

2014

A Comparative Analysis of the Religious Non-Fiction Collections of a Public Library and a Christian Church Library

Tanya C. Bolton

Follow this and additional works at: <http://aquila.usm.edu/slisconnecting>

 Part of the [Archival Science Commons](#), [Collection Development and Management Commons](#), [Information Literacy Commons](#), [Scholarly Communication Commons](#), and the [Scholarly Publishing Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Bolton, Tanya C. (2014) "A Comparative Analysis of the Religious Non-Fiction Collections of a Public Library and a Christian Church Library," *SLIS Connecting*: Vol. 3: Iss. 1, Article 9.

DOI: 10.18785/slis.0301.08

Available at: <http://aquila.usm.edu/slisconnecting/vol3/iss1/9>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by The Aquila Digital Community. It has been accepted for inclusion in SLIS Connecting by an authorized administrator of The Aquila Digital Community. For more information, please contact Joshua.Cromwell@usm.edu.

A Comparative Analysis of the Religious Non-Fiction Collections of a Public Library and a Christian Church Library

By Tanya C. Bolton

Master's Research Project, May 2013
Readers: Dr. Elizabeth Haynes
Dr. Teresa S. Welsh

Introduction

Natchitoches Parish (county), Louisiana, is located in the northwest region of the state. The town of Natchitoches, the parish seat, was established as a French colony in 1714 in an area already inhabited by the Natchitoches Indians and is considered the oldest permanent European settlement in the Louisiana Purchase Territory (Louisiana Office of Culture, Recreation and Tourism, 2012). According to U.S. Census Bureau statistics (2012), there were an estimated 39,442 people residing in the parish in 2011. The town is also home to the main campus of Northwestern State University, a public university with nearly 9,500 total students, with 4,149 of those taking classes on the Natchitoches campus (Northwestern State University, 2012).

The Natchitoches Parish Library is located in downtown Natchitoches, in the heart of the town's historic district. The library does not operate any branches other than the main library, but its community bookmobile has thirty stops scheduled in various locations throughout the parish in a two-week rotation (Natchitoches Parish Library, 2012a). A schoolmobile also visits the public schools that are located in six different outlying areas of the parish on alternate weeks (Natchitoches Parish Library, 2012c). Between Jan. 1, 2007 and Oct. 5, 2012, 823 people borrowed items from the community bookmobile, 1,691 people used the schoolmobile, and 12,679 people borrowed items from the main library. The total number of users for the entire system in that time period was 15,193 (Natchitoches Parish Library, 2012b).

Directly across the street from the Natchitoches Parish Public Library is the First Baptist Church (FBC) of Natchitoches. The First Baptist Church is a Southern Baptist Church and has approximately 800 registered members with an average attendance of 300. Its main library houses the adult fiction and non-

fiction collections, audiobooks, DVDs and kits usually used for teaching purposes. It also has several satellites in the same building housing the children's, juvenile, youth (young adult), and university collections. The FBC library also serves as a repository for the Natchitoches Baptist Association, as well as District Eight Baptist Convention, which encompasses 125 churches that are members of five Louisiana Baptist associations in west central Louisiana. The materials owned by the Association and the Convention are part of the library's circulating collection but are marked differently to distinguish them from the church's own holdings. The library has approximately 1400 registered users (H. Ferguson, personal communication, Nov. 14, 2012).

Statement of Problem

The purpose of this study is to compare the religious non-fiction collection of a public library (Natchitoches Parish Library) with the religious non-fiction collection of a Christian church library (First Baptist Church, Natchitoches) focusing on those books classified in the 200s of the Dewey Decimal Classification system. The two libraries that are the focus of this study are located directly across the street from each other. By uncovering strengths and weaknesses of each collection and pinpointing areas of overlap, the staff of the two libraries may be able to use the findings to identify ways in which they may be able to work cooperatively to provide improved resources and services to the people of Natchitoches Parish.

Research Questions

- R1. How many books in each collection are classified under the 200s using the Dewey Decimal Classification System?
- R2. What percentage of the adult non-fiction books in each collection are classified in the 200s using the Dewey Decimal Classification System?
- R3. What percentage of each library's total collection is classified in the 200s using the Dewey Decimal Classification System?

R4. How many core religious texts as identified in H.W. Wilson's *Public Library Core Collection: Nonfiction*) does each library contain?

R5. How many non-Christian books (290s) are in each library's collection?

R6. What is the rate of circulation of the books in each library's non-fiction religious collection (200s) for the two-year period of Jan. 1, 2011 through Dec. 31, 2012?

Definitions

Dewey Decimal Classification System - The Dewey system, created in the 1870s by librarian Melvil Dewey, is a "classification system [that] allows a cataloger to assign numerical call numbers to media which positions each title in a logical arrangement according to its subject" (Southern Baptist Convention, 2004, p. 3).

Church library – A church library can be described as "a special library designed to serve the needs of its parent institution" (White, 1971, p. 397). It often contains highly specialized resources related to the religious denomination of the church with which it is associated, including its "history, theology, educational program, music, art, and worship" (White, 1971, p. 397). A church library may also be referred to as a congregational library or a parish library. Synagogue libraries are also included in this category. These libraries, which are available for use by the members of the congregation, differ from parochial libraries, which historically have been reserved for use by the clergy to increase their knowledge of doctrine and improve their preaching skills (Jacob, 2011, p. 211).

Collection Development - Collection development "is the process of making certain the library meets the information needs of its service population in a timely and economic manner, using information resources produced both inside and outside the organization" (Evans & Saponaro, 2005, p. 50).

Limitations and Delimitations of the Study

For all research questions except R4, this study is limited to books classified in the 200s of the Dewey Decimal Classification system that are part of the

main (adult) collection of each library. Books that are identified as juvenile or young adult texts are not included in this study. Audiovisual materials, audiobooks, e-books and formats other than printed books are also excluded from this study. Non-circulating books that are part of the library's reference collection are not included in this study. For question R4, religious books that are recommended in H.W. Wilson's *Public Library Core Collection: Nonfiction* and are owned by each library are included regardless of format, call number or location.

Assumptions

It is assumed that all books examined use similar cataloging and classification procedures. It is also assumed that shelf-lists generated for this study by each library's software are accurate and complete.

Importance of the Study

The library of First Baptist Church in Natchitoches is located across the street from the Natchitoches Parish Public Library. It is also open to the public, though few people outside of the church membership are aware of it. The results of this study may be helpful in promoting the use of the collection to the general public, beyond the church's own congregation. As budgets for many libraries continue to shrink, it is important for public libraries to find ways to provide users with the information they want and need. Because these two libraries are in such close physical proximity to one another, the public library may be able to use some of the resources of the neighboring church library to help them meet the needs of their patrons without duplicating resources unnecessarily. A cooperative partnership may be beneficial to both libraries.

Literature Review

Church Libraries in the United States

Though libraries have existed in churches worldwide for many centuries, there appears to be a lack of scholarly research on the development or role of modern church libraries in the United States. The majority of articles on church libraries that are indexed in the library and information science databases are historical pieces on specific church libraries, particularly those associated with Anglican and Catholic churches in Western Europe.

In the United States, church libraries have been traced to 1696. It was around this time that church leaders began allowing their congregations to use materials in their private collections. Church libraries in the United States really began to take shape around 1812, when the first library was opened to support a Sunday School program in Boston. By 1860, there were approximately 6,000 Sunday School libraries with a combined collection of more than two million volumes (Andrews, et al., 2004).

Over time, these Sunday School libraries evolved into church libraries designed to “carr[y] out the mission of the church by providing information through media for evangelism, discipleship, fellowship, ministry, and worship that results in numerical growth, spiritual transformation, ministries expansion, and kingdom advance” (Andrews et al., 2004, p. 11). In 1971, there were an estimated 35,000 church libraries in the United States (White, 1971). In 1984, more than 1600 libraries in the United States and Canada representing 29 denominations were members of the Church and Synagogue Library Association (White, 1984).

