



Welcome to the September Quarterly Newsletter for the Library! This newsletter contains details of upcoming events and also mentions previous activities.

On 7 June, at St Francis' College, about thirty people enjoyed hearing from Julie Moser. Julie has been involved in Youth Ministry for thirty years as a Youth Minister and Youth Trainer in Australia and Canada. She is the author of *Studies 2 Go* and *More Studies 2 Go* and other Youth Bible Studies. She is currently the Diocesan Youth and Children's Missioner with the Anglican Diocese of Qu'Appelle in Saskatchewan, Canada. She runs the Young Anglicans Project 2017. There are a number of churches in her Diocese

where there is a little or no Youth Ministry. The aim of the Young Anglicans Project is to enable people of all ages including older people and grandparents to engage with young people and to pass on The Christian Faith to them. The essence of the Engage Training is to first talk with young people, second study a portion of the Bible with young people and third pray with them. Everyone who attended found it very encouraging and some have been using the training in their mission and ministry. Hopefully, she will return again to Brisbane on another occasion. We were very fortunate to have her with us in Brisbane.

We have published Michael Raiter's talk on *Lively Communication: the Why and How of Lively Communication*, which he gave at the 2017 Mathew Hale Public Library Annual Dinner. The talk covers the hottest thing in church today, God and lively communication, the why of lively communication and the how of lively communication. If you would like a copy of this talk, it is available for \$10 (including postage and GST). An Order Form is available on the website.

On the 3rd of August at St Francis' College about 20 people joined with Rev Dr Andrew Cameron, Director of St. Mark's National Theological Centre in Canberra, to discuss the challenges and opportunities for positive cultural engagement by churches in 21st century Australia. Reports coming back from attendees were very positive.

The library is continuing to encourage key leaders through the sponsorship of six people to attend a preaching workshop and three people to a national youth ministry conference to encourage them in their ministry.

I encourage you to attend the events of the library. Please review and note the list of events outlined in Upcoming Events later in the newsletter.

Our new website has now been launched. Please have a look. Much thanks goes to James Crawford and Graham Stanton for their work.

Our Youth Ministry Advisor, Revd Graham Stanton is continuing his work of mentoring leaders, and also with his Doctoral Studies at the University of Queensland. Included in the newsletter is an article by Graham.

Please go to the Mathew Hale Public Library website ([www.mathewhalepubliclibrary.com](http://www.mathewhalepubliclibrary.com)) website to read a review by Rev Peter Corney from The Melbourne Anglican of the book *The Good Bishop* by Dr Mike Gourlay. The review is used by us with the kind permission of The Melbourne Anglican.

### **Keep in touch and connect your friends**

Do you know of anyone who would be interested in receiving information from the Mathew Hale Public Library? If so, please suggest to them that they sign up to our mailing list on our website ([www.mathewhalepubliclibrary.com](http://www.mathewhalepubliclibrary.com)) Thank you again for your support of the Library. If you would like to make a donation to the library please use the form at the end of the newsletter.

With Best Regards,  
Geoff Dutton  
*Honorary Warden*

### **Upcoming Events**

#### **Bible Study**

The Prayer and Bible Study group continue to meet at 5.30pm each Tuesday at the Library. We have a short Bible study and then we pray for people and churches. You are more than welcome to attend.



#### **Cloaks, Scrolls and Paediatric Palliative Care**

Dr Anthony Herbert is a paediatrician who has specialised in paediatric palliative care. He is a graduate from the University of Queensland, and trained in both Brisbane and Sydney. He started work as a paediatrician at the Royal Children's Hospital in Brisbane in 2008. He now directs the Paediatric Palliative Care Service at the Lady Cilento Children's Hospital. His research interests include telehealth, communication, music therapy and insomnia in palliative care. He was the national secretary of the Christian and Medical Dental Fellowship of Australia from 2006 to 2011.

Date & Time: Tuesday, October 3rd 2017 at 7pm

Location: Blue Room, St Andrew's Anglican Church, 160 Vulture St, South Brisbane

Enquiries: Alex Crawford - [info@mathewhalepubliclibrary.com](mailto:info@mathewhalepubliclibrary.com) or 0411 271 787

Cost: By Donation

Scrolls and a cloak were an important practical need for the Apostle Paul as he approached the end of his life (2 Tim 4:13). The modern palliative care movement formed 50 years ago with the opening of St Christopher's Hospice in 1967. Devout faith, scrolls and cloaks were also critical in the formation of this new specialty in modern medicine. Within the specialty of palliative care, we see the science and humanity of medicine come together. The specialty has a focus on providing best practice care, through research and evidence, in the most compassionate way possible to all those who are suffering from a serious or life-threatening illness. Anthony's presentation aims to deal with some of the following issues – vocation, suffering, spirituality, self-care and compassion. This will be achieved by Anthony sharing his own personal story, reviewing the biography of the founders of the modern palliative care movement (e.g. Dame Cicely Saunders and Balfour Mount) and through case studies.

