

## Ecclesiastes as research

### Autoethnography through a rear-vision mirror

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#### Introduction

**The Bible is a book of many surprises. Not least of these is that it contains accounts of research. In a collection of 66 books mostly in Hebrew, Greek, and some Aramaic, through more than 40 Holy Spirit inspired authors, stretching over one and a half millennia, God gives a special revelation of Himself and His purposes for humanity. The texts deal with or touch on subjects ranging from history, literature and philosophy to health and hygiene, prophecy, law, natural science and the environment; and more. Across this wide spectrum of content, no less than four distinct instances of research conducted by individuals can be identified; three in the Old Testament and one in the New Testament.**

The first occurs in Judges 6, where Gideon has a crisis of faith in dealing with Israel's enemies. To verify the divine promises he carefully conducts two simple consecutive empirical tests under identical conditions with startling results that appear to run counter to logic and naturalistic explanation. Another example is the dietary evaluation study conducted at the Babylonian court to train young men to serve King Nebuchadnezzar, as recorded in Daniel 1: 3–19. Modern evaluation research literature refers to it as an “exemplary model for the utilisation of research in making educational policy decisions.”<sup>1</sup>

A further example is found in the Gospel of Luke. In the introduction, the writer refers to using primary sources—eye witnesses—in his historical research, as he “carefully investigated everything from the beginning...to write an orderly account.”<sup>2</sup>

It is evident from the cited instances, that research was conducted in situ to inform decision-making and as a vehicle to strengthen personal faith; also to validate the veracity of historical accounts for listeners and readers, rather than for academic purposes. A fourth example of research found in the Bible, is the book of Ecclesiastes, traditionally attributed to Solomon, which is the focus of this article.

#### Ecclesiastes in a general research context

There are different approaches to contemporary research. Each has its inherent strengths and

weaknesses, including the ‘closeness of fit’ to the planned inquiry. A scan of the book of Ecclesiastes suggests the author is engaged in inquiry that approximates what is regarded now as *autoethnography*; a subcategory of ethnography, which is a form of qualitative research. The latter is descriptive; with the collected data coming from natural settings rather than from contrived or experimental ones and taking the shape of words and ‘pictures’, compared to the numerical data collected in quantitative research.

Ethnographic research is open-ended, context specific, and interpretive in nature, aiming to develop understanding rather than establish statistical relationships. Researchers seek to understand people's view of the world; “how they create and understand their daily lives”<sup>3</sup> and what meaning people construct around life events, assuming “there are always multiple perspectives”.<sup>4</sup> Hence, “meanings and interpretations are not fixed entities”.<sup>5</sup> In their methodology ethnographers proceed inductively rather than deductively; towards theory rather than from theory, often revisiting social environments, to narrow their observations or collect additional data raised by emerging questions.

More specifically, in autoethnography the researcher is simultaneously the study's observer and actor; discrete roles that call for an approach of conscious detachment. Researchers thus “turn the analytic lens on themselves...[and] write, interpret, and/or perform their own narratives about culturally significant experiences”;<sup>6</sup> consequently becoming the main topic themselves.

#### The writer's background<sup>7</sup>

Solomon was the son of King David and Bathsheba, widow of Uriah the Hittite. Solomon succeeded his father David as Israel's king in a palace coup with the backing of the prophet Nathan, the Queen Mother, Zadok the priest and David's palace guards. The group foiled a conspiracy headed by his older brother Adonijah and Joab, Israel's army commander.

After the execution or banishment of his most dangerous opponents, Solomon began a prosperous and mostly peaceful reign of 40 years over a united

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kingdom. The latter, in addition to the vassal states that were tributary to Solomon, stretched from the Euphrates in the north to the borders of Egypt in the south, and from the land of the Philistines in the west to the Arabian Desert in the east. Israel owed its considerable land size and power to David's territorial conquests which Solomon further strengthened through treaties and alliances, consolidated by 'political marriages'.

Over time, Solomon embarked on ambitious large-scale construction projects; some accomplished through conscripted labour. His greatest achievement was probably the building of the temple in Jerusalem. He also continued to build a strong army, developed a substantial trading fleet, and exploited the copper and iron mines in the south of his kingdom. From a historian's point of view, all these undertakings, together with the inflow of tribute money, contributed to his personal power, wealth and fame as an oriental monarch; and to the stability of his rule.