The religious collections of church libraries, particularly the resources they contain related to specific denomination of the church in which they are located, are often far superior than those in public libraries because “[t]he public library, after all, must keep its religion section in balance, not only insuring that all faiths are represented, but also that the section itself is properly proportioned within the whole collection” (White, 1971, p. 397).

Church libraries have long existed in the Christian Church. Similar libraries are also taking root in the houses of worship of other religions. One 1981 study compared the Christian church libraries of the United States with the mosque libraries in Tehran, Iran (Harvey & Musavi, 1981).

Collection Development Policies

According to Jacob (2011), there were virtually no distinctions between church, school, and public libraries in their early years. In writing about the parochial libraries of England, he states that any categorization “between sacred and secular, clerical and lay, ecclesiastical and borough” was nonexistent,

as there was much overlap in the administration of towns, schools, and churches. As the functions of each of these became more compartmentalized, libraries were identified as either religious or secular.

This pre-determined role of a library, whether religious or secular, and the population it serves help to determine the services and resources that will be available to users. Collection development, as previously defined, is the process by which resources are selected and acquired in order to meet the informational needs of the library users. All libraries, regardless of type, should have a collection development policy in place that clearly articulates the library’s selection criteria for the collection (Evans & Saponaro, 2005).

Media selection in church libraries will usually differ from the selection of media of the same topic in a public library because they service a highly specialized population. In a church library, media may be rejected if they do not support the teachings of that particular church. Fisher (2010) notes, “the one thing [church] librarians are most particular about is making sure the item being processed does not promote behavior discouraged by the church, or direct the reader away from the truth of what is being taught by the pastor and other leaders” (p. 20). In a church library, some texts may be labeled with a disclaimer if the teachings within do not fully support the church. This type of labeling may be considered censorship within a public library, but it is fully acceptable, and even expected, within a church library (Andrews et al., 2004).

In a public library, religion is often considered a controversial topic (Sargent, 1993). Sargent writes that public librarians should not feel required to cover all religions equally in their collections. He suggests that the collection should represent the predominant religious views of the community in which it is located and equates this idea serving the cultural interests of the public. Sargent (1993) writes, “No one thinks it amiss for a library in a predominantly black community to have a collection that is especially strong in black culture: it is taken for granted as an appropriate way of serving the particular interests of the community” (p. 11).

Because of the differences in user base and mission, the religion collections of a public library and a Christian church library may be expected to differ significantly. However, it is not unlikely to see differences in the composition of the religious collection among public libraries located in different geographic locations. Colom (2011) identifies differences in the juvenile science collections of public libraries located in different areas. For example, marine science books are more prevalent in regions located along the coast than in land-locked areas. Similarly, one might infer that religious collections of similar size public libraries, while striving to maintain a balanced collection, may also differ based upon the predominant religion practiced in that region.

In her article about religion collections in school libraries, Howard (1986) noted the importance of studying religion in order to better understand contemporary issues developing throughout the world. She states, "It is becoming necessary for students to explore the essentially religious issues of war and peace, nuclear developments and environmental dangers, plenty and scarcity, freedom and restraint" (p. 267). Howard also offers guidelines for the selection of religious materials in school libraries and offers recommendations on religious texts for school libraries. As public libraries usually strive to offer users a collection that represents a variety of viewpoints that does not support or promote one religion in particular, her recommendations on Bibles, atlases, encyclopedias, concordances and religious histories, as well as works on comparative religions, philosophy and ethics may also be helpful to public libraries in their development of the religious collection as they offer a basic foundation for the study of many different religions.

Gouker (1987) has noticed an apparent increase in reference inquiries regarding religion, particularly "from conservative Christians seeking Bible study, spiritual growth, and self-help materials," which can affect collection development (p. 342). Gouker offers librarians practical recommendations on resources and reviewing sources to assist public libraries with the development of their religious collections. His recommendations are particularly helpful as he

identifies materials, especially Bible commentaries, which offer a conservative perspective, a liberal perspective, or a stance somewhere in between.

Dewey Decimal Classification (200s)

In library terms, "the process of organizing knowledge into some systematic order" is known as classification (Chan, 2007, p. 309). Church library collections can range in size from a few hundred books to more than 10,000. Regardless of collection size, some kind of classification system is necessary in order for library users to locate and retrieve materials from both the library's online public access catalog (OPAC) and its physical location on the library shelves. The specific needs of the individual collection often dictate how library materials are organized and the type of classification system used (Chan, 2007). The three main classification systems used by both academic and public libraries are the Dewey Decimal Classification (DDC) system, the Library of Congress Classification (LCC) system, and the Universal Decimal Classification (UDC) system (Zins & Santos, 2011). The Dewey Decimal Classification system is often recommended for use by church libraries because of its relative ease of use for the mostly volunteer, non-professionally trained staff compared to the other classification systems (Andrews et al., 2004; Gorman, 1985).

The DDC works well for a Christian library because it is inherently "Christianity biased," (Zins & Santos, 2011, p. 882) specifically toward American Protestantism (Chan, 2007; Gorman, 1985). The main class of religion (200) of the DDC is divided into 10 subclasses. Of all subclasses of religion, the majority are dedicated to some aspect of the Christian faith, while only one subclass is made available for all religions other than Christianity. In addition to the monotheistic religions of Judaism and Islam, the 290s encompasses ancient religions, including Egyptian and Greek mythology; the Asian religions of Buddhism, Jainism, Sikhism, Confucianism, Taoism, Shinto, Bahaism, and Zoroastrianism; the modern religion of Scientology; and the ethnic religions of Shamanism and Voodoo (Zins & Santos, 2011). Table 1 contains a chart from *A Classification System for Church Libraries* (Southern Baptist Convention, 2004) that lists all subclasses of the 200s in the DDC.

Table 1 Subclasses of the 200 class of the Dewey Decimal Classification system

| | |
|--|---|
| <p>200 Religion 201 Religious mythology and social theology 202 Doctrines 203 Public worship and other practices 204 Religious experience, life and practice 205 Religious ethics 206 Leaders and organization 207 Missions and religious education 208 Sources 209 Sects and reform movements</p> | <p>250 Christian orders and local church 251 Preaching 252 Texts of sermons 253 Pastoral office and work 254 Parish administration 255 Religious congregations and orders 256 [Unassigned] 257 [Unassigned] 258 [Unassigned] 259 Pastoral care of families and kinds of persons</p> |
| <p>210 Philosophy and theory of religion 211 Concepts of God 212 Existence, knowability and attributes of God 213 Creation 214 Theodicy 215 Science and religion 216 [Unassigned] 217 [Unassigned] 218 Humankind 219 [Unassigned]</p> | <p>260 Social and ecclesiastical theology 261 Social theology 262 Ecclesiology 263 Days, times and places of observances 264 Public worship 265 Sacraments, other rites and acts 266 Missions 267 Associations for religious work 268 Religious education 269 Spiritual renewal</p> |
| <p>220 Bible 221 Old Testament 222 Historical books of Old Testament 223 Poetic books of Old Testament 224 Prophetic books of Old Testament 225 New Testament 226 Gospels and Acts 227 Epistles 228 Revelation (Apocalypse) 229 Apocrypha and pseudepigrapha</p> | <p>270 History of Christianity and Christian Church 271 Religious orders in church history 272 Persecutions in church history 273 Doctrinal controversies and heresies 274 History of Christianity in Europe 275 History of Christianity in Asia 276 History of Christianity in Africa 277 History of Christianity in North America 278 History of Christianity in South America 279 History of Christianity in other areas</p> |
| <p>230 Christianity and Christian theology 231 God 232 Jesus Christ and his family 233 Humankind 234 Salvation and grace 235 Spiritual beings 236 Eschatology 237 [Unassigned] 238 Creeds and catechisms 239 Apologetics and polemics</p> | <p>280 Christian denominations and sects 281 Early church and Eastern churches 282 Roman Catholic Church 283 Anglican churches 284 Protestants of Continental origin 285 Presbyterian, Reformed and Congregational 286 Baptist, Disciples of Christ and Adventist 287 Methodist and related churches 288 [Unassigned] 289 Other denominations</p> |
| <p>240 Christian moral and devotional theology</p> | <p>290 Other religions 291 [Unassigned]</p> |

| | |
|---|--|
| 241 Christian ethics | 292 Greek and Roman religion |
| 242 Devotional literature | 293 Germanic religion |
| 243 Evangelistic writings for individuals | 294 Religions of Indic origin |
| 244 [Unassigned] | 295 Zoroastrianism |
| 245 [Unassigned] | 296 Judaism |
| 246 Use of art in Christianity | 297 Islam, Babism and Bahai Faith |
| 247 Church furnishings and articles | 298 (Optional number) |
| 248 Christian experience, practice and life | 299 Religions not provided for elsewhere |
| 249 Christian observances in family life | |

Because of its heavy emphasis on Christianity, the DDC might be the obvious choice among church libraries. However, though it is used often by public libraries, it may not always provide the best classification system for libraries who seek more balance in their religious collections.

