

JAMES WHITE LIBRARY RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT POLICY

PART A. THE GUIDING PHILOSOPHY

- 1. The James White Library Resources Development Policy reflects the unique mission of Andrews University.**

“Andrews University, a distinctive Seventh-day Adventist Christian institution, transforms its students by educating them to seek knowledge and affirm faith in order to change the world.”

Andrews University students will:

SEEK KNOWLEDGE as they

- Commit to a mindset of intellectual discovery
- Demonstrate the ability to think clearly and critically
- Communicate effectively utilizing multiple media
- Understand the arts, letters, and sciences from a Christian point of view
- Become competent to serve humanity in their chosen disciplines and professions
- Prepare for meaningful work in a complex, technological, and global society

AFFIRM FAITH as they

- Nurture life in the Spirit through a personal relationship with Jesus Christ
- Deepen their faith commitment and practice
- Demonstrate personal and moral integrity
- Embrace a wholesome way of life
- Respect ethnic and cultural diversity

CHANGE THE WORLD as they go forth to

- Cultivate the capacity for creative problem-solving and innovation
- Commit to generous service through civic engagement
- Create a caring culture of global leadership
- Carry out the world-wide mission of the Seventh-day Adventist Church

The library plays a significant part in the accomplishment of this mission. Arthur DeJong, a Christian educator, suggests that academic excellence at a church-related college or university includes the student’s “acquisition of important knowledge along with the accompanying skills; but as much – or more – it means learning how to learn, developing the desire to continue to learn, to be curious, to develop and use one’s imagination, and to satisfy a creative mind.”² These skills of information literacy and research are learned, to a significant extent, through the use of the library’s resources.

The University’s mission statement echoes an assertion by Ellen White about the purpose of a Christian education: “To restore in man the image of his Maker, to bring him back to the perfection in which he was created, to promote the development of body, mind and soul, that

the divine purpose in his creation might be realized – this was to be the work of redemption. This is the object of education, the great object of life.”³

The meanings we assign to “the image of God” expression include the freedom to choose, the power to think, and the ability to make independent decisions. It follows then, that whatever Andrews University does for its students, it must not deny their freedom to think and act for themselves. Rather, it is called upon to develop this power within its students. Edward Heppenstall articulates this mission succinctly: “The purpose of the Christian college is to instruct and capture the life of the student for Christ without violating his freedom or bypassing his right to think for himself.”⁴

2. In its resources development, the James White Library's makes a deliberate effort to reflect a Christian perspective or worldview.

The Seventh-day Adventist philosophy of education embraces two concepts that go hand in hand – the idea that education has to do with the whole person (body, mind and spirit), and the total integration of faith and learning. Although the reality does not meet the ideal in either of these elements, that does not diminish their importance.

The Christian is inundated with secular influences in virtually every aspect of life, not least in exposure to books, periodicals and the Internet. Postmodern perspectives are prevalent in today's society, infiltrating the culture of western higher education. Its perspectives are often in conflict with the Christian worldview, and students are exposed to its viewpoints during the years when they are forming their own worldviews.

Significant numbers of scholarly publications in a wide range of disciplines, compatible with a Christian worldview, are published, and the library seeks to identify, acquire and promote these materials. While the library cannot and should not prevent the acquisition of secular worldview materials, it can and will act positively to redress the balance by emphasizing selection of materials with a Christian perspective. In the selection of general and recreational reading materials, librarians recognize their responsibility to encourage and nurture moral integrity in the lives of others. ⁵

3. James White Library contains a diverse collection of printed materials, but it also provides access to a vast and expanding universe of electronic information.

Academic libraries in the 21st century face a tremendous expansion of information resources. The conjunction of the knowledge explosion with new communication technologies – in particular, the Internet – has created a situation in which students and faculty have virtually unrestricted access to the universe of information. The Internet is a vast resource in which all sources and ideas seem equally valid and authoritative. Its existence increases the responsibility of the James White Library to formulate policies, including selection criteria, for all of its resources, whether owned or accessed.

4. The library's resources, both owned and accessed, present a diversity of ideas and viewpoints on topics of study, interest and research.

Responsible academic freedom demands that the library not restrict itself to collecting materials which support only one side of a question or issue. Christ said, "You will know the truth, and the truth will set you free." ⁶ Freedom is a gift of God and includes the freedom to discover truth. Christian faith does not try to suppress the right to discover. "The Word of God puts no padlock on the mind." ⁷

An official Seventh-day Adventist statement on academic freedom supports this view, while recognizing the importance of the Christian environment in which intellectual research and growth occurs:

“Roots of the Christian university are found in a principle that has long undergirded the development of all higher education – the belief that the best education is attained when intellectual growth occurs within an environment in which Biblically-based concepts are central to the aims of education. ... For the church college or university, academic freedom has an additional significance. It is more important than it is in the secular institution, not less, for it is essential to the well-being of the church itself.”⁸

Within the environment of a Christian university, students are encouraged to pursue and investigate truth, testing their discoveries against the framework of the scriptures, and guided by teachers and librarians who espouse a Christian worldview. Within this setting, the library provides a diversity of learning and research materials reflecting a variety of viewpoints and interpretations.

In selecting resources the primary consideration must be the intent or purpose of the material in relation to the mission, curricula and research needs of the university. It will be recognized that not all of the content of books, periodicals and other resources will be compatible with Seventh-day Adventist belief, behavior, lifestyle or perspectives.

References:

- 1 Published Mission Statement of Andrews University
- 2 Arthur DeJong. *Reclaiming a Mission*. (Eerdmans, 1990), p.148
- 3 Ellen G. White. *Education*. p.15,16
- 4 Edward Heppenstall. “Academic Freedom and the Quest for Truth.” *Spectrum*, 1 (4): 34-40, 1969, p.39
- 5 See I Corinthians 10:23-24
- 6 John 8:32 (NIV)
- 7 Edward Heppenstall. *Op cit.*, p.37
- 8 *Academic Freedom in Seventh-day Adventist Institutions of Higher Education*. (General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, 1989?)