



Centre de Formation Biblique

Library Management

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Why Libraries?

The Value of Books

The Bible is the most valuable of all books, and therefore the first priority to read. We should never read another book as a replacement for the Bible. The Bible contains an accurate and very interesting record of history. The Bible shows us the way of salvation through Jesus. The Bible is our guide to a higher and better life.

We desire to establish libraries to make the Word of God more accessible to the people and to allow them to discover or verify for themselves the way of salvation. We want people to live better lives and to get ready for Jesus' soon return.

Both preachers and books are needed to effectively spread the gospel message. Preachers are valuable in the work of spreading the gospel, and we must have them. God has told us to go out and preach and to teach.

However, there are many advantages to spreading gospel truth through the printed page.

- Unlike people, books do not get tired.
- Books do not argue with people.
- Books do not become angry.
- Books do not change their message.
- Books are not forgetful.
- Books are not embarrassed or timid.
- A book is cheaper than a preacher, which means that books can be multiplied easier than preachers and sent to where preachers cannot go.

Books prepare the way for the preacher or Bible worker. Many people who accept the truth during a sermon will recognize that the first time they learned the truth was through a book or tract.

What is the purpose of the library?

- The library gives church members access to books that will encourage them and enrich their lives spiritually.
- The library is a resource for church members who want to do Biblical research for questions they have or have been asked.
- The library is also an evangelistic tool to reach non-members. From it, books can be lent to those who are interested in learning truth.
- Friendship evangelism can be cultivated with those people who regularly visit the library to read a book.

What types of libraries are there?

There are many different kinds of libraries. In this course, we will be talking primarily about two: the home library and the church library.

- **Home library.** An individual or a family can maintain a personal library at home. The library may be small and consist of only two or three books, or it may be larger. A home library can encourage young people in their education because the books are easily available and easy to access. Without books to read, a child has little motivation to learn how to read. But if there are books to read, he will want to know what is in them and will be more likely to learn how to read. Unlike a church library which is limited by certain regulations, the home library gives freedom and flexibility. The family can lend their books to anybody they want, whenever they want. They can lend books to their family, friends, or neighbors. Also, a personal library is not generally restricted by hours of operation.
 - *Let publications upon moral and religious subjects be found on your tables and in your libraries, that your children may cultivate a taste for elevated reading. {AH 415.3}*

- *The volumes of Spirit of Prophecy, and also the Testimonies, should be introduced into every Sabbathkeeping family, and the brethren should know their value and be urged to read them. It was not the wisest plan to place these books at a low figure and have only one set in a church. They should be in the library of every family and read again and again. Let them be kept where they can be read by many, and let them be worn out in being read by all the neighbors. {4T 390.3}*
- *There should be evening readings, in which one should read aloud to those assembled at the winter fireside. There is but little interest manifested to make the most of the light given of God. Much of it is concerning family duties, and instruction is given to meet almost every case and circumstance. Money will be expended for tea, coffee, ribbons, ruffles, and trimmings, and much time and labor spent in preparing the apparel, while the inward work of the heart is neglected. God has caused precious light to be brought out in publications, and these should be owned and read by every family. Parents, your children are in danger of going contrary to the light given of heaven, and you should both purchase and read the books, for they will be a blessing to you and yours. You should lend Spirit of Prophecy to your neighbors and prevail upon them to buy copies for themselves. Missionaries for God, you should be earnest, active, vigorous workers. {4T 390.4}*
- **Church library.** A church library is typically maintained in a small room within the church itself or in a small room or building near the church. A church library is somewhat limited by certain regulations. For example, it is open only during the days or hours when there is a church member available to manage the library. If several church members are available to help, they can take shifts or each manage the library a different day. In a busy library, people may find it difficult to borrow certain books, or they may have to wait a long time.

- *Every church member should feel it his special duty of labor for those living in his neighborhood. Study how you can best help those who take no interest in religious things. As you visit your friends and neighbors, show an interest in their spiritual as well as in their temporal welfare. Present Christ as a sin-pardoning Saviour. Invite your neighbors to your home, and read with them from the precious Bible and from books that explain its truths. This, united with simple songs and fervent prayers, will touch their hearts. Let church members educate themselves to do this work.--Testimonies, Vol. 6, p. 276. {CME 24.2}*

Choosing Good Books

See AH chapter 68.

When a child is growing up, the parents need to study how to give him the best food. The child grows and gains strength from the food that he eats. For example, a child who eats poor quality food or insufficient food will become weak and malnourished. He will not grow well.