The classification of religious materials poses numerous problems for the classifier. According to Gorman (1985), there are three main areas that make classification of religious materials difficult. The main issue is that “the primary literature in every culture and civilization has been religious in orientation, ranging from simple invocations and ritual inscriptions to substantial collections in the form of sacred books” (p. 204). Another issue is that religion is often used to interpret many other facets of human behavior (p. 204). Further complicating matters are the many different interpretations of beliefs within any religious tradition (p. 204).

The scope of religious literature is vast. Gorman (1985) writes, “Indeed in its fullest form theology is the most multi-disciplinary of all subject areas, encompassing textual and critical studies, linguistics, archaeology, history, philosophy, doctrine, anthropology, sociology, education, art and most of the social sciences from an ethical or pastoral standpoint” (p. 204). For these reasons, there have been many attempts to adapt these general classification schemes or create new ones for different denominations specifically to address some of the inadequacies of the accepted systems. Gorman provides an annotated bibliography of general resources to assist classifiers in dealing with religious materials, as well as resources that offer modifications of the general Dewey Decimal and

Library of Congress schemes and special treatments for different religions and denominations.

Comparative Collection Analyses

When conducting a comparative analysis of the collections of two or more libraries, there are various methods that can be used. The contents of each collection, or a selected portion of each collection, should be examined individually and then the results compared to uncover relationships between the collections being studied, determine the degree of coverage in a specific area that each provides, and identify areas of overlap. Perhaps the most common method of bibliographic checking is to compare the resources listed in a bibliography of recommended titles to the items contained in the library’s collection (Elzy & Lancaster, 1990; Porta & Lancaster, 1988). This type of evaluation can be conducted with a published list of recommended titles or a bibliography can be compiled by the researcher drawing upon the recommendations of multiple sources. This type of study is used “to estimate coverage in a subject area or, more importantly, to identify possible gaps in the collection” (Elzy & Lancaster, 1990, p. 1).

This method of evaluating a collection can be a good indicator of a library’s coverage of a particular subject area only if the bibliography used for comparison purposes is free of bias and adequately represents the information needs and wants of the patrons of that particular library (Porta & Lancaster, 1988, p. 131-132). Another weakness of this method is that it can “indicate what a library should own, and does not, but tells us nothing about items the library does own but perhaps should not” (Elzy & Lancaster, 1990, p.2).

The reverse of this process—comparing the holdings of a library against an authoritative bibliography—does not yield the same results (Elzy & Lancaster, 1990; Porta & Lancaster, 1988). Goldhor (1973) refers to this reverse process as the “inductive method” of bibliographic checking (p. 6). When the holdings of a library are checked against a bibliography, the results can be used to estimate quality of a collection and not just degree of coverage. For example, if an item appears on five lists of recommended materials, it may be judged to be of higher quality or more useful than a similar item that is not recommended by any type of reviewing source. This inductive method of bibliographic checking is used less frequently than the aforementioned method of checking a bibliography against the items held in a particular collection (Elzy & Lancaster, 1990).

When performing either of these bibliographic checks, the size of the collection will determine if the entire collection or selected subject area is used. Additionally, the number of items listed on the selected bibliography will determine if all of the resources on the list are used. If either the number of items on either of these lists is too large, a random sample can be taken to arrive at an adequate representation of each (Elzy & Lancaster, 1990; Porta & Lancaster, 1988).

Once an individual collection is examined, the information obtained can be used to compare two or more collections. Colom (2011) conducted a similar study that compared the juvenile science non-fiction collections of three different branches of a public library. Her research focused on books classified in the 500s using the Dewey Decimal Classification system and shelved in the juvenile section of the library (J 500s). The three branches chosen for the study were a rural, a suburban, and an urban library located in Hillsborough County, Florida. To compare the collections, Colom investigated the age of each collection, the number of books in each, the proportion of juvenile non-fiction books to the entire juvenile non-fiction collection, and the number and proportion of books considered “science fair books” to the overall juvenile non-fiction collection (Colom, 2011). In addition to the collection of quantitative data, the researcher also interviewed each branch’s youth services librarian to obtain additional

information on the circulation and use of the juvenile science collections.

Colom’s research, however, did not involve bibliographic checking with a published or compiled list. To determine the number of items considered “science fair books,” she simply counted the number of items classified in the 507s of the Dewey Decimal Classification system instead of using a list of recommended science fair texts. Books that are assigned 507 generally deal with science fair experiments (Colom, 2011, p. 87).

Doll (1985) conducted a comparative study of the children’s collections of public and elementary school libraries in order to determine if the collections reflected the popular belief among librarians and users alike that public libraries support children’s recreational reading needs while school libraries are more likely to focus on their educational, or curricular, needs. Like Colom, Doll (1985) did not use bibliographic checking. Instead, she used a random sample drawn from the shelf lists of each library to study the overlap of specific children’s titles held by both the public libraries and school libraries. She also measured the number of items in each library assigned Dewey numbers (non-fiction) and the number of fiction items, as non-fiction works are often viewed as instructional materials while fictional works are often considered recreational. The article does not offer specific details of how the random sample of titles was drawn.

Methodology

A shelf list of each library’s adult 200s collection was generated using the library’s automation software program. The First Baptist Church library uses the Concourse library software offered by Book Systems, while the Natchitoches Parish Library uses Library•Solution from The Library Corporation (TLC). The library software was also used to count the number of books classified with a Dewey Decimal number in the 200s in each collection. Additionally, the library software was used to count the total number of items in each library’s collection, as well as the total number of items in the adult non-fiction collection. Using a calculator, the number of religious texts (200s) was divided by the number of total items in the collection to arrive at the percentage of the

total collection that is classified as religious non-fiction. Similarly, the total number of religious texts (200s) was divided by the total number of books in the adult non-fiction collection to determine the percentage of the non-fiction collection that is religious in nature.

H.W. Wilson's *Public Library Core Collection: Nonfiction* was used to identify texts that are considered essential to the development of the religious section of a library collection. *Public Library Core Collection: Nonfiction* is published every four years, with an update published for each year that the complete text is not published. As the 2012 edition was not yet available, the 2008 edition, as well as the 2009, 2010, and 2011 supplements, were used for this study.

A search of the Natchitoches Parish Library's OPAC indicated that this book is not available locally; however, a search of library holdings in the state of Louisiana using the Louisiana Library Connection identified a copy at the Terrebonne Parish Library in Houma, Louisiana, that was used for this study. Each library's OPAC was used to look up all core religious titles as identified in *Public Library Core Collection: Nonfiction* to determine if it is part of the library's holdings. Each title that is held by each library was counted to determine the total number of core texts held by each library. If an item appeared on more than one year's list due to the release of an updated version, the book was counted only once. Earlier versions of recommended titles held by each library were not counted if the edition was not an exact match of the recommended version.

In the Dewey Decimal Classification, books assigned numbers in the 290s are considered "non-Christian" or "other than Christian." Using the shelf list generated for each library, the books in the 290s was counted. This total was then divided by the total number of religious non-fiction books to determine percentage of the adult religious collection.

Finally, each library's automation software was used to determine circulation statistics for the adult non-fiction religious collection for the two-year period beginning Jan. 1, 2011 and ending Dec. 31, 2012. The

results were used to determine which library has circulated more religious texts in the past two years.

