

Explanation of the LIBRARY system (& CURRICULUM code)

This note was originally sent to the leaders of the house fellowship of which we were a part during Max's formative years, approximately 2010-2016:

Hi guys

In thinking through where to start with the issue of LEADERSHIP, I was forced back immediately to the COST OF DISCIPLING tract which you all (I hope) received as an attachment some months back.

You may recall – and if you don't, it's attached below – the whole tract was an apology for large libraries. It contains a list of some 220 categories and subcategories which embrace virtually the totality of human knowledge. I do not remember discussing as a group the reason WHY we have the 220 categories. That was approximately the number of shelves we needed (and could fit) in the APOLOGIA library when we had it in our shop. So with the space and shelf limitations we had, your's truly – as unofficial librarian of Apologia – could not possibly use the normal library approach, the Dewey decimal system. If you remember from your childhood book borrowing, the Dewey system involves numbers up to 1000 – no book has a number less than 4 places (say 936.5). Many go to subcategories involving 5 places (say 936.57). This system, I perceived, would not be practical with 200 available shelves.

So I devised a system involving 26 basic categories and approximately 200 subcategories. The basic divisions would correspond to the 26 letters of our alphabet, making for easy access for the shelf browser among our 26 or so book stands.

At this point you may be wondering just HOW does this connect with Christian leadership. Well, the alphabet system caused me to have to think through carefully how subjects relate to each other – just to be able to put them on adjacent shelves! And in doing so I began to see for the first time in my 45 years the reason for many of our communication problems. Why we can't work together, sometimes even talk at all. For example, evangelicals can't 'get to' Jehovah's Witnesses. Why? Speaking 'alphabetically', it has a lot to do with the fact that evangelicals talk T and X and Z to JW's (that is, theology, Christology, eschatology) when we haven't even dealt with the A and B and C yet (authority, Bible, church). Similarly, Protestants agree – mostly – with Catholics on T and X, but we cannot dialog effectively. Why? Because we cannot even begin to deal with A and C, which both are influenced by our B position. And that brings us to evangelical ministries and Christian leadership. Most Christian pastors and leaders whom I have met have quite a bit of knowledge of N (New Testament) but little of O (Old Testament). But without O, you cannot really approach the subject of leadership. For the NT assumes the Old Testament model of leadership (family education, male elders, synagogue community etc.) So can we discuss pastoral leadership (a subcategory of C – church) without a detailed discussion of A and B – the relation between authority and the Bible? The very NATURE of the Bible's authority, the reason we have the present CANON of Scripture, is the background of any discussion of church leadership and even D (discipleship).

And that realization brought me to a decision even about the library system itself. In the wake of our discussions over the past 2 years I have been brought to realize that the BIGGEST problem confronting those who wish to know the ABCD of the Christian faith is the E factor – economy – and the severe effect economic realities have upon our ability even to find time for self-education, as well as the parents' role in the family's education. Brothers, it should not take me 60 years, or take you 30-40, to dig down to the foundation. So I have decided to make the E of our library system ECONOMY and move the previous E (evangelism) to a subcategory of C.

If all of this seems a bit of an unnecessary diversion, take it on faith from me – it's not. Until we get to the bedrock of A and B, we cannot deal effectively with C and D. To expedite this process, I attach several tracts, at least 2 of which you may have seen before. [WEANERS, COST OF DISCIPLING, EVERY HOME A CHURCH (A COMMUNICATION CATASTROPHE)]

The LIBRARY SYSTEM – A to Z

A	Authority, Apologetics	N	New Testament
B	Bible	O	Old Testament
C	Church	P	Poetry
D	Discipleship	Q	Science
E	Economy, Economics	R	Religion
F	Film	S	Social Sciences, Sociology
G	Earth Sciences, Geography, Geology	T	Theology
H	History	U	Unbelief
I	Psychology	V	Visual Arts, Theatre
J	Judaica, Jewish Studies	W	World (Nations, Peoples)
K	Kids, Children's Literature	X	Christology
L	Literature	Y	Philosophy
M	Music	Z	Eschatology, Last Things