Solomon's riches and wisdom are 'legendary'. Among examples are his accumulation of vast quantities of gold; the accolades heaped on Solomon by the Queen of Sheba for answering the hard questions put to him during her state visit; the judgement of the dispute between two women over 'their' child; as well as his many proverbs. Biblical history records Solomon, together with Jesus, as offering the longest and most detailed prayers of intercession recorded in Scripture;<sup>8</sup> one for literal Israel, the people of God; the other for spiritual Israel, future generations of Christ's followers. The circumstances of these two prayers, however, were in stark contrast. Solomon was officiating at a glorious public event, celebrating the dedication of the temple, while Jesus' outpouring of concern for the spiritual and the physical welfare of his followers was made on an intensely private occasion.

The available background evidence indicates that Solomon was a high achiever for many decades. He was self-confident and proud of his achievements, but then experienced an end-life crisis that left him seriously depressed and led him to inquire into and reflect on his life experience: Wealth, fame, pleasure, power, knowledge; for what purpose and to what end? The book of Ecclesiastes is a record of this inquiry. Interestingly, his published findings were 'peer reviewed', Ecclesiastes being accepted later as part of the canon of Hebrew sacred writings.

## The research presented

### Preamble

The very title of the book—in Hebrew, *Qoheleth*—suggests the notion of a convener of or presenter at a meeting;<sup>9</sup> not unlike a present-day academic

colloquium. Colloquia are usually organised meetings when scholars, post-graduate students and interested persons gather to listen to someone's perspective or research findings on a particular topic, with guest speakers often making presentations. The present article postulates that Solomon could well have been the guest presenter at such a gathering that may have included younger scholars, even his son(s).<sup>10</sup>

### Stating the problem

To begin his presentation, Solomon introduces himself. Then, from the perspective of the 'natural man' (*under the sun*) or perhaps devil's advocate, he succinctly foreshadows the problem of the inquiry: The meaninglessness of life as the 'bottom line', despite all one's hard work and toil. By implication, he poses the question: "How does one find happiness, purpose and meaning in life, without God?" Thus the *qoheleth* clearly identifies the research problem and its significance, and then embarks on his topic, which is both riveting and controversial.

The purpose and meaning of life has absorbed thinkers over the ages, including monarchs, concentration camp inmates,<sup>11</sup> philosophers and writers, among countless others. Thomas Keneally, Australian novelist three millennia removed, highlights the importance of the issue raised by *Qoheleth*, but in more positive terms:

Meaning is everything and humans will never cease pursuing the question of meaning. Nor should they. Indeed, nor can they. We're almost hard-wired to pursue the question of meaning and significance. There is no escaping it, wherever you go.<sup>12</sup>

### Reviewing the literature

To review the literature is an important task for any present-day researcher. The purpose of the literature review is to create context and background as well as providing an overview and a frame of reference for the study. Moreover, it seeks to clarify concepts, often by assisting with definitions; drawing on relevant fields of existing knowledge, identifying pertinent controversies, and benefiting from previous research and what other researchers, writers and thinkers have said. Solomon, as might be expected from an ancient writer, concerned himself mostly with the latter group.

At first glance, the literature search does not become a conspicuous part of Solomon's text. However, on closer examination, it is evident that the researcher is indebted to at least one source that was readily available to him: Israel's sacred writings. At the time these consisted of the books of

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**Table 1:** Samples of Old Testament sources predating Ecclesiastes; pointing to Solomon's possible references to, or dependence on O.T. texts