Results

A shelf list of all books classified in the 200s of the Dewey Decimal Classification system was generated by a staff member of each library. Each library's automation software was used to count the number of items in each library's collection and the number of items in each adult non-fiction collection library.

R1. How many books in each collection are classified under the 200s using the Dewey Decimal Classification System?

R2. What percentage of the adult non-fiction books in each collection are classified in the 200s using the Dewey Decimal Classification System?

R3. What percentage of each library's total collection is classified in the 200s using the Dewey Decimal Classification System?

As of March 14, 2013, the Natchitoches Parish library had 1,585 books classified in the 200s using the Dewey Decimal Classification system. There were 98,653 total items in the library's collection, and 21,169 items in the library's entire non-fiction collection. According to these figures, the 200s collection accounts for 1.6 percent of the entire Natchitoches Parish Library collection, and 7.4 percent of the library's non-fiction collection.

As of March 20, 2013, the First Baptist Church Library had 2,127 books classified in the 200s using the DDC System. There were 9,219 total items in the library's collection, and 3,242 items in the library's entire non-fiction collection. In the FBC library, biographies are classified under the letter "B" instead of the more common 920, so those items with a call number beginning with "B" were added to the total number of items with Dewey Decimal numbers to determine the total number of non-fiction items. According to these figures, the 200s collection accounts for slightly more than 23 percent of the entire FBC library collection, and 65.6 percent of the library's non-fiction collection. Figure 1 compares the religious collections of each library as a percentage of the entire collection while Figure 2 shows a comparison of the religious collections of each library as a percentage of the library's non-fiction collection.

Figure 1 Percentage of overall collection that is classified in the 200s of the Dewey Decimal Classification System.

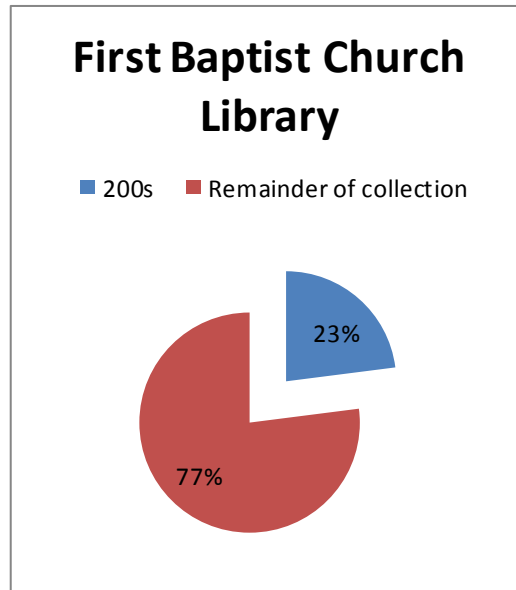
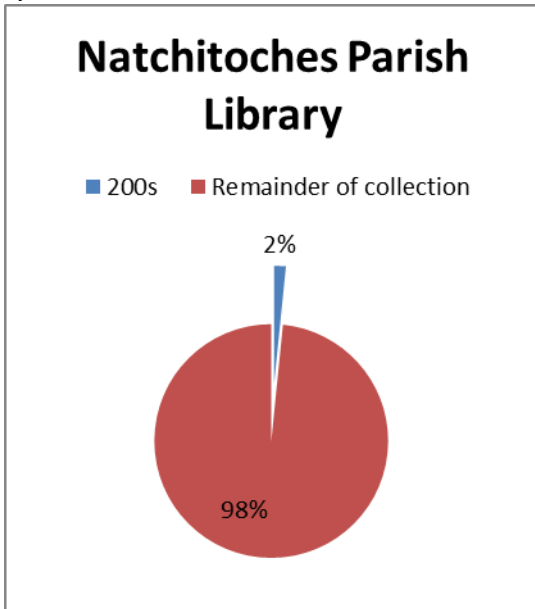
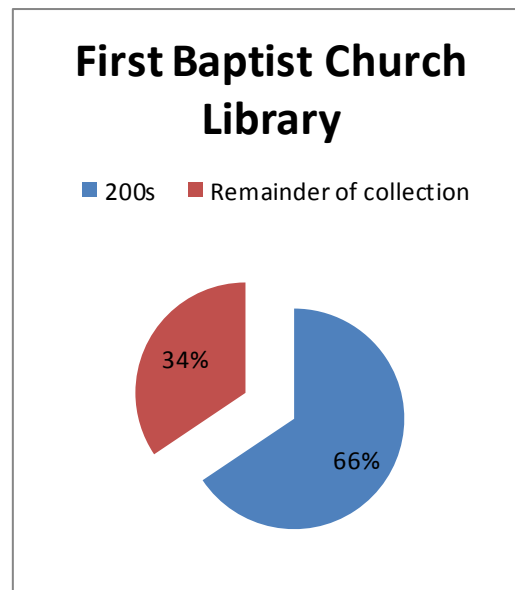
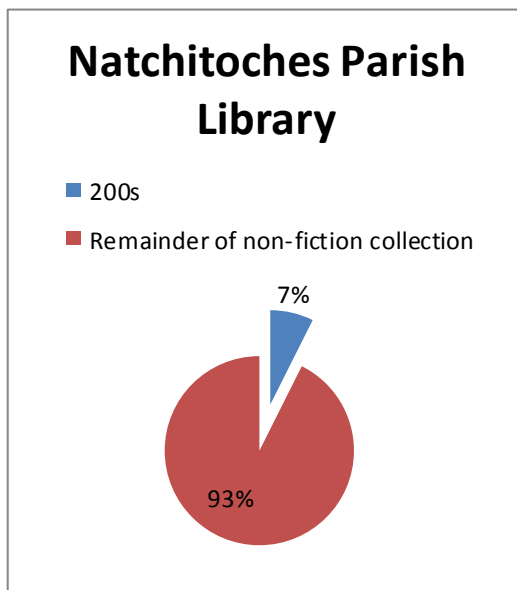


Figure 2 Percentage of non-fiction collection that is classified in the 200s of the Dewey Decimal Classification System



R4: How many core religious texts (identified in H.W. Wilson’s *Public Library Core Collection: Nonfiction*) does each library contain?

A manual count of the number of recommended religious titles in H.W. Wilson’s *Public Library Core Collection: Nonfiction* revealed 427 recommended titles in the 2008 full edition, 20 in the 2009 supplement, 26 in the 2010 supplement, and 22 in the 2011 supplement. In total, there were 495 recommended religious titles listed in the selection guide. A small number of titles were listed in both the

2008 edition and a later supplement if a new edition was released after the publication of the full edition.

A search of the Natchitoches Parish Library OPAC turned up 90 of the 427 recommended titles from the 2008 full edition. However, eight of these were earlier versions and not exact matches. One was listed in the OPAC but no call number or location was provided. Three were marked as lost. This leaves 79 out of the 427 recommended titles (18.5%).

The library also owns nine of the 20 titles (45%) listed in the 2009 supplement, 10 of the 26 titles (38.5%) in the 2010 supplement and nine of the titles for 2011. For 2011, however, two of these were deleted as duplicates because they were newer versions of books listed in the 2008 full edition, leaving only seven of 22 (31.8%) exact matches. In total, the Natchitoches Parish Library owns current versions of 105 of 495 (21.2%) recommended titles.

A search of the First Baptist Church Library OPAC revealed that it owns 21 of the 427 recommended titles from the 2008 full edition. However, seven of these were earlier versions and not exact matches. Additionally, one book was a participant’s guide for a study of the original book by the same title. This leaves 13 of the 427 recommended titles (3%). The library also owns 2 of the 20 titles (10%) listed in the 2009 supplement, 2 of the 26 titles (7.7%) in the 2010 supplement and one of the titles for 2011. However, this one title was deleted as a duplicate of an older version listed in the 2008 edition, leaving zero for that year. In total, the First Baptist Church Library owns current versions of 14 of 495 (3%)

recommended titles. Table 2 shows the number of core texts recommended by each edition of *Public Library Core Collection: Nonfiction* and the number and percentage of recommended texts owned by each library. A complete list of all books held by each library, along with call number and format, which were recommended in the selected editions of *Public Library Core Collection: Nonfiction* is provided in Appendix 1.

