

## Selected Reference Sources for Church Libraries

### general reference

*Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary*, 11th ed. Springfield, MA: Merriam-Webster, 2005.  
*Robert's Rules of Order*, various eds.

Bartleby.com [www.bartleby.com/reference/](http://www.bartleby.com/reference/)

Includes *American Heritage Dictionary*, *Columbia Encyclopedia*, selections from *The Harvard Classics*, and much more.

### about the Bible

Dowley, Tim, ed. *Atlas of the Bible and Christianity*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1997.

———, ed. *The Crossway Illustrated Bible Handbook*, Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2005.

Hoffmeier, James K. *The Archaeology of the Bible*. Oxford: Lion, 2008.

Ryken, Leland, Philip Graham Ryken, and Jim Wilhoit. *Ryken's Bible Handbook*.  
Wheaton, IL: Tyndale, 2005.

Vamosh, Miriam Feinberg. *Daily Life at the Time of Jesus*. Herzlia, Israel: Palphot, 2001.  
[www.palphot.co.il](http://www.palphot.co.il)

Wood, D.R.W., and I. Howard Marshall, eds. *The New Bible Dictionary*, 3rd ed. Downers Grove: IL: IVP, 1996.

Youngblood, Ronald F., F. F. Bruce, and R. K. Harrison. *The International Children's Bible Dictionary*. Nashville, Tommy Nelson, 2006.

BibleGateway.com [www.biblegateway.com/](http://www.biblegateway.com/)

Read and research Scripture online in many versions.

### Bible commentaries

Carson, D. A. *New Testament Commentary Survey*, 6th ed. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2007.

Longman, Tremper. *Old Testament Commentary Survey*, 4th ed. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2007.

Carson, D. A., et al., eds. *New Bible Commentary*, 4th ed. Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 1994.

*Tyndale New Testament Commentaries*, IVP.

*Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries*, IVP.

*IVP New Testament Commentaries* [www.biblegateway.com/resources/commentaries/?source=1](http://www.biblegateway.com/resources/commentaries/?source=1)  
Informed by current evangelical scholarship, presents commentary based on the NIV along with background information on authorship, setting, theme, and various interpretive issues.

*Classic Bible Commentaries* [eword.gospelcom.net/comments/](http://eword.gospelcom.net/comments/)

Matthew Henry, John Calvin, John Wesley, Geneva Study Bible, and others.

### church history

Bercot, David, ed. *A Dictionary of Early Christian Beliefs*. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1998.

Hart, D. G., and Mark A. Noll, eds. *Dictionary of the Presbyterian and Reformed Tradition in America*. 1999. Reprint, Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R, 2005.

Leonard, Bill J., ed. *Dictionary of Baptists in America*. Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 1994.

Reid, Daniel G., ed. *Concise Dictionary of Christianity in America*. 1995. Reprint, Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2002.

*Christian History & Biography CD-Rom* [www.christianhistorystore.com/cdspecial](http://www.christianhistorystore.com/cdspecial)  
Access to all 99 print issues of this magazine, now available in a new digital format only.

*Christian Classics Ethereal Library* [www.ccel.org/wwwsb/index.html](http://www.ccel.org/wwwsb/index.html)  
A digital library of hundreds of classic Christian books selected for edification and education.

### **theology and religious studies**

Anthony, Michael J., ed. *Evangelical Dictionary of Christian Education*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2001.

Elwell, Walter A., ed. *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology*, 2nd ed. Grand Rapids: Baker, 2001.

Mead, Frank S., Samuel S. Hill, and Craig D. Atwood. *Handbook of Denominations in the United States*, 12th ed. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2005.

Nichols, Larry A., et al., eds. *Encyclopedic Dictionary of Cults, Sects, and World Religions*, rev. ed. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2006.

*Baker's Evangelical Dictionary of Biblical Theology*  
[www.biblestudytools.net/Dictionaries/BakersEvangelicalDictionary](http://www.biblestudytools.net/Dictionaries/BakersEvangelicalDictionary)

*The Cyber Hymnal* [www.cyberhymnal.org/](http://www.cyberhymnal.org/)

Hymns and gospel songs from many denominations, with lyrics, scores, MIDI files, pictures, and history.

### **resources specific to your church**

Start now to collect every scrap of your church's history. Invade your church office or archives for publications and images commemorating significant events and make photocopies. New members enjoy learning what went before and longtime members enjoy reminiscing. I recommend having a non-circulating copy as well as copies to checkout. The purpose isn't to become the church archive (unless your library has been so designated); the purpose is to celebrate together the history of God's grace to your church.

Besides collecting the annual membership directories, begin interviewing people and taping their stories about the church. Organizing an oral history program well is challenging, but involving non-library staff to do the interviews and create CDs will extend the library's reach. The project will honor longtime members' contributions and provide opportunity for cross-generational fellowship.

### **professional collection**

Haburn, William B. *Church Library Classification System*, rev. ed. Salem, OR: The author, 1993.

*A Handbook for Church Librarians*, 2nd ed. Stillwater, MN: NCLA, 2006.

McMichael, Betty. *The Church Librarian's Handbook*, 3rd ed. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1998. (OP)

Various selection tools: such as Gladys Hunt's *Honey for a \_\_\_\_\_ Heart* series, the periodicals *Church Libraries* (ECLA) and *The Christian Librarian* (Association of Christian Librarians).

WorldCat (free web access)

[www.worldcat.org](http://www.worldcat.org)

FirstSearch WorldCat (paid subscription access)

your public library

Library of Congress Online Catalog

[catalog.loc.gov/](http://catalog.loc.gov/)

Evangelical Church Libraries Association

[www.eclalibraries.org/](http://www.eclalibraries.org/)

Church and Synagogue Library Association

[cslainfo.org/](http://cslainfo.org/)

National Church Library Association

[www.churchlibraries.org/](http://www.churchlibraries.org/)

## Establishing a Reference Service in Your Church Library

### Introduction

- Write a letter or e-mail to your pastors, inviting their questions and offering your help. Follow that with similar letters/e-mails to church officers and committee chairs.
- Identify every potential "reference" book in your library. What is its copyright date? Is there a newer edition? Is there a better title or web site with similar information?
- Visit the libraries at your nearest Christian college and/or seminary. Introduce yourself to the staff.
- Identify any Christian schools that the students in your church attend and visit those libraries. Perhaps your library can serve as a supplementary homework center.
- Hang around your church library, especially at the end of the morning or evening service or a special event. You will have significant conversations.

### Selected bibliography

### Questions and wrap-up

October 25, 2008

church library name

Dear Pastor \_\_\_\_\_, (or use first name if that is more natural)

With your personal library and your expertise searching the Internet, you are able to track down most of the questions you need answers to. Nevertheless, I hope you will let me know if I can help locate a journal article or loan you a book from home or verify the exact words of a quotation you need. I enjoy the hunt—and your questions will give me a break from the narrower focus of processing materials and keeping the library looking decent.

Eventually, I plan to contact church officers and committee chairs with the same invitation. The library committee and I are determined to provide the best reference service we can for our whole congregation, using church library materials as well as resources from surrounding libraries. As questions are asked and answers found, books recommended and shared, I know our church fellowship will grow in good ways we cannot imagine.

You have helped us so much by recommending worthwhile titles for purchase. When there is time, please alert us to forthcoming sermon series and adult education topics.

Thank you for your wholehearted support of this library enterprise.

Your sister/brother in Christ,

(signature)

\_\_\_\_\_, Chair  
Library Committee  
home phone