However, a child who eats good quality food in good quantity will be strong and healthy. A parent can choose whether to give their child good food or bad food, and by this they can determine the health of their child.

The same concept applies to our minds throughout all of our lives, but especially when we are newborn Christians. It is impossible to keep our minds inactive, yet healthy. If the mind is not active with something good, something bad fills the space automatically. The only way to get rid of bad thoughts is to encourage good thoughts and to teach right principles. If the good seed of the Word of God is not planted, the bad seed of the enemy will take root. Our spiritual health is in a large way determined by what we read.

If we have a taste for thinking about or reading about things that are not helpful to us in our Christian life, we must learn to dislike those things and acquire a new taste for thoughts and reading material that is wholesome and good.

In choosing books for a church library, we must choose books that contain special messages of truth for this time. There are thousands of books that we can choose from. But not all of these books contain the special message of truth that we know. While books of stories, biographies, books of theories and speculations may be interesting, they are not the most important books for our libraries. Our mission is not to establish the biggest and best library; our mission is to give people access to books that contain present truth.

Many of the books piled up in the great libraries of earth confuse the mind more than they aid the understanding. Yet men spend large sums of money in the purchase of such books, and years in their study, when they have within their reach a Book containing the words of Him who is the Alpha and Omega of wisdom. The time spent in a study of these books might better be spent in gaining a knowledge of Him whom to know aright is life eternal. Those only who gain this knowledge will at last hear the words, "Ye are complete in Him" (Colossians 2:10).--(Pamphlet) Words of Counsel, 1903. (CH 369.) {1MCP 108.3}

Principles of choosing good literature

Philippians 4:8 gives us an excellent list of principles for choosing reading material. For example, we can ask ourselves,

- Is this book true?
- Is it honest?
- Is it just?
- Does it talk about pure things or use pure language?
- Is it lovely?
- Is it of good report?

Here are some other good questions that can help us in deciding whether a book is good to read or not.

- What kind of character am I building with this material? Am I laying a foundation of wood or hay or stubble, or am I laying a foundation of stone or gold?

- How much time do I spend reading my Bible compared to how much time I spend reading other books? What does this say about my priorities?
- Does reading this book increase or decrease my desire to read the Word of God?
- Does this book make the Bible more interesting to me?
- What is my objective in reading? Am I reading to be entertained, or am I reading to be educated?
- Am I searching substantial knowledge or superficial knowledge?

Disapproved Literature

This list is only an example of literature that is not approved to put in our libraries. There may be a category not in this list. It is up to the church to determine if any material is not in harmony with the principles of good literature and then to not allow that book to be placed in the library.

- Any book that contains error
- Any book of fiction, stories that did not happen
- Books that teach infidelity, pagan philosophy or books that were written by infidels or pagan philosophers.
- Books that teach the theory of evolution.
- Books that are written about politics.
- Books of love stories, romance, etc.
- etc... (any books that are not in harmony with the principles of good literature)

Even fiction which contains no suggestion of impurity, and which may be intended to teach excellent principles, is harmful. It encourages the habit of hasty and superficial reading, merely for the story. Thus it tends to destroy the power of connected and vigorous thought; it unfits the soul to contemplate the great problems of duty and destiny. {CT 383.2}

In order to obtain an education, many think it essential to study the writings of infidel authors, because these works contain many bright gems of thought. But who was the originator of these gems of thought? It was God, and God only. He is the Source of all light. Why, then, should we wade through the mass of error contained in the works of infidels for the sake of a few intellectual truths, when all truth is at our command? {CT 378.1}

Another source of danger against which we should be constantly on guard is the reading of infidel authors. Such works are inspired by the enemy of truth, and no one can read them without imperiling the soul. It is true that some who are affected by them may finally recover; but all who tamper with their evil influence place themselves on Satan's ground, and he makes the most of his advantage. As they invite his temptations they have not wisdom to discern or strength to resist them. With a fascinating, bewitching power, unbelief and infidelity fasten themselves upon the mind. {CT 135.3}

Those who value their salvation should shun infidel writings as they would shun the leprosy. {CT 136.1}

If the time and effort spent in seeking to grasp the bright ideas of infidels were given to studying the precious things in the word of God, thousands who now sit in darkness and in the shadow of death would be rejoicing in the glory of the Light of life. {8T 306.4}

If you own any books that contain error, it is best to destroy (burn) those books rather than give or sell them to somebody else. Study the story of the books burned at Ephesus (found in Acts 19:18-20). By some estimates, these books were valued at over 5,000,000fcfa! It was better to burn them than to let them be read by others.

