



Library Guides #6

Buying Christian Books

Whether you are studying theology for interest or for ministry, it's likely you'll want to begin a theological library at home. You may also need to buy a textbook for one of your units. This guide gives some tips.

Shops in Perth

Christian bookstores mainly stock theological works which are recent and popular. They are willing to order something in they don't have on the shelves, although it is quicker to order it directly.

- **Word** has stores at 359 Albany Hwy, Victoria Park and 4 Wellington Rd, Morley; you can shop online at www.word.com.au
- **Koorong** has a store at 434 Lord St, Mt Lawley; you can shop online at www.koorong.com.au
- **St John's Books** is an ecumenical Christian bookshop on High St in Fremantle - www.stjohnsbooks.com.au

For all of these, you can check whether a particular title is in stock at the local store from their website.

Booksales can be a cheap way to get older books cheaply. Vose has a perpetual booksale at the front of the library, and a big annual sale in April. Save the Children have two sales each year, one at UWA in Crawley (during the mid-year semester break) and one in South Perth.

Shopping online

Often the easiest way to get a more obscure book is to shop online. Some people avoid shopping online over fear of credit card fraud. However, the larger sellers have been established a long time and have a good security record. We haven't had any problems buying books for the library, and we spend thousands of dollars each year.

If you don't have a credit card, you may be able to pay with Paypal, linking it to your bank account – www.paypal.com.au. Another option is a prepaid credit card; the prepaid Mastercard only costs \$2.95 to buy - www.everydaymoney.com.au.

Price comparison sites

If you are shopping online, you can actually compare the prices from many different stores simultaneously using one of these price comparison sites. Both of them include the cost of postage, usually accurately.

- **Booko** is Australian based and so has many Australian stores not covered by Fetchbook. It includes the Australian Christian stores Koorong and Mosaic. www.booko.com.au
- **Fetchbook** includes many secondhand sellers not included in Booko. www.fetchbook.info

Online sellers

- **Book Depository** doesn't charge any extra postage on top of the book price. It has a huge range of books, and the prices are often the cheapest anywhere. We have found they generally deliver within 1-2 weeks of ordering. At the time of writing, it seems the USA version of the site – www.bookdepository.com – has slightly cheaper prices than the UK based version – www.bookdepository.co.uk. This may be some quirk of exchange rates; both sites deliver from the UK.
- **Mosaic Resources** is a Melbourne based theology specialist. Their website is easy to use, and they offer a 15% discount just for ordering online. The postage is cheap too. www.mosaicresources.com.au
- **Amazon** is the best known online bookseller. Its prices are often competitive and its range is extensive. The user reviews are also helpful to judge whether you will like a book – something Book Depository is only just introducing. The postage can be expensive – about \$15 for a single book, down to \$6 per book for many books – and you don't find out how much the postage will be until just before you complete the order. Usually the books take 2-4 weeks to arrive. Amazon's Marketplace books are from independent sellers; many of these won't ship internationally. www.amazon.com
- **Abebooks** – Abebooks is a massive aggregate of holdings of secondhand bookshops around the world. There are thousands of sellers who list their books on the site. It is one of the best places to find old, rare and out of print books. The shipping can be expensive, although recently it seems to have been reduced. Books from UK will generally arrive quicker than ones from the USA. www.abebooks.com.au
- **Betterworld** – Betterworld sells its own books, both new and secondhand, as well as listing a lot of other smaller sellers on its site. Some of its profits are donated to literacy projects. Its postage is now free for their own books, even to Australia. www.betterworldbooks.com

Cataloguing Your Books

If you want to keep track of which books you have, check out **Librarything** – www.librarything.com. It allows you to download catalogue records and covers from all the world's major libraries. You can compare your collection with other people around the world. You can catalogue 200 books for free, and then you have to pay – from about US\$1 per year or US\$20 for life. (You decide how much you want to pay.)