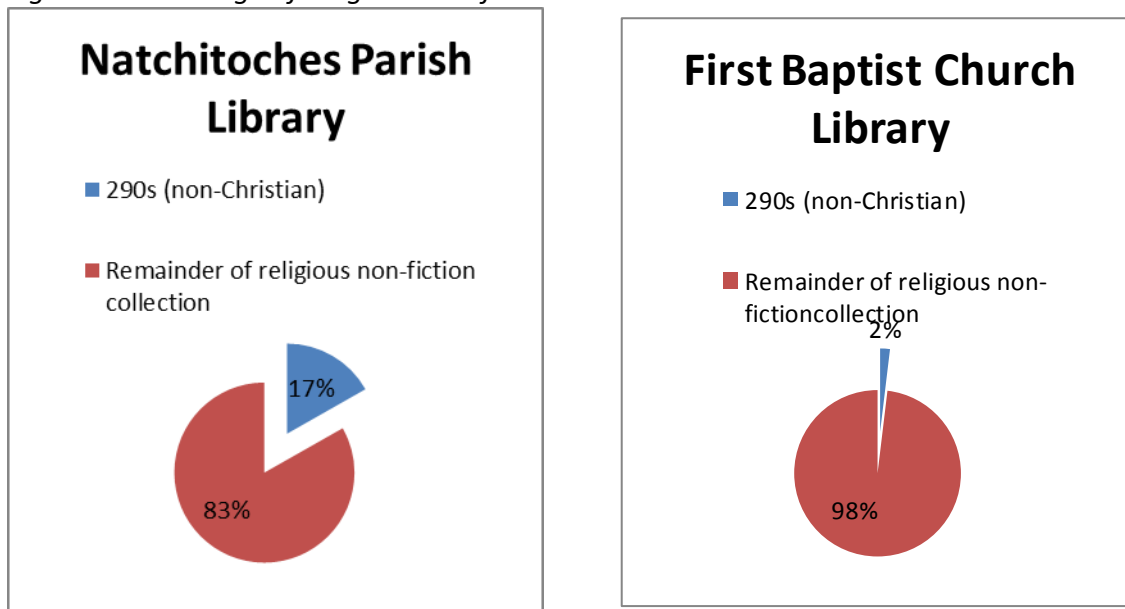
R5: How many non-Christian books (290s) are in each library’s collection?

Using each library’s shelf list to count the number of items with a call number in the 290s, it was determined that there are 267 books considered to be non-Christian in the Natchitoches Parish library collection, or about 16.8 percent of the religious collection. In the FBC library, there were 40 books considered to be non-Christian, or almost 1.9 percent of the religious collection. Figure 3 shows the percentage of the religious collection of each library that is classified in the 290s of the Dewey Decimal Classification system.

Table 2 The number and percentage of core texts owned by each library

| Public Library Core Collection edition/ # of recommended books | Natchitoches Parish Library | First Baptist Church Library |
|---|------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 2008 full edition/ 427 | 79 18.5% | 13 3% |
| 2009 supplement/ 20 | 9 45% | 2 10% |
| 2010 supplement/ 26 | 10 38.5% | 2 7.7% |
| 2011 supplement/ 22 | 7 31.8% | 0 0% |
| Total for all editions/ 495 | 105 21.2% | 14 3% |

Figure 3 Percentage of religious non-fiction collection that is considered non-Christian



R6: What is the rate of circulation of the books in each library’s non-fiction religious collection (200s) for the two-year period of Jan. 1, 2011 through Dec. 31, 2012?

According to circulation reports provided by each library, there were 2307 circulations of religious texts in the Natchitoches Parish Library during the two-year period beginning Jan. 1, 2011 and ending Dec. 31, 2012. First Baptist Church library had 625 circulations of items in its religious collection during the same period.

Discussion/Conclusion

The religious non-fiction collections of the Natchitoches Parish Library and the First Baptist Church library provide a plethora of resources on religious topics for the people of Natchitoches Parish, Louisiana. When viewed according to collection size, the church library provides a larger selection of books of a religious nature than the public library. The church library holds 34 percent more religious non-fiction books than the public library while its overall collection is less than 10 percent of the size of the public library. With its religious non-fiction collection making up nearly a quarter of the church’s total library collection and approximately two-thirds of its non-fiction collection, the 200s of the Dewey Decimal Classification system are obviously a main focus of the collection development efforts of First Baptist. The number of resources available, along with the fact that it available for use by the general public and

is located just a few yards away from the public library, makes the church library an attractive resource for patrons seeking information on religious subjects.

In spite of its size, however, both in total number of religious texts and as a percentage of total collection and non-fiction collection, the First Baptist Church library may not necessarily contain the strongest religious collection. The Natchitoches Parish Library contains many more of the recommended religious texts, including in the area of Christianity. A check of each collection against the recommended lists in *Public Library Core Collection: Nonfiction* shows that the public library owns seven times more recommended religious titles than the church library. It is interesting to note that the First Baptist Church library does not own the one text on the Baptist faith that is recommended in the *Core Collection* selection guide; however, it does own a book of prayer and rites commonly used by the Episcopal Church.

White (1984) offers an explanation why there may be so few recommended texts in the First Baptist Church library: “Church libraries are not intended to be research collections, nor little public libraries...They contain religious resources to support their parent institutions much of which are too specialized to be appropriate for the public library collection” (p. 1984). For this reason, religious and public libraries

should not view themselves as competitors, but as partners (White, 1984, p. 1894).

While this method of checking a library's collection against an authoritative bibliography is often used to determine coverage level or gaps in a particular area of a collection (Elzy & Lancaster, 1990, p. 1), Goldhor (1973) recommends using the reverse process of checking a collection against selected bibliographies to gauge quality of the collection (p. 6). The current research could be built upon in the future by using both methods to compare both subject-area coverage and collection quality. An interesting approach to the topic would be to compare the two collections using bibliographies focusing on both public library collection development and church library collection development. *A Basic Booklist for Church Libraries*, published by the Church and Synagogue Library Association, is one such bibliography geared toward church libraries; however, it does not appear to have been updated in more than 10 years. This method could provide a better idea of the each library's strengths and areas where they may be able to provide assistance to each other.

As the First Baptist Church library is located in a Christian church environment, the majority of its religious non-fiction collection is logically Christian. However, it does have a small number of books available on non-Christian topics for patrons who are interested in learning the details of other faiths. With nearly nine times more books on various religious groups other than Christianity, patrons of both libraries could benefit from the non-Christian collection of the Natchitoches Parish Library.

The religious collection of the Natchitoches Parish Library had more than three times the circulations of the religious collection of the church library. However, the public library has more than 10 times the number of registered users. When this massive difference in patron numbers is factored in, the church library exhibits a higher per capita circulation rate of religious materials than the public library.

The Natchitoches Parish Library and the First Baptist Church Library may differ in many ways, including size, focus, and user base; however, they do have at

least one thing in common: their mutual goal of connecting patrons with the resources they desire to fulfill their information needs and wants. With their close physical proximity, these two libraries are in an ideal location to share their knowledge and resources. White (1984) acknowledges the value of a church library collection: "While we don't usually think of the church or synagogue library as a special library, it is, and as such it often contains specialized material not included in the public library" (p. 1894). White suggests ways in which public libraries and church libraries can work together to serve their patrons, and some of those suggestions are relevant to the Natchitoches Parish and First Baptist Church libraries.

First, an awareness of resources already available in the community, particularly right across the street as is the case in this situation, can reduce the amount spent by each library on duplication of materials. The church library, in particular, often orders any religious materials requested by the church staff and library patrons (H. Ferguson, personal communication, Nov. 14, 2012). A quick consultation of the public library's OPAC, which is available online, can determine if the item is already available nearby.

Second, the staff of the public library may be able to assist with the training of the church library's staff, the majority of whom are volunteers untrained in the management of a library (White, 1984, p. 1895). By working together in this manner, librarians at each facility can become more aware of the resources available at each and, in turn, refer more patrons to the other's collections, possibly resulting in increased circulation numbers for each library.

