

In Memoriam: Rev Pieter Viljoen

It is with great sadness that we received the news of the passing of Rev Pieter Viljoen. He was the member of ACRP's Operational Team who did the evaluations of RPL applications. He was always available to his team and was dedicated to the task of evaluating pastors' applications in a professional and fair manner. This was a task of love, done as a volunteer with no compensation. I had the privilege of working closely with him the past few years. He always had a funny story to tell, friendly advice to give and a love of good strong coffee. His devotion to his family, the church and community were an inspiration. Our thoughts and prayers go out to his family. He will be greatly missed.
Andrea (ACRP Administrator)

One of the messages received was from Dr Noko:
So sorry to hear of the passing of Rev Peter Viljoen. On the occasions that I had an opportunity to meet and talk to him on Ministries Formation, I found him a pleasant person, solid and knowledgeable Christian Educator. We thank God for Pieter's life and for being our fellow labourer in the Vineyard of the Lord. We are reminded nonetheless that death is yet another way of living in the presence of God. May his family be comforted by the Grace of God.

In view of so many of our Pastors who have suffered losses and who has passed away due to COVID-19 and other causes, we would like to invite our affiliates to send us the names of those they may be aware of, together with a few sentences in commemoration to
acrp@acrpafrica.co.za

The guiding light Newsletter



Issue 10 - September 2021



Message for today From the Bible Society's Verse-a-day Bathsheba: the wife of someone else Xanthe Hancox

One evening David got up from his bed and walked around on the roof of the palace. From the roof he saw a woman bathing. The woman was very beautiful, and David sent someone to find out about her. The man said, "She is Bathsheba, the daughter of Eliam and the wife of Uriah the Hittite." [2 Samuel 11:2-3](#)

There's a good chance that you know the story of David and Bathsheba. You probably know that David's act of adultery ended with the death of Uriah, David's faithful warrior – and more importantly, Bathsheba's husband. If you read through [Matthew 1](#), then, it is interesting that Matthew associates Bathsheba with Uriah ("David was the father of Solomon, whose mother had been Uriah's wife" – [Matthew 1:6b, NIV](#)). It seems that whenever Bathsheba is mentioned, so is David's sin.

We don't know much about Bathsheba, but she could not have known that she would become a part of the lineage of the Messiah – even if it was because of circumstances outside of her own control. Bathsheba was a faithful wife who caught the eye of a king.

Jerusalem in 980 BC was a very different place for women. She had no choice but to obey David, even if she was already married. I can only begin to imagine the devastation and trauma she suffered. Violated by a man of great power who then had her husband killed on the battlefield, Bathsheba must have felt her life was ruined.

Bathsheba was resilient in the face of multiple accounts of grief – when she lost her husband, and later when she lost her child. Bathsheba is a woman who was initially sought out as the object of David's desire, but who showed persistence and perseverance and a spirit that isn't defined by her circumstances.

But the Lord would not be stopped by circumstances such as these. God's possibilities thrive in impossible situations. Just when it seems as if history is at another dead end, God opens a new path forward. Bathsheba became the mother of Solomon, a king whose glory was exceeded only by Christ himself.

Faith is often a result of ordinary people obeying God despite their circumstances. Bathsheba's story teaches us that our lives will not always go according to plan. Unexpected circumstances will arrive, but God is constantly and sovereignly working to bring about plans that are bigger than us.

Dead ends are all around us. But God specialises in opening new roads.

Prayer: Lord, some of us have had our lives destroyed by the greed and injustice of others. We don't know where to turn. Comfort us, and open up a road to your peace, we pray. In your name, Amen.

For more information on the Bible Society, please visit their website at
<https://www.biblesociety.co.za>



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THE BIBLE — WRITING, HISTORY, RELIABILITY — PART 8A

The Bible is one book with two sections—the Old Testament and the New Testament.

The Old Testament contains thirty-nine books written over a period of a thousand years: five books of the Law (the Pentateuch), twelve books of history, five of poetry and wisdom, and seventeen books in which prophets proclaim God’s message.

The New Testament is the story of Jesus the Messiah and his followers, who spread the Good News of Jesus. It contains twenty-seven books and letters written over a period of fifty years. Like the Old Testament, the New Testament begins with history and is followed by other writings.