Approved Literature

We will list a few books that are approved. This list is not exclusive. In other words, this is an example list. There are other books that would be excellent to put in a library. It is up to the church to determine if any material is in harmony with the principles of good literature.

- Bible
 - *Above all, take time to read the Bible--the Book of books. A daily study of the Scriptures has a sanctifying, uplifting influence upon*

the mind. Bind the Holy Volume to your hearts. It will prove to you a friend and guide in perplexity. {CT 138.3}

- *Help them also to appreciate its wonderful beauty. Many books of no real value, books that are exciting and unhealthful are recommended, or at least permitted to be used, because of their supposed literary value. Why should we direct our children to drink of these polluted streams when they may have free access to the pure fountains of the word of God? The Bible has a fullness, a strength, a depth of meaning, that is inexhaustible. Encourage the children and youth to seek out its treasures both of thought and of expression. {Ed 188.2}*
- *The nature of one's religious experience is revealed by the character of the books one chooses to read in one's leisure moments. In order to have a healthy tone of mind and sound religious principles, the youth must live in communion with God through His word. Pointing out the way of salvation through Christ, the Bible is our guide to a higher, better life. It contains the most interesting and the most instructive history and biography that were ever written. Those whose imagination has not become perverted by the reading of fiction will find the Bible the most interesting of books. {CCh 170.5}*
- Bible concordance
- Old Sabbath School quarterlies
- Anything authored by Ellen G. White
- Question d'Homme, Reponse de Dieu
- Ensiegner Nous Comment Prier
- Discover Bible studies
- Storacles Bible studies
- My Bible First! Stories
- etc... (books that are in harmony with the principles of good literature)

Specific books recommended by EGW (CM 123)

- Patriarchs and Prophets
- The Great Controversy
- Daniel and Revelation (by Uriah Smith)
- The Desire of Ages
- Christ's Object Lessons

Sister White is not the originator of these books. They contain the instruction that during her lifework God has been giving her. They contain the precious, comforting light that God has graciously given His servant to be given to the world. From their pages this light is to shine into the hearts of men and women, leading them to the Saviour. The Lord has declared that these books are to be scattered throughout the world. There is in them truth which to the receiver is a savor of life unto life. They are silent witnesses for God. In the past they have been the means in His hands of convicting and converting many souls. Many have read them with eager expectation, and, by reading them, have been led to see the efficacy of Christ's atonement, and to trust in its power. They have been led to commit the keeping of their souls to their Creator, waiting and hoping for the coming of the Saviour to take His loved ones to their eternal home. In the future, these books are to make the gospel plain to many others, revealing to them the way of salvation.--Review and Herald, Jan. 20, 1903. {CM 125.1}

Categories of Books

Permanent books and materials.

These are rare or expensive books that need to be treasured and guarded so that they do not get lost or stolen. For example, a library may have only one dictionary or only one concordance. These books may not be replaceable. It is best to allow these books to be used only within the library and under supervision of the library manager. Do not let people take books or materials in this category out of the library or back to their homes.

Loaning books and materials.

These are books intended to loan to members of the library. A person must show their membership card and the library manager must record the loan before the person is allowed to borrow the book. Typically, a library may have multiple copies of each loaning book.

Giving books and materials.

Giving books are generally smaller booklets or tracts intended to give to people as gifts. They can take the material home, keep it, or give it to a friend as they wish. Quantities given are determined by the quantity of stock in the library.

- If tracts and materials are limited, there are several ideas to manage distribution. For example, use free books or tracts as incentives.
 - If a member comes to the library five days, he is given a certain small tract or booklet.
 - If a member comes to the library twenty days, he is given a bigger book.

The Building and Furnishings

A library is a precious opportunity for you and your village. The building is as important as the books, because the building helps to protect and preserve the collection of books. The books need to be protected from wind and rain, mice, termites, and thieves.

Location

- Choose a central location to the population you are trying to reach.
- Sometimes a room within the church building is the easiest place to establish the library at first. This makes it convenient for the church members to use.
- Choosing a location away from the church will lower prejudice. Some people may not be willing to enter a church, but would be willing to visit a library separate from the church.

Structure

- Choose a room that is solid and well built. If the walls cave in during a rain storm, the books become ruined very quickly.
- Preferably, choose a room for book storage that has a tin roof. If it is not possible to buy tin, attach a sheet of plastic to the roof to protect the books from water leaking through the thatch.

