technology driven age.

4. **Role of Counselors:** Many library patrons are burden with personal and psychological issues and therefore, information professionals are to serve as counsellors in meeting the emotional and spiritual needs of those desire to communicate with them as faith integrators. Information professional should be prayerful in dealing with patron because a "little kind word may save a dying soul."

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