### **2017 Thanksgiving Service**

We have much to be thankful for. In order to celebrate and reflect on the life and work of the library in 2017 a Thanksgiving Service will be held.

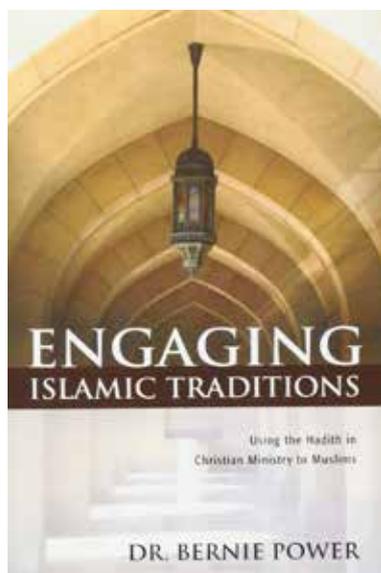
Date & Time: Tuesday, December 5th 2017 at 6PM

Location: Blue Room, St Andrew's Anglican Church, 160 Vulture Street, South Brisbane.

Enquiries: Alex Crawford - [info@mathewhalepubliclibrary.com](mailto:info@mathewhalepubliclibrary.com) or 0411 271 787

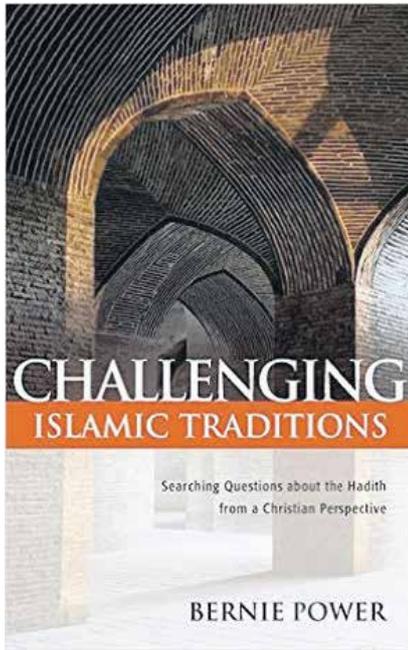
Dr Bernie Power, **ENGAGING ISLAMIC TRADITIONS - Using the Hadith in Christian Ministry to Muslims**, Pasadena: William Carey Library, 2016. 267 pages

Dr Bernie Power, **CHALLENGING ISLAMIC TRADITIONS - Searching Questions about the Hadith from a Christian Perspective**, Pasadena: William Carey Library, 2016. 278 pages



These twin books by Dr Bernie Power, lecturer in Islamic Studies at the Melbourne School of Theology, provide a unique insight into the interface between Christianity and Islam. The author has made a detailed study and analysis of the 7,275 hadiths (traditions of utterances attributed to Muhammad) in the nine volumes of Bukhari's Collection of Hadiths, including many weird and wonderful stories about the Prophet of Islam. In the first book he examines possible points of convergence with Biblical events, doctrines and ethics and how these may provide springboards for presenting the gospel to Muslims. In the second book he highlights the differences between the Islamic and Christian understanding of God, the

role and ethics of Muhammad and Jesus, the place of women , descriptions of Heaven and Hell, and the challenges to Islam from Science, modern Society and Human Rights perspectives.



What makes these two books unique are the rigorous way they engage with the vast corpus of material in the Hadith and the honesty and empathy of an author engaged in ongoing dialogue with Muslims. Dr Power's research has been described as original and monumental. He raises critical questions concerning the sources of the traditions as well as their content and the process of transmission and has provided useful appendices, diagrams and tables to clarify his arguments. He makes extensive reference to both Islamic and non-Islamic scholars and claims a special place for his Christian perspective, while acknowledging that there is already a long line of Islamic commentaries available on the Hadith. The Hadith have had a profound impact on the Muslim world, shaping the culture and customs of Muslim communities and are regarded as a supplement to the Qur'an, clarifying religious customs, Islamic laws and the meaning of Qur'anic verses. There is a plethora of books

studying the Qur'an from both an Islamic and Christian viewpoint but few have tackled the daunting challenge posed by the hadith.

