

The Library in a Growing Theological Seminary

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The function of a seminary library, as it appears to me, is similar to that of a laboratory—the place where faculty and students find the necessary instruments, appliances and materials to implement, supplement, and further enrich the instructional program. If the trend of the latter is according to modern progressive educational methods, the library must become an integral part of the program. Assuming that the seminary library is to become such a service agency, its program and activities should be planned accordingly and its personnel qualified by training and experience to efficiently carry the program forward.

The contents of the book collection form, for the most part, the basic experimental materials. However, the information provided by the card catalog, the classification system, films, slides, recordings, music scores, pictures, etc., may also logically be considered in this category. The apparatus may well include various forms of equipment, such as projectors, reading machines, bibliographical aids, indexes, and many reference books. The members of the library staff are the technicians selecting, acquiring and preparing the materials and equipment, and guiding in their use. A faculty library committee actively assisting in policy forming, book selection and guidance in use of the library's resources are technicians as well.

What types of books are considered essential in building a seminary library collection? Certainly those which supplement the curriculum are of primary importance. Chief among these are the various versions of the

Bible, Biblical history, archaeology, and books about Bible characters and events; church history, biographies of the church fathers, and outstanding personalities in various religious faiths; books on religious activities and services; applied theology; philosophy and psychology of religion; ethics; homiletics; apologetics; Christian education; Christian literature, music, drama, and art; pastoral counseling and books on doctrine. These books must be supplemented by general books in the same fields of knowledge. Church history cannot be divorced from the history of a given country, period or people. The same is true of philosophy, sociology, psychology and many other major subjects in the curriculum. In addition, books of general and specific reference, such as dictionaries, encyclopedias, commentaries, and the like must be included. This is not all—periodicals of a general nature and in the specific fields must supplement the book collection. There also important government documents, lectures, sermons, minutes of Conferences, abstracts, research studies and a wealth of denominational and sectarian literature. All of these are not always necessary. However, the problem of selection is thus further complicated. The library can legitimately be expected to purchase a goodly percentage of current religious books, periodicals, and publications from at least a selected list of theological seminaries. These reading materials should be further supplemented by well selected and appropriate films, slides, recordings, music scores, and the necessary equipment to use these

aids effectively.

How much material should be provided for the individual student's recreational and informational reading and faculty research will in many instances be determined by demand, the budget or the physical resources of the library. The library staff cannot dismiss lightly its responsibility for encouraging and even stimulating such requests. With the limited demands for and the infrequent reprintings of many desirable theological books, one must continually resort to inter-library loans. My happy experience has been that theological seminary librarians are most generous in granting such privileges.

A definite part of the instructional program should be given to teaching students how to (a) use library materials effectively, (b) compile bibliographical information, especially if theses are required, and (c) how to organize their own materials for future effectual use. Alumni and others interested in securing materials of special doctrinal emphasis in various seminary libraries should receive some consideration.

After the vast problem of deciding what to buy and the number of copies needed has been solved, the books must be ordered, received, processed and made available for use. Some of these operations, especially those of a routine nature, can be satisfactorily performed under supervision by non-professional personnel. Technically trained and experienced librarians are absolutely necessary for cataloging, classification, reference and administrative duties.

The classification scheme to be adopted is another problem. Most libraries use the Dewey or Library of Congress system. The Union Theological Seminary notation has been especially designed to meet the needs of special libraries of this type and has through the years proven that it is sufficiently expansive, yet not too detailed or complicated, for practical use. Its

imperfections seem fewer than either of the above mentioned classifications when applied to theological seminary library materials. Miss Julia Pette, the originator of the scheme, and Dr. Julia Markley, librarian, Union Theological Seminary, are always willing to assist libraries adopting the classification and are making the necessary changes and adaptations to meet growing Theological Seminary library needs. An ever increasing number of theological schools are adopting this classification.

Not until the books have been selected, processed and logically arranged on the shelves and the cards filed in the catalog are the books ready for use.

It is the responsibility of the staff to carry on an orderly procedure of making library materials available, to supply information and to assist faculty and students in the use of library aids and materials. Students usually need special guidance in the use of unfamiliar resources. A person experienced and skilled in the use of reference, research and source materials is an invaluable addition to any library staff and is especially so in a theological seminary library. All staff members, however, must be familiar enough with the library collection to answer promptly and correctly the general reference questions.

