

Introduction

What Is a Library?

The best known library in the ancient world was established in Alexandria, Egypt, between 367 and 283 B.C. Historians estimate that it contained half a million volumes in scroll format. Scholarly librarians there developed a methodology for organizing the collection. The first public libraries were founded in Rome where Seneca, the Roman philosopher and writer, “regarded a library as essential as a bathroom.” In writing to Timothy (2 Tim. 4:13), Paul apparently had a small collection of books which he prized (“Libraries” by E.M. Blaiklock, in *Zondervan Pictorial Bible Dictionary*, ed. by Merrill C. Tenney, Zondervan, 1967).

The term *library* (derived from the Latin word *liber*, meaning book) has commonly been used to mean a collection of books, whether for public or private use. Although the word *library* may still be used, today’s collection often contains not only a variety of printed materials, such as books, magazines, and pamphlets, but also non-print resources such as tapes, films, slides, compact disks and a variety of other formats produced by the explosion of technology. The walls of the library are falling down as the Internet brings the world of information to personal computers in many places. In keeping with this trend, some libraries now have changed their names to Media Center, Instructional Materials Center, Educational Resource Center, or Learning Center. In this manual, the term *library* will be used to mean any of the names just mentioned.

What Is Its Purpose?

Regardless of the name selected, the library has become an essential part of the academic institution. The educational process relies on it as a resource for the intellectual development of students. The library provides the tools that support classroom instruction and the curriculum of that institution. In addition, other resources are available to challenge further study or provide information for a variety of student interests and needs. The library can become the channel for electronic materials coming from beyond the campus, and librarians can guide users through the information maze of the Internet. In a Christian setting, information in printed or non-printed forms must be presented in a way that integrates learning in the context of biblical revelation and Christian values.

The library must adapt to the needs of the institution, its teachers, and its students. Some students may come with weak reading skills or have no library experience. This is in contrast to the scholarly instructors. The librarian may need to take on the task of developing readers and helping to establish lifelong patterns of reading and learning. In addition, other practical needs must be considered if vocational, health, cultural, and other concerns must be met.

What Are Its Functions and Activities?

Basically, all libraries are similar in their function and activities:

1. Materials are selected and acquired.
2. Materials are organized so they can be found easily.

3. Materials are made available to the users.

Institutional aims and the needs of the school community will guide the library in developing a unique plan of specific goals, policies and procedures. Underlying these functions and activities are the people who make it all happen—the administration and library staff.

How Will This Manual Help?

This manual is for people who may be starting a library or for those who are attempting to put in order one that has not been well maintained. It may also be helpful to those who are beginning work in a small library already operating at an adequate level. Before you begin to make changes, it would be best to read through or, at least, skim this manual.

Chapter 1, Getting Organized, will help you to assess where you are in the stages of development. Even though you may have a general idea, before proceeding it is important that you take the time to be as thorough as possible in collecting the data requested in Section A, "Assessing the Present Situation." The balance of the chapter will help you get started in a practical fashion.

Chapter 2, Administration, describes the general organization and functioning of the library including personnel, budgeting, records, and reports.

Chapter 3, Collection Development and Acquisitions, explains the steps for selecting and acquiring materials.

Chapter 4, Introduction to Cataloging, gives a general overview of cataloging.

Chapter 5, Descriptive Cataloging, explains how catalog records are created so that resources can be located by author, title and subject.

Chapter 6, Subject Cataloging, discusses the process of subject analysis and how this is translated into subject headings.

Chapter 7, Classification, provides detailed instructions for creating call numbers for books.

Chapter 8, Computer-Assisted Cataloging, describes in detail international standards for finding, copying and editing records for an online catalog.

Chapter 9, Processing and Care of Materials, describes the steps involved in labeling and repairing books in preparation for the library shelves.

Chapter 10, Serials, provides instruction for handling serial publications such as magazines, journals, and annuals.

Chapter 11, Services to the Users of the Library, describes how to make the books available to users.

Chapter 12, Selecting a Library Computer System, guides evaluators as they learn about software and choose the best system for their library.

Chapter 13, Planning a New Building, offers assistance for those who are building a new library building or remodeling an existing building.

If you have difficulty understanding any terms in this introduction or in later sections, you may refer to the "definitions" in the **Glossary**.

The appendixes contain useful information including a section entitled "If I find a system in place, how do I decide if it is usable?"

After looking at the entire book and completing the assessment in **Chapter 1**, you may want to go to the chapters which are most important for your present needs. That is the purpose of a manual, to use as a whole if needed, or in sections if that meets your needs better. The purpose of this particular manual is to assist you, as the librarian, to fulfill the needs of the institution and users you serve. It will guide you in acquiring, organizing, and circulating the resources that will enable “wise men [to] store up knowledge” (Proverbs 10:14) and “to come to the knowledge of the truth” (1 Tim. 2:4).

Some Guidelines for Using the Manual

In many cases several options are available for doing a particular aspect of library work. For example, in classification you can choose from the Dewey Decimal Classification, Library of Congress Classification, or other systems. The editors, in consultation with advisors, tried to identify the option that was considered most useful for small libraries. You may find that another is best suited for your library. If you have questions, you may want to write an e-mail to the publisher of this book, the Association of Christian Librarians (info@acl.org) or visit the Association’s website (www.acl.org). A sister organization is the Librarians’ Christian Fellowship in the United Kingdom. You may write to the Fellowship’s secretary at secretary@librarianscf.org.uk or learn more about LCF from its website (www.librarianscf.org.uk).

Some library procedures are complicated. You may find it necessary to read over some sections of the manual several times before you are able to understand the material. It is best to read a section, look over any examples, then re-read the section. When you are ready, complete any exercises that are provided. If none are included, practice on books in your library.

You may want to write notes in the page margins to help you in the future. The exercises, however, should be left blank so they can be reused as new people are trained. The exercises may be photocopied or the answers written on a separate piece of paper.

This manual follows standard library practice. Where variations occur they are identified as such. Yet, even with variations, the writers attempted to use those common to small libraries.

Building an efficient library and providing helpful service can be hard work, but it is very rewarding when students return and express gratitude for help in broadening their vision.