In taking up this challenge Dr Power is unashamedly an advocate for Christianity and seeks to present the gospel in a way that respects the mindset and worldview of the Muslim and to remove misunderstandings of the Bible. In doing so he explains why dialogue drawing on insights from the Qur'an and Hadith is a legitimate method of evangelism and how it can be used in practice. He argues, "True faith involves the whole person -- heart, mind and will. Faith can be assensus but it is focused on relationships ....Some of the hadith bring out this emphasis." From these books I have gained a deeper understanding of the way truth and love are needed in Muslim evangelism and of the critical issues being faced in the Islamic world, such as the uncertain historicity and confused messages of the primary texts. I highly recommend the books.

*Review by John Arnold*



## What if Christian Ministry was really Complex?

*Written by Graham Stanton*

That might seem like a fairly obvious question. If complex means “consisting of many different and connected parts” then of course Christian ministry is complex! There’s preaching and evangelism and pastoral care and morning tea rosters and child safety training and small groups and leadership training and community outreach and workplace health and safety and overseas mission support and parish council and on and on and on. Perhaps a better question is what is there about Christian ministry that isn’t complex!

My question is coming from a more technical angle, in terms of the Cynefin Framework. Cynefin, meaning context or habitat, is rapidly becoming the most internationally well-known word from the Welsh language. Pronounced to rhyme with Kevin, but with an additional n at the beginning, the Cynefin Framework is a sense-making framework to identify different contexts in which we make decisions and pursue action.



The Cynefin Framework distinguishes between systems that are simple, complicated, complex, and chaotic.

In simple systems, cause-and-effect is straightforward and so the right actions will lead to your desired outcomes. To make good decisions you need to get a sense of the situation you face, identify the category of action that you’re dealing with, and pursue the right response: sense, categorise, respond. So, if it’s time for morning tea, you know you need to fill the kettle, turn the kettle on, put the tea-bag in a cup, and pour boiling water over. There may be debate about whether it’s better to use a tea-pot instead of tea-bags, and whether the milk should go in first or not, but besides that, making a cup of tea is a simple affair.

Complicated systems are basically the same as simple systems in that there are stable patterns of cause-and-effect, but they’re just a bit more complicated than making a cup of tea. A flushing toilet is simple, a car is complicated. I don’t know how a car works, but I know that it’s possible to work it out. In a complicated system cause-and-effect is at least knowable, even if not known. Rather than simply identifying which category of action we’re dealing with, complicated systems call for some careful analysis of what’s going on. Leaders sense, analyse, and respond. This is the realm of expert advisors and consultants. Rather than identifying “best practice” (which implies one way of proceeding that ought to be followed by everyone everywhere every time), complicated systems look for “good practice”. Given that analysis will always be an interpretation and open to alternative explanations, there’s likely to be various strategies that can reach the desired outcome.

Simple and complicated systems are alike because there are generally stable relationships that exist between cause and effect. Complex and chaotic systems are ones where there’s no such stability. In chaos cause-and-effect breaks down entirely. Things are so chaotic that there is no way of predicting what might happen next and no discernable pattern in the events that have unfolded. In times of chaos, such as the days following the 9/11 attacks on New York, effective leadership needs

decisive action in the hope of restoring some semblance of order. In chaos, leaders act first, then try to make sense of what's happening, then respond.

Complex systems are like chaotic ones in that the effect of various causes cannot be predicted. Complex systems have so many inputs, and so many possible causal links between inputs and combinations of inputs, that the result of any one change is too difficult to know in advance. A Ferrari is complicated; the Amazon rainforest is complex. Furthermore, in complex systems, because the environment within which the situation exists is changing so frequently, what happened once before cannot be guaranteed to have the same effect again. Playing chess is complicated; a six-year-old birthday party is complex.

But unlike chaotic systems, even though cause-and-effect cannot be predicted, there's enough stability in a complex system that patterns of cause-and-effect can still be discerned, if only in hindsight. Complexity therefore calls for widespread consultation and experimentation in order to discern "emergent practice". It's not a case of "anything goes" since experimenters need some clear boundaries to open a space to explore. With a clear objective or outcome for the mission, five or ten or more experiments might fail, but the mission and objective remains valid. As Thomas Edison is quoted as saying, "I have not failed. I've just found 10,000 ways that won't work". Complexity needs multiple safe-to-fail experiments rather than one fail-safe strategy. Leaders in complex systems probe, sense, and respond. Those experiments that move us toward our desired goal are repeated and amplified; those that don't are dampened or deleted.

The Cynefin framework has been widely applied in areas such as business strategy, software design, and political action. I've found it helpful also for thinking about Christian ministry. Some aspects of Christian ministry are simple in the sense of being able to identify best practice methods to learn and implement. How to chair a parish council meeting efficiently, how to organise a volunteer roster and contact database, what to do if a child reports an experience of abuse: these are all 'simple' systems where, once you've identified what sort of situation you're facing, there are clear steps to follow.