A third way the public library can work together with church libraries is by compiling a union catalog for the entire community where the public library patrons can easily locate the resources available at other locations throughout the community and obtain them through interlibrary loan (White, 1984, p. 1896). This type of arrangement could be mutually beneficial to each library as "the public library can offer more religious works than it could otherwise, without the problems of denominational balance or the justification of the expenditure of public funds for religious materials. The church library extends its

ministry of librarianship to a wider clientele than it otherwise could reach" (p. 1896).

References

Andrews, B., Ferguson, H. W., Hunter, E. N., Maynard, M. & Tiller, D. (2004). *Church library ministry information service*. Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman.

Chan, L. M. (2007). *Cataloging and classification: An introduction*. Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press.

Colom, H. M. (2010). Juvenile science nonfiction: A comparison of the collections of a rural, a suburban, and an urban public library. *Current Studies in Librarianship*, 30(1/2), 79-94.

Deitrick, B. (2002). *A Basic Book List for Church Libraries* (6th rev. ed). Portland, OR: Church and Synagogue Library Association.

Doll, C. (1985). A comparison of children's collections in public and elementary school libraries. *Collection Management*, 7, 47-59.

Elzy, C., & Lancaster, F. (1990). Looking at a collection in different ways: a comparison of methods of bibliographic checking. *Collection Management*, 12(3-4), 1-10.

Evans, G. E., & Saponaro, M. Z. (2005). *Developing library and information center collections*. Westport, CT: Libraries Unlimited.

Fisher, D. (2010). Special libraries in the Baptist church. *Virginia Libraries*, 56(4), 19-22.

Goldhor, H. (1973). Analysis of an inductive method of evaluating the book collection of a public library. *Libri*, 23(1), 6-17.

Gorman, G. (1985). The classification of theological literature: a commentary and annotated bibliography. *International Library Review*, 17, 203-231.

Gouker, D. (1987). God is alive and well at the reference desk. *American Libraries*, 18(5), 342.

Greenfieldt, J., & Bartell, P. (2008). *Public library core collection: A selection guide to reference books and adult nonfiction* (13th ed.). New York: H.W. Wilson Co.

Harvey, J. F. & Musavi, S. A. (1981). Tehran mosque libraries and a comparison with American Christian church libraries. *International Library Review*, 13, 385-395.

Howard, E. (1986). Religion collections and school libraries. *Collection Management*, 72, 263-280.

Jacob, W. M. (2011). Parochial libraries and their users. *Library & Information History*, 27(4), 211-216.

Louisiana Office of Culture, Recreation and Tourism. (2012). Fort St. Jean Baptiste State Historic Site. Retrieved from <http://www.crt.state.la.us/parks/iftstjean.aspx>

Natchitoches Parish Library. (2012a). Community bookmobile schedule. Retrieved from <http://www1.youseemore.com/natchitoches/about.asp?loc=240>

Natchitoches Parish Library. (2012b). Count of borrowers. Retrieved from <http://www1.youseemore.com/natchitoches/>

Natchitoches Parish Library. (2012c). Schoolmobile schedule. Retrieved from <http://www1.youseemore.com/natchitoches/about.asp?loc=232>

Northwestern State University. (2012). Enrollment up at Northwestern State. Retrieved from <http://news.nsula.edu/home/enrollment-up-at-northwestern-state/>

Porta, M. A., & Lancaster, F. (1988). Evaluation of a scholarly collection in a specific subject area by bibliographic checking: a comparison of sources. *Libri*, 38, 131-137.

Sargent, S. (1993). Jurgen Habermas and the ethics of gatekeeping. *Cataloging & Classification Quarterly*, 16(3), 7-15.

Southern Baptist Convention. (2004). *A Classification System for Church Libraries* (revised). Nashville, TN: LifeWay Press.

White, J. L. (1984). Church and synagogue libraries: Resources for the public library. *Library Journal*, 109(17), 1894-1896.

United States Census Bureau. (2012). State & county QuickFacts. Retrieved from <http://quickfacts.census.gov/qfd/states/22/22069.html>

Zins, C., & Santos, P. C. (2011). Mapping the knowledge covered by library classification systems. *Journal of the American Society for Information Science & Technology*, 62(5), 877-901.

White, J. L. (1971). Church libraries: Unrecognized resources. *American Libraries*, 2(4), 397-399.

Appendix 1

Core texts owned by each library – Complete table

| Title/Author/Publication Date | NPL Call Number | FBC Call Number |
|---|-----------------------------------|-----------------|
| 2008 Full Edition | | |
| <i>A history of God: The 4000 year quest of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam</i> Karen Armstrong, 1993 | 291.2 ARM | |
| <i>World Religions</i> John Bowker, 1997 | 200 BOW <i>*oversized</i> | 200 BOW |
| <i>The encyclopedia of angels</i> , 2 nd ed. Rosemary Ellen Guiley, 2004 | 291.2 GUI <i>*reference</i> | |
| <i>God is not great: How religion poisons everything</i> Christopher Hitchens, 2007 | 200 HIT | |
| <i>Religious literacy: What every American needs to know--and doesn't</i> Stephen Prothero, 2007 | 200.71 PRO | |
| <i>The history of hell</i> Alice K. Turner, 1993 | 291.2 TUR | |
| <i>Apocalypses: prophesies, cults, and millennial beliefs through the ages</i> Eugen Weber, 1999 | 291.2 WEB | |
| <i>This far by faith: Stories from the African-American religious experience</i> Juan Williams, 2003 | 200 WIL | |
| <i>Wise women: Over two thousand years of spiritual writing by women</i> Susan Cahill (ed.), 1996 | 200 WIS | |
| <i>Encyclopedia of religion</i> , 2 nd ed. Lindsay Jones (ed.), 2005 | E-resource | |
| <i>Strong religion: The rise of fundamentalisms around the world</i> Gabriel A. Almond, R. Scott Appleby, & Emmanuel Sivan, 2003 | 200 ALM | |
| <i>The great transformation: The beginning of our religious</i> | 200.9 | |

| | | |
|--|--|--------------------------------------|
| <i>traditions</i> Karen Armstrong, 2006 | ARM | |
| <i>The God factor: Inside the spiritual life of public people</i> Cathleen Falsani, 2006 | 200.92 FAL | |
| <i>Where God was born: A journey by land to the roots of religion</i> Bruce Feiler, 2005 | 200.95 FEI *2 copies- standard & large print | 221.93 FEI |
| <i>New historical atlas of religion in America</i> Edwin S. Gaustad & Philip Barlow, 2001 | 200.973 GAU *reference | 912 GAU *original 1962 edition |
| <i>Encyclopedia of American religions, 7th ed.</i> Gordon Melton, 2003 | E-resource | |
| <i>Transformations of myth through time</i> Joseph Campbell, 1990 | 291.1 CAM | |
| <i>Don't know much about mythology: Everything you need to know about the greatest stories in human history but never learned</i> Kenneth Davis, 2005 | 201.3 DAV | |
| <i>The golden bough: A study in magic and religion</i> (A new abridgment from the second and third editions) Sir James George Frazer, 1998 | E-resource | |
| <i>How to be a perfect stranger: The essential religious etiquette handbook, 4th ed.</i> Stuart M. Matlins & Arthur J. Magida (eds.), 2006 *5 th edition also in 2011 supplement | 291.3 HOW *reference | |
| <i>The Oxford companion to world mythology</i> David Adams Leeming, 2006 | 201.3 LEE *reference | |
| <i>The spiritual life of children</i> Robert Coles, 1990 | 291.4 COL | |
| <i>The varieties of religious experience: A study in human nature</i> William James, 2004 | 291.4 JAM *has 2002 edition | |
| <i>The God delusion</i> Richard Dawkins, 2006 | 211.8 DAW *print & E-resource | |
| <i>The language of God: A scientist presents evidence for belief</i> Francis Collins, 2006 | | 215 COL *sound recording |
| <i>The year of living biblically: One man's humble quest to follow the Bible as literally as possible</i> A.J. Jacobs, 2007 | 220 JAC | |
| <i>Eerdmans dictionary of the Bible</i> David Noel Freedman (ed. in chief), 2000 | 220.3 NAT | |

