

OUR RESPONSE

"We are all woven together in the great web of humanity, and whatever we can do to benefit and uplift others will reflect in blessing upon ourselves. The law of mutual dependence runs through all classes of society."

E. G. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 534, 535

CHRISTIAN LITERACY

1. Is a tool for evangelism, providing an ideal climate for conversion and church planting.
2. Opens the pages of the Bible and other Christian literature to both non-Christians and new converts.
3. Is a door into nations and people groups where other types of mission activities are unwelcome.
4. Provides a rewarding activity for local Christians who are eager to help elevate their own people to experience a better life.
5. Expresses compassion, demonstrating that Christians reflect the nature of the Good Samaritan.

THE BENEFITS

"Every word you speak, every action you perform, has an influence for good or evil upon those who associate with you; and, oh! how necessary it is that you have Christ dwelling in your heart by faith, that your words may be words of life, and your works, the works of love."

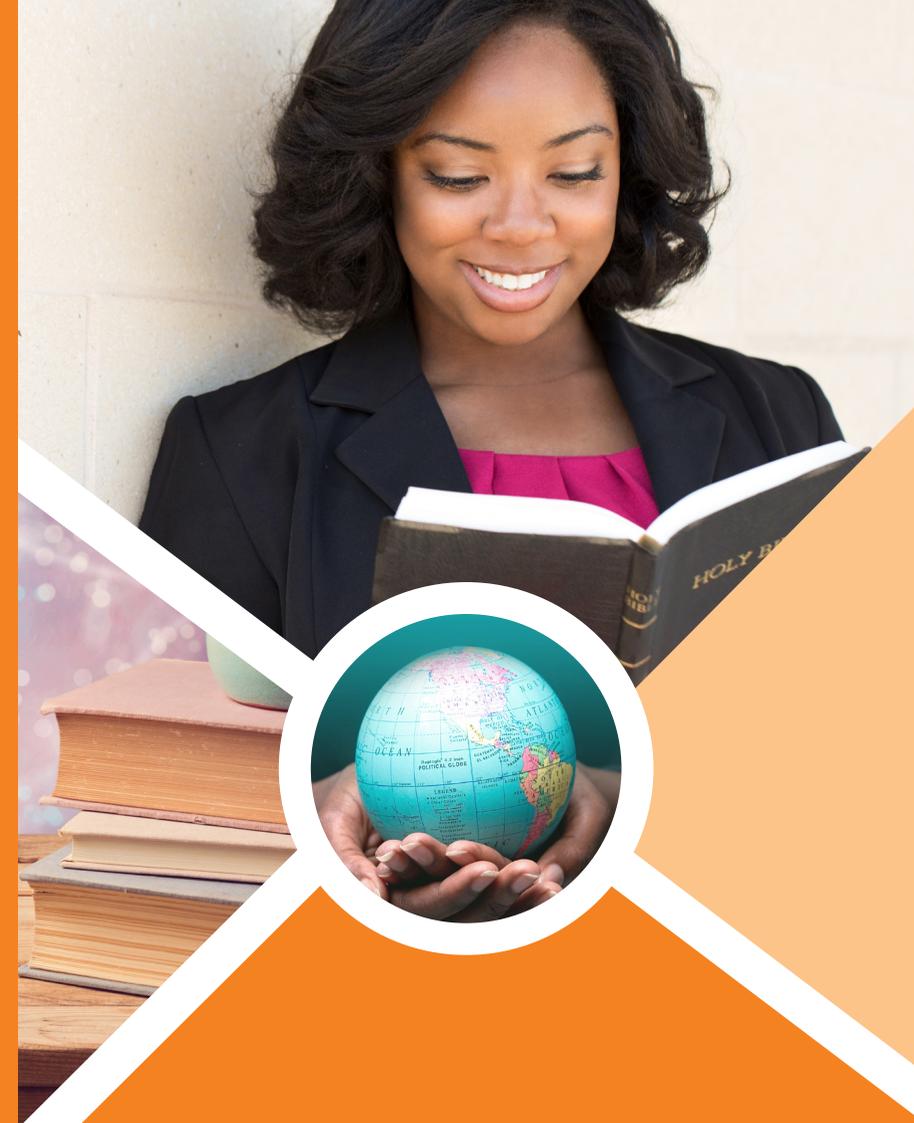
E. G. White, *Mind, Character and Personality*, Vol. 2, p. 431

PRAYER OF COMMITMENT

*Our Lord and Father, Thank You for Your Holy Word that demonstrates Your love and enriches our lives. May we seek ways to bless and serve our neighbors, using our talents to uplift those around us.
Amen*



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ILLITERACY

Every woman should have access to the basic life skills of reading and writing.