The Bible is the most important book in the world. Billions of people’s lives have been transformed by reading it. Its translation helped form the English and German languages as we know them today. It was the first book printed by Johannes Gutenberg on movable type. A portion of the Bible or a complete Bible has been translated into more than three thousand languages.

How We Got the Bible

Sixty-six books were written over fifteen hundred years and collected into what we know today as the Bible. It is also referred to as the *canon*, a word meaning “collection.” To be part of the Bible, a book had to be inspired by God. Was the author a genuine messenger speaking God’s words? Was the message of the book consistent with earlier revelations from God?

No one questioned Moses’s testimony (see John 9:29), so the first five books of the Old Testament were first accepted as Scripture. Israel called these the *Torah*, and they became the basis of the Jewish faith.

Through the centuries, Jewish scholars acknowledged as Scripture seventeen prophetic books, twelve books of history, and five books of poetry and wisdom. The entire Old Testament was identified by Jewish scholars as holy Scripture three hundred years before Christ was born. Jesus quoted from this Scripture, calling them the Law and the Prophets.

The four Gospels in the New Testament were all written in Greek in the first century and were circulated to early churches. Acts and some of Paul’s many letters were accepted as Scripture without great discussion. Only a few books at the end of the New Testament were still in question by the end of the second century. But, by then, there were many counterfeit writings about Jesus circulating, some falsely claiming to have been written by the apostles. These were rejected by the church as “fictitious history.” When the synods of Hippo in AD 393 and of Carthage in AD 397 (both of them in Africa) identified the books of the New Testament as we now know them, they confirmed what the church had already determined – by the witness of the Holy Spirit – that they were New Testament Scripture.

In the next newsletter, we’ll learn how the number of manuscripts and the accurate history recorded in the Bible helps build our trust.

The Christian Church within the global crisis.

Seasons come and seasons go. We are in the 17th month since the national state of disaster was declared and we are still losing our loved ones, friends and colleagues and there is no indication that the pandemic is coming to an end. Instead, it's a manifestation of this pandemic in various forms like variant delta etc. Indeed, this is an uncharted territory. We are in the middle of the storm. We are in a crisis. It's a season that we would like to fast forward. It's a season that caught all sectors unaware. All sectors in society are affected and impacted. No one is spared from the current storm. The Church of Jesus Christ, purchased by HIS PRECIOUS blood finds itself within the global crisis and fighting the pandemic. Its resources are waning day by day. Even though they are depleting we have a loving God who cares for HIS people and HIS Church that must fulfill the great commission. This is the time when the Church and all Christian leaders must be more united to serve and save the world with Divine manifestation. We are reminded to pray without ceasing as recorded in the Holy Bible and claim on God's promises in times like these that our "help cometh from the Lord, which made heaven and earth" (Psalm 121).

We are in a crisis and how we react is very key as Amit Ray puts it this way: **"In every crisis, doubt or confusion, take the higher path - the path of compassion, courage, understanding and love."** I have observed how Christian leaders have reacted during this period of confusion. Period of fake news and conspiracy theories. We fail to speak with one voice as the body of Christ in the midst of a global crisis. One will ask a pertinent question while facing this demonic pandemic: where do you focus your attention to? It is the same situation when the twelve spies came with the report (Numbers 13). The two, Caleb and Joshua gave the message of hope that **"We should go up and take possession of the land, for we can certainly do it."** While the other ten discouraged the masses and they never saw any opportunity at Canaan, only defeat and loss of life. Caleb and Joshua saw opportunities within a crisis as John Kennedy puts it this way **"When written in Chinese, the word crisis is composed of two characters –one represents danger and the other represents opportunity."** This is an opportunity where the body of Christ puts FAITH in action. It's a moment where we are supposed to show love and fulfill our missional calling as the called ones. It's not a moment where we are seen to be part of the problem and confusion. It's a moment where Christian leaders encourage God's people to embrace science and medicine like they have been taking medication all their adult life. The point is that medication is not an act of distrust in God, it is also a gift of God. The book of Jeremiah 8:22 (KJV) asks the **question "Is there no balm in Gilead; is there no physician there? Why then is not the health of the daughter of my people recovered?"** Yes, Jeremiah was addressing the spiritual condition of Israel by using this metaphor but in the same breath, balm was a medicine to administer physical ailments and there were physicians during those times. In 2 Kings 20:1-7 there is prayer and the usage of physical healing using figs to heal Hezekiah. We need to show God's people in these crises that prayer is key, and God has entrusted other people with gifts using leaves as medicine to heal HIS people.