| | | |
|---|---|--|
| | <i>*reference</i> | |
| <i>The HarperCollins Bible dictionary, rev. ed.</i> Paul Achtemeier (general ed.), 1996 | <i>*in OPAC but no call # or location given</i> | |
| <i>The New Interpreter's dictionary of the Bible</i> Katharine Doob Sakenfeld (ed.), 2006-2008 | | 220.3 BUT <i>*original 1962 5- volume set</i> |
| <i>The Oxford companion to the Bible</i> Bruce M. Metzger & Michael D. Coogan, 1993 | 220.3 OXF | |
| <i>Good news Bible: Today's English version</i> American Bible Society, 1976 | | 221.52 BIB TEV <i>*large print</i> |
| <i>The Holy Bible; updated New American Standard Bible: containing the Old Testament and the New Testament, 1999</i> | 220.5 BIB <i>*large print</i> | 220.5204 BIB NASB |
| <i>The new Jerusalem Bible</i> Henry Wansbrough (general ed.), 1985 | | 220.52 BIB NJB |
| <i>Cruden's Complete concordance: With index to proper names and their meanings</i> A.D. Adams, C.H. Erwin, & S.A. Waters (eds.), 1968 | | 220.3 CRU |
| <i>The strongest Strong's exhaustive concordance of the Bible, 21st century edition</i> John R. Kohlenger III & James A. Swanson (eds.), 2001 | 220.5 STR <i>*1980 & 1985 versions</i> | 220.3 STR <i>*1980, 1986 & 1990 versions</i> |
| <i>All of the women of the Bible</i> Edith Deen, 1955 | | 220.92 DEE |
| <i>The HarperCollins concise atlas of the Bible</i> James B. Pritchard (ed.), 1997 c1991 | | 220.9 HAR |
| <i>The Cambridge companion to the Bible</i> Howard Clark Kee, Bruce Chilton (general ed.), 2008 | 220.9 CAM <i>*reference; 1997 version</i> | |
| <i>Men and women of the Bible: A readers guide</i> Nancy Tischler, 2002 | 220.9 TIS <i>*reference</i> | |
| <i>The five books of Moses: A translation with commentary</i> Robert Alter, 2004 | 222 FIV | |
| <i>The Genesis of justice: Ten stories of biblical injustice that led to the Ten Commandments and modern law</i> Alan M. Dershowitz, 2000 | 222 DER | |
| <i>Abraham: A journey to the heart of three faiths</i> Bruce S. Feiler, 2002 | 222 FEI | 221.92 FEI |
| <i>The beginning of wisdom: Reading Genesis</i> Leon Kass, 2003 | 222.1 KAS | |
| <i>Misquoting Jesus: The story behind who changed the Bible and</i> | 225.48 | |

| | | |
|--|---|--|
| <i>why</i> Bart Ehrman, 2005 | EHR | |
| <i>Peter, Paul, and Mary Magdalene: The followers of Jesus in history and legend</i> Bart Ehrman, 2006 | 225.9 EHR | |
| <i>The cost of discipleship: Containing material not previously translated</i> Dietrich Bonhoeffer, 1959 | | 248 BON <i>*university library</i> |
| <i>Mary Magdalene: A biography</i> Bruce Chilton, 2005 | 226 CHI | |
| <i>Pontius Pilate</i> Ann Wroe, 2000 | 226 WRO | |
| <i>Beyond belief: The secret Gospel of Thomas</i> Elain H. Pagels, 2003 | 229 PAG | |
| <i>Mere Christianity: A revised and amplified edition, with a new introduction, of the three books, Broadcast Talk, Christian Behavior, and Beyond Personality</i> C.S. Lewis, 2001 | 230 LEW <i>*sound recording</i> | 230 LEW <i>*3 copies (books in main & univ. library plus sound recording of original 1952 version)</i> |
| <i>Encyclopedia of early Christianity, 2nd ed.</i> Everett Ferguson (ed.), 1997 | 270.1 ENC <i>*reference</i> | |
| <i>God: A biography</i> Jack Miles, 1995 | 231 MIL | |
| <i>Finding Darwin's God: A scientist's search for common ground between God and evolution</i> Kenneth R. Miller, 1999 | 231.7 MIL | |
| <i>Jesus and the Dead Sea scrolls</i> James H. Charlesworth, 1992 | 232 CHA | |
| <i>Jesus of Nazareth</i> Joseph Ratzinger (Pope Benedict XVI), 2007 | 232.9 BEN | |
| <i>A portrait of Jesus</i> Joseph Girzone, 1998 | 232.9 GIR <i>*large print</i> | |
| <i>A marginal Jew: Rethinking the historical Jesus</i> John Meier, 1991-2001 | 232.9 MEI | |
| <i>The illustrated Jesus through the centuries</i> Jaroslav Jan Pelikan, 1997 | 232.9 PEL <i>*original (non-illustrated) 1985 edition</i> | |
| <i>Mary through the centuries: Her place in the history of culture</i> Jaroslav Jan Pelikan, 1996 | 232.91 PEL | |
| <i>Surprised by hope: Rethinking heaven, the resurrection, and the mission of the church.</i> | 236 WRI | 236.24 WRI |

| | | |
|---|--|---|
| N.T. Wright, 2008 | | *youth library; 6-session participant's guide |
| <i>The reason for God: Belief in an age of skepticism</i> Timothy Keller, 2008 | 239 KEL *marked as lost | |
| <i>The African prayer book: Selected and with an introduction by Desmond Tutu</i> , 1995 | 242 AFR *book and e-resource | |
| <i>The rosary: Prayer comes round</i> Garry Wills, 2005 | 242 WIL | |
| <i>The Screwtape letters; with, Screwtape proposes a toast</i> C.S. Lewis, 2001 | 248.4 LEW *current print version, plus sound recording & e- book of earlier edition | F LEW *1958 edition |
| <i>Into the region of awe: Mysticism in C.S. Lewis</i> David C. Downing, 2005 | 248.22 DOW | |
| <i>The mighty and the Almighty: Reflections on America, God, and world affairs</i> Madeline K. Albright, 2006 | 261.87 ALB | |
| <i>With God on our side: The rise of the religious right in America</i> William C. Martin, 1996 | 261.8 MAR | |
| <i>Papal sin: Structures of deceit</i> Garry Wills, 2000 | 262 WIL | |
| <i>The Book of common prayer and administration of the sacraments and other rites and ceremonies of the church: together with the Psalter or Psalms of David according to the use of the Episcopal Church</i> Episcopal Church, 1979 | | 264.03 EPI |
| <i>The new faces of Christianity: Believing the Bible in the global south</i> Philip Jenkins, 2006 | 270.83 JEN | |
| <i>Fox's book of martyrs: A history of the lives, sufferings and triumphant deaths of the early Christian and the Protestant martyrs</i> John Foxe, 1978 c1926 | 272 FOX | 272 FOX *2001 edition plus sound recording |
| <i>Stealing Jesus: How fundamentalism betrays Christianity</i> Bruce Bawer, 1997 | 277.3 BAW | |
| <i>The black church in the African American experience</i> C. Eric Lincoln and Lawrence H. Mamiya, 1990 | 277.3 LIN | |
| <i>Handbook of denominations in the United States</i> , 12 th edition Frank S. Mead, Samuel S. Hill, and Craig D. Atwood, 2005 | | 280 MEA |