Texts from Ecclesiastes	Texts from O.T. sources predating Ecclesiastes
Eccl. 1:4 "[Many generations pass away] but the earth abideth for ever." KJV	Psalms 119:90 "...thou hast established the earth, and it abideth." KJV
Eccl. 2:2 "I said of laughter, 'It is mad'; and of mirth, 'What doeth it?'" KJV	Prov. 14:13 "Of laughter I said, 'It is madness', and of amusement, 'What does it accomplish?'" MLB
Eccl. 3:19 "For that [death] which befalleth the sons of men befalleth beasts...as the one dieth, so dieth the other..." KJV	Psalms 49:12 "But man with all his pomp must die like any animal." LB
Eccl. 4:3 "...Better is he than both they [the dead and the living], which hath not yet been [born]..." KJV	Job 3:11 "Why didn't I die as soon as I was born? Why didn't I die when I came out of the womb?" NCV
Eccl. 5:4 "When you make a vow to God, do not delay in fulfilling it." NIV	Num. 30:2 "When a man makes a vow to the Lord...he must not break it." NEB
Eccl. 6:2 "God has given to some men very great wealth...and they die and others get it all!" MLB	Psalms 39:6 "[Man rushes to and fro]...he heaps up wealth, not knowing who will get it." NIV
Eccl. 7:7 "Extortion turns a wise man into a fool, and a bribe corrupts the heart." NIV	Exodus 23:8 "Do not accept a bribe, for a bribe blinds those who see and twists the words of the righteous." NIV
Eccl. 8:11 "It is because sentence upon a wicked act is not promptly carried out that men do evil so boldly." NEB	Psalms 10:5,6 "...They [the wicked] always succeed. They are far from your laws...They say to themselves, 'Nothing bad will ever happen to me...'" NCV
Eccl. 9:5 "The living know that they shall die, but the dead don't know anything." ML	Psalms 6:5 "Dead people don't remember you, [Lord, and]...don't praise you." NCV
Eccl. 10:20 "Never curse the king, not even in your thoughts." LB	Exodus 22:28 "You shall not revile God, nor the ruler of your people." RSV
Eccl. 11:9 "...walk in the ways of thine heart, and in the sight of thine eyes: but know thou that for all these things God will bring thee into judgement." KJV	Deut. 29:19 "[A wrongdoer]...may flatter himself and think, 'All will be well with me even if I follow the promptings of my stubborn heart'; but this will bring everything to ruin." NEB
Eccl. 12:13 "...revere God, and keep his commandments..." MLB	Deut. 4:2 "...keep the commandments of the Lord your God..." NIV

Key to Bible translations—KJV: King James Version; MLB: Modern Language Bible; RSV: Revised Standard Version; LB: Living Bible; NCV: New Century Version; NIV: New International Version; NEB: The New English Bible.

Moses (the Pentateuch) and a collection of writings that probably included (in part or their entirety) Job, Joshua, Judges, Ruth, Samuel 1–2, and many of the Psalms. Then there were some of the proverbs that were written *for* Solomon, and those *by* him.<sup>13</sup> *Table 1* indicates, to some degree, Solomon's possible references to, or dependence on this literature.

Modern researchers normally set out their review of the relevant literature as a discrete section of their reported study. Such a separation would probably have been perceived as artificial, if not completely unknown by Solomon. A perusal of Ecclesiastes reveals that references to the literature are scattered throughout the text, as evident from *Table 1*, to augment the author's argument.

Some scholars point out that the author of Ecclesiastes would also have had access to non-Hebrew writings:

Solomon had no doubt read all the 'books' he could find, perhaps including the rather extensive literature of his day and the wisdom literature of Egypt, already famous in his day (see 1 Kings 4:30).<sup>14</sup>

This conclusion is deduced from archaeological evidence of the widespread existence and use of alphabetic cuneiform script in producing, for example, Canaanite texts of mythology and poetry; and the employment of hieroglyphics to record the achievements of Egyptian civilisation.<sup>15</sup> However, it appears, little is known about whether Solomon utilised such sources.

## The methodology utilised

Autoethnographies are marked by both strengths and weaknesses. On the positive side, autoethnographic genres are powerful, first-hand accounts. They have an authentic voice, shaped by personal experience; they carry authority. Readers are challenged to experience the worlds of the authors vicariously (as they pose questions like, “How does my experience shed light on, and offer insights about particular situations?”) and to reflect critically on their own.<sup>16</sup>

On the other hand, there is a danger of bias, narcissism,<sup>17</sup> or that they become hagiographies. Further, these self-narratives are not created in a cultural vacuum and are, almost always, *ex post facto*. As in Solomon's case, retrospectivity—his observations through a rear-vision mirror—may be flawed and inadequate. As Frances Foster makes clear:

Looking back is tricky business. It is seeing through time, people, events; it's remembering subtleties and attitudes. It's getting the facts straight, even though the facts may have little to do with 'telling the truth'. So much depends on who does the looking back and why.<sup>18</sup>

It is thus pertinent that utilisation of the methodology maximises its strengths and through alertness, ‘pitfalls’ are avoided and its weaknesses minimised.

