# Controversy surrounds new student-run bookstore

# Buyer fired for "insubordination and incompetence"

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Two months ago, the York Student Federation gave a relatively quiet birth to a brand new business. York's used bookstore, the Lyceum, managed by Gary Empey, was created in order to grant students the opportunity to buy academic literature at reasonable prices. Under the supervision of John Watson, hired by Empey to buy and shelve classical literature, the fledgling began to flower.

According to Empey, the store has managed to sell about 100 books a day, and should be paying for itself by the end of the summer.

But last Thursday, March 27, Watson was fired by Empey, for what he called "insubordination and fiscal incompetence."

The decision was motivated largely by two events according to Empey.

Recently, Watson, an honours student in history, was instructed not to purchase any more books because the Lyceum's funds were rapidly being depleted.

Following Empey's request, Watson went ahead and purchased some \$900 worth of second-hand books. According

to Empey, "My staff's cheques were bouncing because he authorized further expenditures."

In Watson's account of the story, Empey had not ordered him to stop purchasing books but merely suggested it. He quoted Empey as saying, "Would you mind curtailing buying books?"

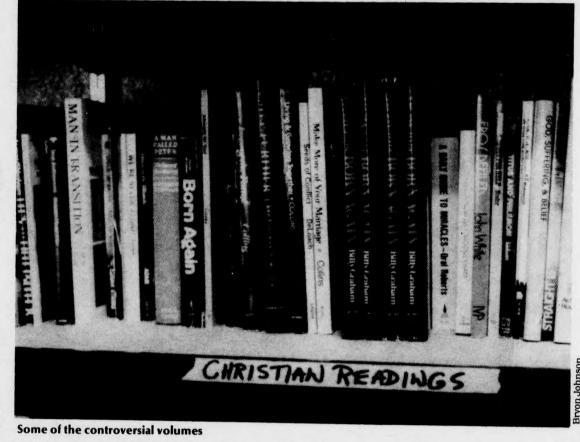
Watson went ahead anyway, explaining, "If you're buying used books, you've got to buy them when people are ready to sell them."

The second incident took place when Watson removed some Christian literature from the shelves of the Lyceum. The 25 books—purchased by Manager Empey—were inappropriate, according to Watson.

### "Not into collecting junk"

"A used bookstore has to cater to business interests," argued Watson. "Let's face it, this is an academic community and Oral Roberts and Billy Graham are just not up to par with Marx and Engels. A book store is judged by the content of the store, and I am not into collecting junk," declared Watson.

Empey, however, does not feel



that the decision was Watson's to make. "I decided that certain material shall be put on the shelf," he explained, "and John arbitrarily took it off."

### "Swearing and cursing"

Empey was offended when in the discussion surrounding the books, Watson resorted to what Empey called "an immature spree of swearing and cursing."

Watson admitted using the language attributed to him by Empey, but explained that he had been growing angry with him for a number of weeks and that the colourful language was a result. "When you get angry," he explained, "not all the words you use will be found in the Oxford dictionary."

In the course of the discussion, Empey fired Watson, and called York Security to have him removed from the bookstore. "I was afraid he might resort to violence," explained Empey.

Watson told Excalibur he was virtually powerless to complain because he had been hired by CYSF without a contract.

"Without a contract, I couldn't manage the store, I just couldn't be responsible for anything except the buying, shelving and pricing of the books."

Speaking with Excalibur on Wednesday, he indicated that Empey's charges about his incompetence and insubordination were new to him, and tht he was not told that they were the reason that he was fired. In his opinion, he was let go because of his reluctance to have the Christian literature in the shop.

## Religious recruiting

He is concerned that the CYSF funds have been invested into a religious recruiting area.

"I've seen people wait for 5 or 6 minutes while the employees

finished preaching to the Lord. I mean, this book store is for the students, not the Lord," said Watson.

When Excalibur approached a student who was leaving the book store last Wednesday about store practices, his reply was, "I have often wondered what exactly is going on in there. Once when I was in there, I heard someone ask a student if she was a Christian. Then, when someone bought a book on Buddhism, they were asked why?"

According to Empey, "some people working there are Christians, but they're certainly not recruiting." He said that "there have been no complaints, nor will there be any," since employees have been warned not to let their personal beliefs interfere with proper business conduct.



