Bring also the books: Studies of ministers as readers
Abstract
Religious leaders have long used books. The roles of ancient poets and prophets or scribes and priests often merged. The Judeo-Christian tradition is as dependent on books as any other. The Hebrew Scriptures extol the godly man who reads and meditates upon the Torah. If early Christian disciples were "ordinary men of no education," they still drew constantly on the sacred Jewish writings.

The New Testament writers used quotations in their sermons, in their histories, in their letters, in their prayers. They used them when addressing Jews or Gentiles, churches or individuals, friends or agnostics, new converts or seasoned Christians. They used them for argumentation, for illustration, for instruction, for documentation, for prophecy, for reproof. They used them in times of stress and in hours of mature thinking, in liberty and in prison, at home and abroad. Everywhere and always they were ready to refer to the impregnable authority of scripture.
Toni Morrison: a book like Beloved enables readers with differing political beliefs to debate a subject like slavery. Photograph: Caroll Taveras (commissioned). As professors of literature, we are constantly reminded of the ways that literature can provide material where readers engage in meaningful debate about tough ideas. Conventional wisdom, supported
by a spate of recent studies, tells us that literature and books are precisely the things that divide conservatives and liberals: conservatives are "illiterate" while liberals are "well read". Could we find evidence to the contrary? To answer this question, we decided to study readers’ behavior through the website Goodreads.com. People who read books often have better imagination as reading is just words on paper, understanding everything written is left to the reader’s discretion. This opens the mind’s eye and our imagination runs amuck with the vivid sceneries described on the pages of the book in our hands. Over time, reading improves this imagination and becomes as vivid as watching a movie, if not more. Reading everyday helps you to live vicariously through the writer and the characters in the books. A study of reader-response theories, and some views on how the objectivity of the literary text is or is not distinguished from the subjectivity of the reader's response. In this paper I should like to study a few kinds of reader and the subjectivity of their responses to the objectivity found within literary texts, quoting some views found within reader-response criticism. Before I begin, I should like to consider what is meant by the term 'literary text', and what is meant by the objectivity of it. In his books Surprised by Sin: The Reader in Paradise Lost and Self-Consuming artefacts: The Experience of 17th Century Literature (1972), Fish focuses on the reader's experience of reading literature.