Some Bible translations, such as the New International Version, place Solomon's Ecclesiastes under various linked headings. Certain commentators,<sup>19</sup> however, divide the text according to categories into which Solomon organises his data; a practice followed in this article. The likelihood exists that originally Solomon accumulated a mass of data throughout his life, without any conscious attempt of ever planning to record, classify or ‘code’ his experience; until his end-life crisis. Nevertheless, his research question is sufficiently broad for the data to ‘speak’ to it.

Methodologically, Solomon endeavours to bring reliability to his data and credibility to their analysis through repeated observations and revisiting of particular experiences, or examining similar situations. An example of this are the data in relation to fatalism referred to in Eccl. 3:1, 8:6–7, 9:12, 10:14. Similarly, “wise” and “wisdom” occur more than fifty times, bridging different parts of the text when it is sometimes difficult to discern a systematic “unified flow of thought.”<sup>20</sup>

Also noteworthy is his use not only of extensive *reflection*, but emphasis on *reflexivity*—a change in our consciousness (in a sense a transition from *searching* to *researching*<sup>21</sup>) and how we perceive

the world that can prevent us from being ‘trapped’ in it.<sup>22</sup> Many secular persons would see this as a self-empowering act; most Christians, however, would regard it as Spirit-empowered.

## Analysing the data, findings, and comments

History informs us that Solomon, in the role of data analyst, is an individual who has reached his penultimate or perhaps the last stage of his life cycle. Erik Erikson, 20th century psychologist differentiates between two possible alternative ‘markers’ that individuals may have reached at this point in their lives. It is either *stagnation* and later in the final stage, *despair* and *disgust*, on the one hand, or *generativity* and *care* and eventually *integrity* and *wisdom*, on the other.<sup>23</sup> As the qoheleth presents his findings, listeners/readers become aware that Solomon is apparently trying desperately to bring order and meaning to the closing chapter of his life to avoid succumbing to ‘despair and disgust’.

The researcher does not clarify his procedural priorities in examining the data; whether on the basis of chronology, the initial directions in which the ‘weight’ of the data points, or some other logic. As he interprets the data however, in relation to what brings meaning and happiness in life, a number of potential themes emerge:

**Natural science.** This is a field in which Solomon has extensive knowledge (1 Kings 4:33). It is the first theme that he explores. He discerns the transience and insignificance of humankind and sees the cycles and generations of human life as a parallel to the grand cycle of nature; driven by sun, wind and water. His attempt at ‘natural theology’—the endeavour to explain reality, life's meaning and happiness, from nature itself—does not appear to fit the data. An ‘under-the-sun’ view of the world is judged to be *hebel*, futile and meaningless. Oxford professor Alister McGrath, citing medicine Nobel Laureate Sir Peter Medawar, gives credence to this outlook, in an interview with Stephen Vosey:

In his book, *The limits of science*, he [Medawar] says, when it comes to understanding how nature works, how the material order hangs together, science basically has no limits at all. But when it comes to questions of meaning or questions of value, it can't answer these. Not just that it can't—it can *not*.<sup>24</sup>

**Knowledge and wisdom**—philosophy. Next, Solomon examines the data to ascertain whether they support the thesis that this conceptualisation of human endeavour leads to meaning and happiness in life (Eccl. 1:12–18). It appears a promising premise

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at first, particularly given the king's assertion, "...I have grown and increased in wisdom more than anyone who has ruled over Jerusalem before me; I have experienced much of wisdom and knowledge" (Eccl. 1:16, NIV); an assertion that is verified in 1 Kings 4:29–34. However, his subsequent findings are not as encouraging. He checks by taking into account additional data, comparing wisdom and folly (Eccl. 2:12–17), and the weariness of study taken to extremes (Eccl. 12:12).