Furnishings

- Find a table or shelf that is not accessible by termites. A table with metal feet is a good choice. Never store books on the ground, or in a box on the ground. They may be destroyed by termites or moisture.
- The room where the books are stored does not have to be large, but it should be large enough to store the books and a few benches or chairs if necessary.
- A few benches under the shade of a tree make a nice location for readers to sit and read.
- Sometimes readers do not want to be discovered by their superiors or by their neighbors. They prefer to read and study hidden behind walls where people walking by cannot see them.

The Librarian

Qualifications

- The librarian should be an active Seventh-day Adventist church member who understands, believes, and follows the teachings of the Bible as summarized in the 28 Fundamental Doctrines.
- If possible, the librarian should have some simple evangelism training and experience. He should not be timid, yet he should be tactful. He should follow good principles of reaching people.
- Ideally, the librarian should know how to read and write and should be familiar with the books in the library. If he is not familiar with the books, he should begin to read them.

Job Description

- Be able to give brief Bible studies on many different topics and guide the people in their personal studies.
- Maintain accurate inventory in the library journal. Keep a current list of all the books and materials. This includes:
 - Permanent materials. When you receive permanent materials (such as a concordance), mark the book with the name of the library and a unique identification number. An example identification code for a concordance might be BC01 (for Bible Concordance number 1).
 - Loaning materials. These materials should also be assigned a unique identification code.
 - Giving materials. When you receive tracts or pamphlets for giving, note how many you received and the date. Also, note how many you give each day. For example, on February 28 I received 25 Steps to Christ. On February 29, I distributed 3 Steps to Christ and 8 GLOW tracts.
- Verify the position and safety of the books weekly. Detect termite problems early. Record any materials that are stolen. Verify that there are no rain leaks or other problems.
- Register new members, verifying that they qualify to become a member. When a person wants to sign up, help them fill out the registration sheet. Then, fill out their access card and give it to them.
- If a book is not returned in time, find it! Call the person who borrowed it or visit them at their home and try to retrieve the book. Do not loan to people who repeatedly fail to return their books or to anybody who steals.

The Member

There is no membership fee.

Qualifications

- There are no restrictions based on age, race, gender, religion, tribe, etc.
- Generally, a person must attend the library several times before becoming a member. The librarian may make exceptions to this when he knows and trusts the individual.
- The member must live locally, or live within walking distance of the library. Guests or people from a distant village may not become members to take books to their home, but they can still come to the library to read.

Privileges

- A member may use his access card to borrow any material in the loaning category.

Limitations

- The length of a loan is one week. At the end of the week, the member must bring the material back to the library. If he wishes to renew his loan, he must make arrangements with the librarian.
- A member may borrow one item at a time. This allows the other materials to be available to other members.
- A member who fails to return the material promptly loses his membership privileges.

How to Read Books

Many people have not been trained how to read books. To maximize the benefit a reader receives, it is good for him to understand some basic principles of how to read and study.

Learn to read, spell, and pronounce. Encourage your children to learn how to read.

A lot can be learned in the spare time. Instead of sitting and doing nothing, or talking of things that are not really important, learn to

read in the bits and pieces of time throughout the day.

Reading a lot superficially does not benefit the brain very much. It creates confusion. Instead of reading with the goal of finishing a chapter or finishing a book, read with the goal of improving your mind. Read as much as you understand and can digest, no more. Persevere in your reading, even if it is just a little bit at a time.

Fathers and mothers, obtain all the help you can from the study of our books and publications. Take time to read to your children from the health books, as well as from the books treating more particularly on religious subjects. Teach them the importance of caring for the body, the house they live in. Form a home reading circle, in which every member of the family shall lay aside the busy cares of the day and unite in study. Especially will the youth who have been accustomed to reading novels and cheap storybooks, receive benefit from joining in the evening family study. {CT 138.2}

Appendix 1 (book summaries)

Patriarchs and Prophets (1890)

Covers the stories of the Old Testament through the story of King David.

Prophets and Kings (1917)

Continues where Patriarchs and Prophets left off and continues through the Old Testament to Malachi.

Desire of Ages (1898)

Beginning in the New Testament, this book covers the story of Jesus' birth, life, death, and resurrection.

Christ's Object Lessons (1900)

Thoughts from the Mount of Blessing (1896)

Acts of the Apostles (1911)

Covers the life and ministry of the apostles after Jesus returned to heaven.

The Great Controversy (1888)

Covers the destruction of Jerusalem, church history, fulfilled Bible prophecies, current events, and future prophecies yet to be fulfilled.

Steps to Christ (1892)

A small book that teaches how to build and maintain a personal relationship with Jesus.

This is the most popular of all of EGW's books.



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