The quarters where the library materials are housed are usually referred to as the library. This is one of the definitions given in dictionaries and has become so deeply rooted in our thinking that many people are unaware of the "service agency" aspect of an active library program. To be sure the books and other library materials must have housing facilities—those as conveniently located as possible to the class rooms. The seminary library building should combine attractive and appropriate design with utility and sound building construction.

A functional building should pro-

vide for the usual facilities, a reference or reading room, stack and perhaps a reserve room. A librarian's office easily accessible to faculty, students and staff, work and service rooms for the staff are equally necessary. Carrels for easy stack use; sound-proof conference rooms, one large and several smaller ones, specially constructed facilities for the use of audio-visual equipment; faculty study rooms and a browsing room or its equivalent are vital additions. Provisions for displays, and housing facilities for exhibit materials are a necessity. A minimum of twenty years' expansion should be planned and the building so designed that additions can be constructed without marring its balance and usefulness. Adequate natural and artificial lighting; comfortable, practical and appropriate equipment and furniture are essential. Even though the building should be fire and sound proof some provision for safeguarding rare books and the like must be made.

The foregoing library program is ambitious, difficult and requires careful planning and execution. Such library programs, however, would make the instructional phase of seminary

training more effective and more profitable and interesting to the student body. Further suggestions can be secured from the following books as well as from many periodical references.

Branscomb, Harvie: *TEACHING WITH BOOKS*, Chicago, Assn. of American Colleges & A. L. A., 1940

Johnson, B. L., *VITALIZING A COLLEGE LIBRARY*, Chicago, A. L. A., 1939

Randall, W. M. & Goodrich, F. L. D.: *PRINCIPLES OF COLLEGE LIBRARY ADMINISTRATION*, 2d ed, Chicago, A. L. A. & U. of Chicago Press, 1941

Lyle, Guy: *THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE COLLEGE LIBRARY*, NY. H. W. Wilson, 1944

COLLEGE & UNIVERSITY LIBRARY SERVICE; trends, standards, appraisal, problems, Chicago, A. L. A., 1938.

THE EDUCATION OF AMERICAN MINISTERS, v. 3, 4, NY, Inst. of social & religious research, c1934

Hanley, Edna R: *COLLEGE & UNIVERSITY BUILDINGS*, Chicago, A. L. A., 1939

Gerould, J. T.: *THE COLLEGE LIBRARY BUILDING, ITS PLANNING & EQUIPMENT*, NY, Scribner, 1932

Schunk, R. J.; *POINTERS FOR PUBLIC LIBRARY BUILDING PLANNERS*. Chicago, A. L. A.

THE UNIVERSITY LIBRARY By Dr. Louis R. Wilson, soon to be released from the press, and *UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES & LIBRARIANSHIP* by Wm. H. Carlson. #6 of the Planning for Libraries Series should be especially helpful.

THE CHALLENGE OF THE DIALECTICAL THEOLOGY

(Concluded from page 32)

¹⁴Niebuhr, *MORAL MAN AND IMMORAL SOCIETY*, pp. 28ff.

¹⁵Niebuhr, Reinhold, *AN INTERPRETATION OF CHRISTIAN ETHICS* (New York, 1935), p. 66.

¹⁶Heidbreder, Edna, *SEVEN PSYCHOLOGIES* (New York, 1933), p. 393.

¹⁷Niebuhr, *NATURE AND DESTINY OF MAN*, Vol. II, pp. 291ff.

¹⁸Brunner, H. Emil, *THE DIVINE IMPERATIVE* (New York, 1937), p. 298; pp. 305f.

¹⁹Brunner, op. cit., p. 37.

²⁰Niebuhr, *AN INTERPRETATION OF*

CHRISTIAN ETHICS, p. 211.

²¹Trueblood, D. Elton, *THE PREDICAMENT OF MODERN MAN* (New York, 1944), pp. 13ff.

²²Fitch, Robert E., "John Dewey and Christian Education" in *CHRISTIAN EDUCATION*, Vol. XXVIII, No. I, Sept. 1944, p. 27.

²³Brunner, *THE DIVINE-HUMAN ENCOUNTER* (Philadelphia, 1943), pp. 45ff.

²⁴Elliott, H. S., *CAN RELIGIOUS EDUCATION BE CHRISTIAN?* (New York, 1941), pp. 233f.