Supplementary data (Eccl. 9:10, 13–16) point to mortality, among other determinants, limiting human wisdom, the latter being also emasculated by individuals' social status. These data only confirm some earlier impressions. He concludes, "For the more my wisdom, the more my grief; to increase knowledge only increases distress" (Eccl. 1:18), a view annexed 'down the centuries' by Goethe's Faust, a universal figure, who laments that he is no wiser after having studied philosophy, jurisprudence, medicine and theology. Similarly, some modern thinkers contend that while human minds are responsible for remarkable achievements and advances, they are also answerable for the problems which have resulted.<sup>25</sup>

**Hedonism.** Then there are data that, for Solomon, seem to point to pleasure as an organising theme (Eccl. 2:1–11, 18–26). His gratification of every sensory desire, pleasure for its own sake, seemed to weigh heavily on Solomon's mind. His excesses and addiction to pleasure seeking, however, leave him feeling jaded, empty and dissatisfied. Even the pleasure gained from his hard work and achievements generate loathing. He dismisses hedonism as, "...a chasing after the wind..." (Eccl. 2:11, LB), but does not propose asceticism as an alternative. Instead of *the life of having pleasure*, he points to *the pleasure of having life*.

**Materialism.** Wealth and material possessions were some of the defining characteristics of Solomon's reign. Numerous passages (Eccl. 2:4–6, 8; 5:9–6:12) deal with the topic. Solomon was probably the richest king in antiquity, as he had accumulated vast treasures. The question may be posed whether he was the owner or the prisoner of his riches. Unlike his contemporaries, Egypt's pharaohs, who believed in taking their earthly 'stuff' with them to their pyramid graves, Solomon perceived a different reality: "People come into this world with nothing, and when they die they leave with nothing. In spite of their hard work, they leave just as they came" (Eccl. 5:15, NCV). He would have removed from any of his fourteen hundred chariots the modern bumper sticker that purports, "The one who has the most toys when he dies wins."

Solomon's disillusionment with materialism providing significant meaning to life is still echoing in the 21st century:

Happiness is the single commodity not produced by the free market economy. Worse than that, when we are happy, we don't feel the need to buy anything...We must come to the realisation that *to have* is not as important as *to be*.<sup>26</sup>

**Fatalism and deism.** Who or what controls the future? This becomes an interesting question for the researcher in organising his data (Eccl. 3:1–4:16). There is a glimpse of an emerging counter-narrative (to that of the 'natural' man) in the famous verses that instruct us, there is a right time and season for everything under heaven, and by implication, that time is a precious commodity for which we are accountable—God having 'planted eternity' in human hearts. Like Solomon, we, living in the age of the nanosecond, on a planet a billion light years distant from some stars in the cosmos, come to the realisation that God exists outside time. And we apprehend Him not as some super version of a time-lord,<sup>27</sup> but the Lord of Time.

Solomon's temporary 'optimistic' interpretation of data, however, gives way to his former acerbic scepticism. He notes the unfathomableness of God, the finality of His actions, with humans not really being in control: "All things are decided by fate... there's no use arguing with God about your destiny" (Eccl. 6:10, LB). Indeed, the monarch considers that humans have no advantage over animals; all have the same destination, death and the grave. His acute awareness of the scant remaining years of his life only deepens his despair. In contrast to Job (Job 19:25–27), Solomon does not express a hope in the resurrection. He observes inevitability about many things in life.

Alternatively, on occasions, time and chance apparently do appear to govern people's lives (Eccl. 9:11). God doesn't seem to play an interactive role in His creation, allowing rampant oppression, and not meting out swift justice; where "...some of the good die young and some of the wicked live on and on" (Eccl. 7:15, LB). Unconvinced by the explanatory logic of fatalism and deism, Solomon's interpretation of data shifts to a different, 'higher' category.

**Religion and morality.** Having 'raised the bar', Solomon finds that data (Eccl. 5:1–7), however, point to a prevalence of ritual worship—typified by routine temple sacrifices, devoid of the Spirit—and the thoughtless mouthing of pious promises that lack commitment. One is seen as empty, the other foolish.