THE CHALLENGE

The ability to read and write is vital, bringing access to a world of knowledge and information crucial to escape the cycle of poverty. These are basic life skills that every woman should have access to. Yet many women around the world remain illiterate. They are denied the opportunity to learn, develop, and have autonomy because they are unable to read or write.

This handicap affects women much more than men. Nearly two-thirds of the world's 757 million illiterate adults are women. (UIS Fact Sheet, September 2015, No. 32)

GENDER DISPARITY

- Recent reports indicate that in some countries male youth have an up to 20% higher literacy rate than that of females.
- Young women between the ages of 15 and 24 are making the strongest gains in literacy, but still lag behind young men. (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization [UNESCO] 2013)

TRAPPED IN POVERTY

Illiteracy is strongly linked to low social status, poverty, and poor health. Illiteracy traps women in a cycle of poverty with limited options for economic improvement. This in turn limits educational and training opportunities for their children, sentencing them to chronic destitution and few opportunities for a better life.

CULTURAL RESTRICTIONS AND DISCRIMINATION

In some cultures and across the developing world, girls are kept at home or are withdrawn from school to work in the field and at home, while boys are sent to school.

STUNTED SPIRITUAL GROWTH

Illiterate women are unable to read the word of God for themselves. This is a barrier that cripples their spiritual growth and the spiritual nurture and training of their children.



GOD'S REQUEST

"If all would do their utmost to help those who need their help, their unselfish sympathy and love, what a blessed work might be done. To everyone God has entrusted talents. These talents we are to use to help one another to walk in the narrow path."

E. G. White, *Mind, Character, and Personality*, Vol. 2, p. 431

THE BENEFITS

When a woman gains literacy skills, her entire family advances. Benefits include:

- Ability to learn God's word and actively engage in personal Bible studies.
- Access to supervision, mentoring, and monitoring.
- Learning a new life skill.
- Involvement with government/NGO (non-governmental organization) collaboration.
- Motivation to achieve.
- Opportunities for employment.
- Opportunities for personal development.
- Participation in other development initiatives.
- Post-literacy skills and initiatives.

FILLING THE NEED

It would be rare to find any place on the globe where people would not be helped by a literacy program of some type, whether basic literacy skills, second language classes, a reading improvement course, or computer literacy. Such programs can mean improved health, self-confidence, and employment potential. They provide a tremendous outreach opportunity, a wonderful way to bless and serve women in our community.

HOW TO BEGIN

- Access training for teaching literacy where possible.
- Advocate for equal education.
- Compile literacy materials in the relevant language.
- Consult with local training organisations which may be able to offer advice and assistance.
- Check if there are other literacy programs in your area.
- Create a budget for operating this ministry, and investigate funding sources which may be able to cover the cost for running any courses you deliver.
- Decide on the level and category of courses you will provide. What is most needed? What are your resources best suited for?
- Decide on how you will advertise the seminars/courses.
- Decide how you will recruit and place the students.
- Decide on evaluation methods.
- Decide where the classes will be held, and ensure the environment is welcoming.
- Decide date, time and duration of each class, and include this in your advertising.
- Develop a plan for registration and recordkeeping.
- Promote literacy awareness in your church.
- Engage the support of church members who may be able to help with this ministry.
- Partner with local advocacy groups who may be able to provide expertise and support.
- Provide child care facilities during the class/seminar sessions.
- Recruit tutors.
- Review sessions, and evaluate the program during its course and at the end.
- Use your church as a literacy center, if feasible.
- Work in collaboration with the church pastor and other departments of the church.

POSSIBLE PROGRAMS

The literacy program may include:

- Basic literacy classes
- Computer literacy
- General Educational Development (GED) tutoring
- Life skills classes
- Second language training program