

## ESTABLISHING A SELECTION POLICY FOR CHURCH LIBRARIES

### WHY HAVE A SELECTION POLICY?

- 1) A policy approved by the church board and staff is important to give credibility to the library program as well as to provide protection for the library staff.
- 2) Haphazard acquisition results in waste-overlapping content-and an unbalanced collection.

### PHILOSOPHY

- 1) What is your mission? The philosophy statement should stem from the mission statement of the church. How will the library help fulfill the church goals?
- 2) An example:
  - The church library will seek to provide print and non-print materials which will:
    - Deepen our congregation's relationship with Jesus Christ
    - Strengthen the educational program of the church
    - Increase knowledge of our own beliefs and those of our denomination
    - Enrich our devotional life
    - Provide Christian viewpoints on social/economic issues
    - Foster an appreciation of good literature

### BASIC COMPONENTS OF A SELECTION POLICY

1. Objectives (What do you want to accomplish?)
  - a. Meet the needs of all age groups
  - b. Supplement teaching/learning activities of the church
  - c. Provide materials in diverse interest areas (fiction, non-fiction, biography, foreign languages, etc.
  - d. In the non-fiction area cover contemporary issues such as abortion, creation, divorce, family life, as well as theology, Bible, church history etc.
2. Responsibility for selection  
Who will decide what materials are added to a collection? (A committee, the head librarian, church staff or a combination of these?)
3. Things to consider:
  - a. Format
    - i. Hard or soft covers (Use soft for duplicates)
    - ii. DVD's, CD's, Audio-tapes (Book on tape), Periodicals, Large print, Board books, Newspapers
  - b. Space available
  - c. Budget
  - d. Make-up of church community
  - e. Proximity of a public library
  - f. Library users: community, home school families, on-site pre-school, church sponsored school etc.
  - g. Secular materials that reflect and aid in accomplishing the goals of the library.

4. Procedures

- a. Examine material whenever possible
- b. Establish what review sources you will generally use.
- c. Compare prices among distributors

QUESTIONS TO HELP IN EVALUATION OF MATERIALS

- 1) Does the material meet a particular need in the library?
- 2) Is the material true to Biblical teachings and the doctrinal position of the church?
- 3) Is the subject matter treated accurately clearly, fairly and interestingly?
- 4) Is the material appropriate for the age or interest group for which it is intended?
- 5) Is the author qualified to write on this subject?
- 6) Does the publisher have a good reputation in this field?
- 7) Are the materials' physical makeup, binding, paper quality, print size, margins etc. satisfactory?
- 8) Are the illustrations well done and appropriate to the text and age level?
- 9) Are the vocabulary and writing style effective for the intended user?
- 10) Are the contents up-to-date?
- 11) Does the material have lasting value?
- 12) Does it contribute to an overall balance of subject matters?
- 13) Has the material had good reviews?
- 14) Is the material included on recommended lists in periodicals and professional journals, been recommended by staff or read by the library personnel?
- 15) Does the cost allow its purchase without eliminating something needed even more?
- 16) Is the material the best choice we can make in the field?
- 17) Will the patrons use this new material?