Crisis has no bounds. We are decimated by this pandemic, like I have alluded earlier that no sector is unaffected by this pandemic, the Christian community cannot afford to act out of ignorance by joining the chorus of naysayers, like the ten spies by discouraging God's people. The Christian Church is under attack and finds itself in the midst of global crises by **corruption in government, high unemployment rate, gender-based violence, poverty, violent crimes and most of all the Covid-19 is adding to these global crises.** We are compelled to be the beacon of HOPE and to let our lights to shine in these crises. The parable of **Luke 10: 30 – 37** gives the true reflection on how we react in the moment of crisis. This is indeed the Jericho Road of our lives that we are travelling on. We have all fallen into the hands of robbers who have manifested themselves in the various crises that I have alluded to earlier. As the Church of Christ and those who are spiritual leaders, we must answer the question posed by our Lord Jesus Christ to the young lawyer. We need to honestly introspect and reflect on our attitudes of the three personas that Jesus puts on display, and then answer the question, **"Which of these three do you think was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of robbers?"** Luke 10: 36 (NIV). We cannot be counted as a "certain Priest" or a "certain Levite" (the KJV Bible description) in these moments of crises. This is an opportune moment to prepare to offer counselling now and post this era. Institutions that can reach out to Pastors and upskill them to deal with these crises must come to the party and offer those services that are needed.

As I pause for a moment before I finish this opinion piece, the month of August, Women's month had its share of disastrous incidences that are unknown and known. The tragic loss of life where a university student was brutally murdered and the perpetrator dismembering her body. My thoughts and prayers to the families who have lost their loved ones because of these senseless killings. I pray that September month will come with good things and good news. God is still in control.

In God's vineyard.

ACRP Board member and EXCO Vice-Chair.

The Right Reverend N. Phomane.

Books that give children “permission to really feel”

The circumstances in which we live since Covid-19 made its appearance are emotionally challenging for children – to say the least.

Add to that more “normal” challenges like bullying and you have a pressure pot of emotions that needs to be managed.

That is why it is so important for children to have the ability to understand, own, regulate and process their emotions, said dr Beatrix J van Rensburg, a clinical social worker in private practice.

Van Rensburg said, “These skills must be in every child’s emotional tool basket. Especially in times like these. These skills form the core of every child’s emotional development, and that is why it is so important to empower children with the skills concerning their emotions, but also the emotions of others.”

According to Van Rensburg the Lightville series, a series of four books that minister and play-therapist Siegfried Louw recently wrote, will help parents, teachers and therapists talk to children about their emotions.

As play-therapist, author Louw helps children and adults to acknowledge and manage their emotions. “The joy of my work is that I can help others through therapy to be freed from their painful baggage that they are carrying around with them. God gives me the privilege to see how people get back the twinkle in their eye.”

When you ask Louw about the simple language he uses in the Lightville series to address very difficult subjects like death he says, “Children have taught me how to say a lot with only few words.”

Louw says that with these books he wants to give children (and adults) permission to feel what they are feeling. “Yes, we have unwelcome emotions, but to suppress them causes more pain.”

The goal of these books is, for example, to rethink the pain that is caused by losing a loved one. “I want children to understand that their pain means they loved the person that is no longer with them. The missing of the loved one hurts, but it actually tells you something about your love for that person.”

How can the Lightville books help?

- It gives us new ways to think about the experiences in our lives.
- It makes conversations possible between people of different ages who might not know how to talk to one another about some things that happened.
- It encourages emotional integration.
- It empowers parents to talk to their children about the difficult experiences in life *and* about the exciting possibilities it creates.
- It gives children the chance to explore their own experiences.
- It confirms to children that their experiences are valid.