Other aspects of Christian ministry are more complicated, such as, how to build an evangelistic culture in a church. There's no simple lever to pull that will guarantee an increase in enthusiasm for outreach. Part of the complication will be properly understanding the existing obstacles to outreach: how committed are congregation members to their own faith? How confident are congregation members that nothing embarrassing will happen at church the morning they bring their friends? What are the social needs of the surrounding community and where might there be openings for sharing the good news of Jesus? Some expert advice and analysis, such as the results of the National Church Life Survey, can be helpful with these kinds of questions.

There may also be times when Christian ministry is in chaos, such as times of sudden change, or major pastoral crises. Chaotic times will call for a firm hand to be able to steady the ship. We have such a firm hand in our sovereign God. Ministry in chaotic times will echo the psalmists and prophets who draw our attention back to the enduring faithfulness of God. "Though the earth trembles and the mountains topple into the depths of the seas... The LORD of Armies is with us; the God of Jacob is our stronghold" (Psalm 46); "I will be with you when you pass through the waters, and when you



pass through the rivers, they will not overwhelm you. You will not be scorched when you walk through the fire, and the flame will not burn you. For I am the Lord your God, the Holy One of Israel, and your Saviour” (Isaiah 43:2-3). In chaos it’s time to come together and pray. In chaos we cling to the Word, “as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in our hearts” (2 Peter 1:19).

My hunch is that churches and church leaders are reasonably clear about how to operate within simple, complicated, and chaotic systems. Which doesn’t mean it’s easy. Even simple situations such as mandatory reporting aren’t easy. But the difficulty of those situations lies more in doing what we know to be right, rather than in working out what the right thing to do might be.

But what if Christian ministry was really complex? It strikes me that churches are facing lots of complex questions today where working out the right thing to do leaves us floundering.

How might we reach our ever-shifting culture with the unchanging gospel of the crucified and risen Lord Jesus? There are numerous inputs. Each congregation member comes with individual gifts and needs, all with personal and collective histories, all with interconnecting relationships among one-another and in the surrounding community. The people we are called to love and serve in the name of Christ are numerous and varied, shaped in all manner of ways by the surrounding culture. And that culture, that not only shapes the world but impinges on the church as well, is made up of many elements and influences, where even the pace of change is changing apace. The task of living as the people of God in this present age is complex.

But rather than being intimidated or terrified by the challenges of our context, recognising the complexity of the system can be an exciting invitation to lean into the gifts of God that are ours in Christ by the Spirit.

Where complex systems call for widespread consultation, the church is a multi-generational and multi-cultural community united in the Spirit. The question, “how might we reach our community with the gospel of Christ” is addressed to the priesthood of all believers, where we are “all one in Christ Jesus” (Galatians 3:28); “we were all baptized by one Spirit into one body—whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free—and we were all given one Spirit to drink” (1 Corinthians 12:13). Ministry in a complex age calls for creating spaces for conversations, discussions, brainstorming, and daydreaming so that all the members of the church can think about how we might fulfil our shared calling.

Where complex systems call for safe-to-fail experiments, the church is equipped with the safety-net of a merciful, gracious, and sovereign God. We know we won’t always get everything right, but if our identity is secure in Christ rather than dependent on the success of our ministry, then we’ll be free to try. We know that our efforts are often feeble and uncertain, but when we know “it is God who is working in you both to will and to work according to his good purpose” (Philippians 2:12), then we’ll be released to “work out our own salvation” even without a detailed set of instructions to follow. And even if we try ten things and ten of them fail, we know Jesus’ promise that he “will build his church, and the gates of Hades will not overpower it (Matthew 16:18), so perhaps the eleventh experiment will see some fruit.

Finally, where complex systems call for a clear objective and outcome for the mission, the church is guided by the gospel of Christ and the means of grace. Perhaps here is the particular calling of the pastor teacher—to tell the wondrous story of the Christ who died for us all. In preaching the gospel, Christian ministers keep drawing the focus of the church to the boundary conditions on our experimentation: All we do is for the glory of God; the tools of our trade are the word of God and prayer; we are not here to be served but to serve; we are better together. As we engage in the task of discovering how we might fulfil our calling to be the new humanity in Christ, we must “let the word of Christ dwell richly among us, in all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another through psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs, singing to God with gratitude in our hearts” (Colossians 3:16).

There’s a lot of Christian ministry today that is really complex. Thank God that we’ve haven’t been given “a spirit of fear, but one of power, love, and sound judgement” (1 Timothy 1:7). So we pray, “Send us out in the power of your Spirit, to live and work to your praise and glory”.



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\*Note that the library is currently open for advertised events, by appointment and every Tuesday from 3.00pm to 6pm.