Further findings are presented in Eccl. 7:1–12:9. Many are given in the form of wide-ranging aphor-

“*God exists outside time, and we apprehend Him not as some super version of a time-lord, but the Lord of Time*”

isms and maxims, including some enlightened interludes, as well as in revisiting themes that he had explored previously, e.g. wisdom, human mortality, death, the inequalities of life, and our limited understanding of the Creator God. Scanning a concordance will quickly reveal the impact of the Pentateuch, Psalms and Proverbs on Solomon's thinking in these later passages. He notes the flawed nature of humanity, recommends making wise choices, including cooperating with civil authorities and see-saws between powerful spiritual truths such as God's *final* justice (Eccl. 8:12), and his own nagging doubts—why bad things happen to good people (Eccl. 8:14). He finishes by admonishing the young to value their youth and the opportunities before them, because serious mistakes have long-term consequences and ultimately God will call us all to account. Whether morality for the young or old, it is also found to be *hebel*. Then Solomon gives a lyrical description of the aging process, including a reminder of his own condition and the limited choices now available to him. Having dealt with the main themes that have emerged from the data, it seems worthwhile to engage in some further discussion of Solomon's research findings.

So far, many of the findings have really been a rejection of the dominant values and the culture of the court over which Solomon presided for almost 40 years. The court epitomised the hegemonic socio-economic, political, military, and religious 'parties' that controlled the kingdom and determined social relations. Customs, mores and 'maps of meaning', to a large extent, were mediated by the court—the king, his courtiers, officials and representatives. The observed oppressive and disabling social structures were evidently of Solomon's own making and/or that of his administration. Over time, Israel's covenant relationship with Yahweh had been relegated to a tenuous status through the growing alliances with surrounding nations. The aging king comes to the realisation that he and his advisors were thus instrumental not only in leading the nation's decline into decadence, but in shifting the hub of Israel's spiritual orthodoxy.

Solomon leaves us to speculate regarding the precise catalyst that precipitated his sudden critical reflection on the past. Importantly, in the end, he is unable to integrate his data into an overarching explanation that brings together the disparate pieces of the research study. Significantly, also, he is unwilling to make the blind irrational leap of faith into the philosophical abyss that twentieth century existentialists such as Jean-Paul Satre made and commit to a position that asserts, the ultimate meaning of life is meaninglessness. A life that is

not grounded in the Creator God does not appear to make sense to him. So what does the researcher conclude?

## Conclusion

In view of the data, Solomon rejects the 'foreign' values adopted by the court. The dominant lifestyle and the activities that were a product of these values did not liberate him; in fact they seemed to have accomplished the opposite. He is now ready to give what is required of a credible research study or dissertation<sup>28</sup>—provide a clear, succinct answer to its central research question, based on the findings. He shares it with his listeners/readers: "Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this [is] the whole [duty] of man" because God will hold everyone accountable for all their actions (Eccl. 12:13, KJV).

The implications of the conclusion are completely clear to Solomon's audience. The king's voice is raised in warning so that future generations might be saved from similar bitter experiences. Thus the book of Ecclesiastes furnishes the reader with instruction, unlike "certain books [that] seem to have been written...merely for the purpose of letting us know that the authors knew something."<sup>29</sup>

Solomon has presented his conclusion, but the research process has also raised more questions than he is able to answer. In relation to this, he doesn't make any recommendations for future research, but leaves the possibility open.

## Postscript

In the New Testament, Jesus points a rich young man, who is also searching for meaning in life, in the same direction as indicated in Ecclesiastes. "If you wish to enter into life, keep the commandments" (Matth. 19:17, MLB) and if he wanted to be *complete*, he is challenged to change his priorities; to sell his possessions, give to the poor, and follow Jesus. It is worth noting that in Solomon's conclusion, 'duty' is in parentheses, added by translators. The same notion, that commandment keeping motivated by a love for God comprises "the whole of man", is expanded by Jesus' conception of *completeness*: loving God and our fellow humans with all our being.