The Lightville series

The Lightville series consists of four books that each has a colourful character that children can identify with.

Lisa is the main character in *The stone in Lisa’s chest*. Lisa has to deal with the difficulty of losing her Uncle Hun. The most important message Lisa sends to other children is that love will always be stronger than death.

In *Ben and the dragon* Ben is trying to tame his dragon – anxiety. When Dragon visits Ben, he struggles to breathe and starts sweating. The aim of Ben’s story is to equip someone to talk to a child about anxiety, that will help normalise the topic for them.

In *Spot and the poison* Spot will help children to recognise bullying behaviour and teach them what they can do about it. Spot’s message is that love will always be stronger than our fear for a bully.

In *Sophia and the cave* Josh is dealing with loneliness. This book was written to help children remember that we were not made to live alone in our “caves” and that we can ask people to help us deal with difficult situations in our lives.

Visit www.lightville.co.za for more information and to order the books.

Help children, young and old, with the difficult situations of life

The stone in Lisa's chest

Help young children think about loss, to talk about it and eventually process it.

Ben and the dragon

Ben and the dragon is specially written to help children discover more about anxiety and how it works, and what they can do to deal with and tame their dragons.

Spot and the poison

Spot and the poison help children to recognize bullying behaviour and teach them what to do with a bully's poison.

Sophia and the cave

Sophia and the cave is specially written to remind children, young and old, to look into the eyes of the people they love. They will help you escape from the loneliness of your hiding place.

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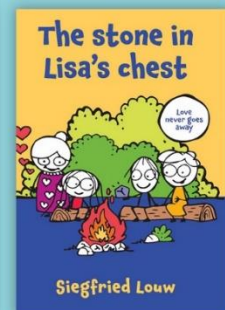
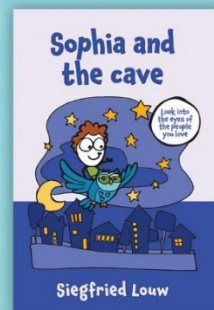
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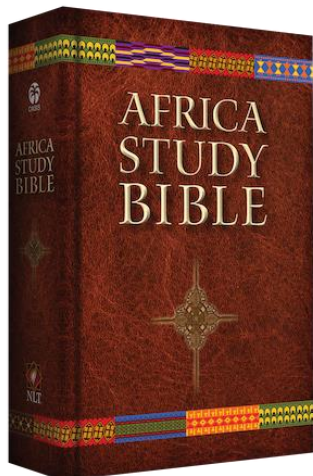
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General Editor: Dr John Jusu



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The Africa Study Bible (ASB) was written by 338 contributors from 48 African countries, making it the most ethnically diverse, single-volume, biblical resource to date.

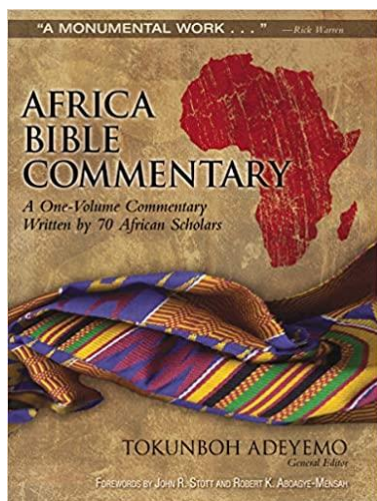
- It was built from the ground up by scholars and pastors in Africa who see the critical need to make Scripture relevant to our everyday lives.
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"The Africa Study Bible is a pacesetter in using the African experience for understanding the Bible. I recommend it highly to those who have sought to understand life and the world from an African perspective". **Dr Mvume Dandala**, former presiding bishop of the Methodist Church of Southern Africa and former head of the All Africa Conference of Churches.

2. Africa Bible Commentary (ABC) (Hardcover)

General Editor: Dr Tokunboh Adeyemo



Key features:

- One-volume Bible commentary produced by African theologians, in Africa, for the needs of African pastors, students and lay leaders—and for the world.
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"A rich and valuable contribution to biblical knowledge and understanding. I commend it to Christian leaders. not only in Africa but the world over". **Dr Justice James Ogenyi Ogebe**, High Court Nigeria

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