| <i>*13th edition also in 2011 supplement</i> | | <i>*4th and 11th edition</i> |
|--|--|---|
| <i>Crossing the threshold of hope</i> Pope John Paul II, 1994 | 282 JOH | |
| <i>Inside the Vatican: The politics and organization of the Catholic Church</i> Thomas J. Reese, 1996 | 262 REE | |
| <i>Why I am a Catholic</i> Garry Wills, 2002 | 291 WIL | |
| <i>Making saints: How the Catholic Church determines who becomes a saint, who doesn't and why</i> Kenneth L. Woodward, 1990 | 235.24 WOO | |
| <i>The Book of Mormon: Another testament of Jesus Christ</i> Translated by Joesph Smith Jr., 2004 | 289.3 DOC <i>*1981 ed.</i> | |
| <i>Joseph Smith and the beginnings of Mormonism</i> Richard L. Bushman, 1984 | 289.3 BUS | |
| <i>Under the banner of heaven: A story of violent faith</i> Jon Krakauer, 2003 | 289.3 KRA | |
| <i>Science and health, with key to the Scriptures: Trustees under the will of Mary Baker G. Eddy</i> Mary Baker Eddy, 2000 | 289.5 EDD <i>*1994 edition</i> | |
| <i>The riddle of Amish culture, rev. ed</i> Donald B. Kraybill, 2001 | 306 KRA | |
| <i>Bones of the master: A Buddhist monk's search for the lost heart of China</i> George Crane, 2000 | 294.3 CRA | |
| <i>In search of Zarathustra: The first prophet and the ideas that changed the world</i> Paul Kriwaczek, 2003 | 295 KRI | |
| <i>To life! A celebration of Jewish being and thinking</i> Harold S. Kushner, 1994 | 296 KUS | |
| <i>This is my God; the Jewish way of life</i> Herman Wouk, 1987 | 296 WOU | |
| <i>Understanding the Dead Sea scrolls: A reader from the Biblical archaeology review</i> Hershek Shanks (ed.), 1992 | 296.1 UND | |
| <i>The Dead Sea scroll: A new translation, rev. ed.</i> Michael O. Wise, Martin G. Abegg Jr., and Edard M. Cook, 2005 | 296.1 DEA | |
| <i>When bad things happen to good people: With a new preface by the author, 20th anniversary ed.</i> Harold S. Kushner, 2001 | 296.3 KUS <i>*sound recording & e-book</i> | 296.3 KUS <i>*2 copies of original 1981 edition</i> |
| <i>Kosher living: It's more than just the food</i> Ronald H. Isaacs, 2005 | 296.7 ISA <i>*marked as lost</i> | |

| | | |
|---|--|------------------|
| <i>How good do we have to be? A new understanding of guilt and forgiveness</i> Harold S. Kushner, 1996 | 296.7 KUS | |
| <i>Who needs God?</i> Harold S. Kushner, 2002 | 296.7 KUS <i>*original 1989 edition</i> | |
| <i>Following Muhammad: Rethinking Islam in the contemporary world</i> Carl W. Ernst, 2003 | 297 ERN | |
| <i>The Shambala guide to Sufism</i> Carl W. Ernst, 1997 | 297.4 ERN | |
| <i>Islam: The straight path</i> , rev. 3 rd ed. John L. Esposito, 2005 | 297 ESP | |
| <i>What everyone needs to know about Islam</i> John L. Esposito, 2002 | 297 ESP <i>*marked as lost</i> | |
| <i>Essential Sufism</i> James Fadiman and Robert Frager (eds.), 1997 | 297.4 ESS | |
| <i>The crisis of Islam: Holy war and unholy terror</i> Bernard Lewis, 2003 | 297.72 LEW <i>*2 versions - standard and large print</i> | |
| <i>The Gnostic Bible</i> Willis Barnstone and Marvin Meyer (eds.), 2003 <i>*Revised edition also in 2011 supplement</i> | 299 GNO | |
| 2009 Supplement | | |
| <i>Melton's encyclopedia of American religions</i> , 8 th ed. Gordon Melton, 2009 | E-resource | |
| <i>A case for the existence of God</i> Dean L. Overman, 2008 | 212.1 OVE | |
| <i>A visual history of the English Bible: The tumultuous tale of the world's bestselling book</i> Donald L. Brake, 2008 | | 220.52009 BRA |
| <i>The Bible and the people</i> Lori Anne Ferrell, 2008 | 220.5 FER | |
| <i>Digging through the Bible: Understanding biblical people, places, and controversies through archaeology</i> Richard A. Freund, 2008 | 220.9 FRE | |
| <i>Original sin: A cultural history</i> Alan Jacobs, 2008 | 233.14 JAC | |
| <i>Love as a way of life: Seven keys to transforming every aspect of your life</i> Gary Chapman, 2008 | | 241.4 CHA |
| <i>The lost history of Christianity: The thousand-year golden age</i> | 270 | |

| | | |
|---|--|--|
| <i>of the church in the Middle East, Africa, and Asia – and how it died</i> Philip Jenkins, 2008 | JEN | |
| <i>The great emergence: How Christianity is changing and why</i> Phyllis Tickle, 2008 | 270.83 TIC | |
| <i>Plain secrets: An outsider among the Amish</i> Joe Mackall, 2007 | 289.7 MAC | |
| <i>Surrender: Appeasing Islam, sacrificing freedom</i> Bruce Bawer, 2009 | 305.6 BAW | |
| 2010 Supplement | | |
| <i>The case for God</i> Karen Armstrong, 2009 | 211 ARM *3 versions – book, CD & e- resource | |
| <i>Fingerprints of God: The search for the science of spirituality</i> Barbara Bradley Hagerty, 2009 | E-resource | |
| <i>The letter and the scroll: What archaeology tells us about the Bible</i> Robin Currie and Stephen Hyslop, 2009 | | 220.93 CUR |
| <i>Heaven: our 2000-year-old fascination with the afterlife</i> Lisa Miller, 2010 | 202.3 MIL | |
| <i>Fearless: Imagine your life without fear</i> Max Lucado, 2009 | 248.86 LUC | 152.4 LUC *2 versions – book & sound recording |
| <i>Saving Jesus from the church: how to stop worshipping Christ and start following Jesus</i> Robin R. Meyers, 2009 | E-resource | |
| <i>The future of faith</i> Harvey Cox, 2009 | E-resource | |
| <i>Jesus wars: How four patriarchs, three queens, and two emperors decided what Christians would believe for the next 1,500 years</i> Philip Jenkins, 2010 | 270.2 JEN | |
| <i>Understanding the Book of Mormon: A reader's guide</i> Grant Hardy, 2010 | 289.33 HAR | |
| <i>Nine lives: In search of the sacred in modern India</i> William Dalrymple, 2010 | 294.09 DAL | |
| <i>A mosque in Munich: Nazis, the CIA, and the Muslim brotherhood in the West</i> Ian Johnson, 2010 | 297.3 JOH | |
| 2011 Supplement | | |
| <i>In the valley of the shadow: On the foundations of religious belief (and their connection to a certain, fleeting state of mind)</i> James Kugel, 2011 | 200.92 KUG | |

| | | |
|--|--|--|
| <i>American grace: How religion divides and unites us</i> Robert D. Putnam and David E. Campbell, 2010 | 201.7 PUT | |
| <i>How to be a perfect stranger; the essential religious etiquette handbook, 5th ed.</i> Stuart Matlins and Arthur Magida (eds.), 2011 *4th edition also listed in 2008 version Duplicate removed | REF 291.3 HOW *reference; original 1996 edition | |
| <i>The rise and fall of the Bible: The unexpected history of the accidental book</i> Timothy K. Beal, 2011 | 220.609 BEA | |
| <i>Paul among the people: The Apostle reinterpreted and reimagined in his own time</i> Sarah Ruden, 2010 | 225.92 RUD | |
| <i>From Bible belt to sunbelt: Plain-folk religion, grassroots politics, and the rise of evangelical conservatism</i> Darren Dochuk, 2011 | 277.94 DOC | |
| <i>Handbook of denominations in the United States, 13th ed.</i> Craig D. Atwood, 2010 *12th edition also in 2008 edition Duplicate removed | | 280 MEA *4 th and 11 th editions |
| <i>American Veda: From Emerson and the Beatles to yoga and meditation: how Indian spirituality changed the West</i> Philip Goldberg, 2010 | 294.5 GOL | |
| <i>The tenth parallel: Dispatches from the fault line between Christianity and Islam</i> Eliza Griswold, 2010 | 297.2 GRI | |
| <i>The Gnostic Bible, rev. ed.</i> Willis Barnstone and Marvin Meyer (eds.), 2009 *2003 edition also in 2008 edition Duplicate removed | 299 GNO *original 2003 edition | |