In Israel's history, obedience to God's commands resulted in freedom from slavery and oppression. Obedience brought liberty on an individual and national level, as well as the physical and spiritual. Most Christians would contend that Solomon developed a new consciousness through responding to the promptings of God's Spirit. The 'retrieved memory' of revealed Hebrew sacred writings, comprised of such 'cultural artefacts' as, the bestowal of the Decalogue, the curses and blessings on

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Mt. Gerizim, and the memorial stones taken from the Jordan River, that spoke of Yahweh's trustworthiness, also is likely to have contributed to Solomon's 'about-turn' in his sunset years and ultimately to the restoration of his relationship with God. **TEACH**

## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> For a detailed treatment of the evaluation study, see Patton, M. (2002). *Qualitative evaluation methods*. Beverly Hills, CAL: Sage Publications, pp.209–214.

<sup>2</sup> Luke 1:3, *New international version of the Bible*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House.

<sup>3</sup> Bogdan, R. and Biklen, S. (2007). *Qualitative research for education: An introduction to theory and methods*. New York, NY: Pearson Education, p.272.

<sup>4</sup> Burns, R. (1997). *Introduction to research methods*. South Melbourne, Vic: Longmans, p.301.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> Chase, E. (2010). Narrative inquiry: Multiple lenses approaches and voices. In W. Luttrell (Ed.). *Qualitative educational research: Readings in reflexive methodology and transformative practice*. New York, NY: Routledge.

<sup>7</sup> The sources for the background material are 1 Kings 1–11; 2 Chronicles 1–9 and Horn, S. et al. (Eds.), (1960). *Seventh-day Adventist Bible dictionary*. Washington, DC: Review & Herald Publishing Association; vol. 3, pp.1029–1031.

<sup>8</sup> See 1 Kings 8:21–53 and John 17.

<sup>9</sup> Horn, loc. cit.

<sup>10</sup> As suggested by Ecclesiastes 12:12.

<sup>11</sup> See Frankl, V. (1962). *Man's search for meaning*. New York, NY: Simon & Schuster.

<sup>12</sup> Thomas Keneally interviewed in Voysey, S. (2007). *Open house: Sheridan Voysey in conversation*. Sydney: Strand Publishing, p.242.

<sup>13</sup> Lee, R. (undated). *The outlined Bible*. London, UK: Pickering & Inglis, no 21.

<sup>14</sup> Horn, loc. cit.

<sup>15</sup> Horn, op. cit., vol. 1, pp.124–129 and vol. 2, pp.37–44.

<sup>16</sup> Wall, S. (2006). An autoethnography on learning about autoethnography. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 5(2), 1–12.

<sup>17</sup> Fetterman, D. (2010). *Ethnography*. Los Angeles, CAL: Sage.

<sup>18</sup> Foster, F. (2010). Looking back is tricky business *Narrative*, 18(1), 19–28. Citing, Davis, O. and Ruby, D. (1998). *With Ossie and Ruby: In this life together*. New York, NY: William Morrow.

<sup>19</sup> Lee, loc. cit.

<sup>20</sup> Zackrison, J. (2007). *Ecclesiastes: Adult teachers Bible study guide*. Warburton, VIC: Signs Publishing Company, p.125.

<sup>21</sup> See Berger, J. and Mohr, J. (1991). The zoo in Basel. *Granta*, 35 (Spring issue), p.152.

<sup>22</sup> Johnson, T. (1995). *The myth of the great secret: An appreciation of Joseph Campbell*. Berkeley, CAL: Celestial Arts.

<sup>23</sup> Refer to Erikson, E. (1997). *The life cycle completed*. New York, NY: W.W. Norton & Company, pp.111–114.

<sup>24</sup> Alister McGrath interviewed in Voysey, S. (2007). Ibid., pp.139–140.

<sup>25</sup> Johnson, loc. cit.

<sup>26</sup> Brown, N. and Selmanovic, S. (2010). The Sabbath: Resistance. *Record*, 115(7), 14–15, citing Wayne Muller.

<sup>27</sup> A reference to the BBC TV series, *Dr Who*.

<sup>28</sup> Dunleavy, P. (2003). *Authoring a PhD*. Houndmills, UK: Palgrave MacMillan.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid., pp. 18–19.