Theological Education

Theological Libraries for the Twenty-First Century:
Project 2000 Final Report
by
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SUPPLEMENT 1984
VOLUME XX
NUMBER 3
AUTHOR OF THIS SUPPLEMENT

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I wish to acknowledge with gratitude the help and support many individuals have given me during this study. Members of the Project Advisory Committee have provided encouragement and insight beyond the call of the Committee obligation. Rutherford Rogers, University Librarian at Yale, negotiated the leave of absence which made the study possible and has provided advice born of his many years of library administration. My colleagues John Bollier, Assistant Divinity Librarian, Viola Mullin, Technical Services Librarian, and May Pollen, Administrative Secretary, carried much of the day to day work of the Divinity Library during this study. Staff members of the ATS have provided office support and the officers have been most encouraging. Mabel Peterson has edited the final report.

Stephen Peterson
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PREFACE

At the beginning of the present decade, many educational leaders used the term crisis with increasing alarm to characterize the emerging state and conditions of academic libraries. It was part of an effort to call attention to what they discerned to be mounting threats to irreplaceable library resources in the battle of institutional priorities and budgets.

As Dr. Jackson Carroll's "ATS Transition Study" of 1981 documented, theological educators shared these concerns. There was a growing preoccupation with theological libraries that was rooted in the mounting organizational and financial problems libraries posed for theological schools, and equally important, in a growing anxiety over the responsibilities of our generation to ensure that our successors would have the library resources needed by them. This study was undertaken in 1981 out of a growing awareness that in the matter of library resources, theological schools faced immediate, long-range, and increasingly complex problems and issues.

There were, in addition, historical and educational motivations for this study. As representatives of ATLA and ATS pondered the future of theological libraries, it became evident that a distinctive era of library development was rapidly coming to an end and another was beginning. There was increasing need, therefore, to discern carefully and comprehensively the implications of the unfolding era into which theological schools were moving.

The past forty years of library development were shaped by at least two major principles. The first was an educational principle of the centrality of libraries to theological curriculums. It is a bit startling to remember that it was only in the 1940s that theological schools undertook to reform theological education by making "teaching through books" a major, if not the primary, mode of instruction. As a consensus developed that students would be better prepared for ministry by extensive exposure to the important literature of each subject matter involved in the theological curriculum rather than by dependence upon prescribed texts and lectures, libraries developed into learning centers for theological schools. It was at the 1948 ATS biennial meeting that L. R. Elliot
of Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary concluded a major address by quoting Professor Homrighausen of Princeton that "... a theological seminary should be judged by its library ... and the use made of it by students and faculty." That standard of institutional quality exercised enormous influence upon theological libraries throughout the past four decades, and fortunately, continues as an operative principle governing the organization and administration of theological schools.

The second principle that shaped the preceding period of library development was largely an economic one. Many schools were able to develop library resources by a simple process of purchasing most, if not all, that became available and relevant in any given year. As a result, the last forty years resulted in a remarkable expansion of library resources. For example, four decades ago, there were only twelve theological libraries in North America with 75,000 volumes or more. Today, there are 106 libraries of that size. A sampling of ten of these libraries indicates that during this period they grew anywhere from 2.9 to 5.8 times their original size.

If for no other reasons, it is clear that the new era of library development confronting theological schools requires different principles than have been operative during the last forty years. The centrality of the library for the educational mission of theological schools is no longer a key issue nor a basis for serious disagreement within the community of theological educators. Other and more complex educational purposes and issues are at stake with their attending implications for theological libraries. Furthermore, the economics of theological education, not to mention the principles of sound planning, no longer make it possible for schools to simply "buy everything" in order to insure the integrity of library resources.

As the conditions of theological schools have changed, so have the issues posed by theological resources and services for institutions. The roles of theological schools in the life and work of the church and in society at large, new and different constituencies served by theological schools, rapidly developing library technologies, each in their own ways confront theological schools with new and bewildering arrays of issues and needs.

This study and report have been carried out with a vivid sense of the timeliness and strategic significance of the questions and
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issues posed by theological libraries. What will be the role of theological libraries and what provisions must be made throughout the remainder of this century to insure the fulfillment of those roles are matters that will determine in no small measure the legacy that we will leave to our successors of the 21st century. Perhaps at no other point in the makeup of theological schools is the future so intimately tied to the present as in the development and nurturing of library resources.

We are indebted to Dr. Russell Dilday and the Advisory Committee for presiding over this study, and above all, to Dr. Stephen Peterson who served as chief investigator and author of this report. We were wiser than we knew when Dr. Peterson was enlisted to undertake this project. His understanding of the purposes of theological education and of the significance of library resources for that enterprise was in all instances instructive and incisive for the committee’s deliberations.

We are grateful to the Lilly Endowment for providing the support that made the project possible, and equally, for the sense of priorities by which Dr. Lynn and Mr. Hofheinz shape and influence theological education. Their concerns for theological libraries have been long-standing ones, and from the very beginning, the project benefited from their counsel.

Finally, a special word of appreciation is expressed to Father Simeon Daly whose collaboration was so essential to the initial planning and organization of the project.

This is an important document. It is worthy of widespread and prolonged consideration by the entire community of theological schools. It is essential that it receive such attention. Although none will claim that it is the definitive statement of what faces theological schools and their library resources or that it offers solutions to the tough questions the future holds, it is a serious and constructive attempt to engage our emerging future. It is also a call for the kind of disciplined reflection and reasoned response that the future requires of us. This document will have served its purpose if it reminds us of our responsibilities to future generations in all matters of library resources and leads us to thoughtful and deliberate responses.

Leon Pacala
Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION AND SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Project 2000 is a study of the present and anticipated needs of theological libraries in North America. It has been sponsored by the Association of Theological Schools in the United States and Canada and the American Theological Library Association and generously supported by a grant from the Lilly Endowment, Inc.

The Project Associate was appointed in July, 1981. The work of the Project has been directed by an Advisory Committee constituted from the ATS and the ATLA. Leon Pacala, Executive Director of ATS and Simeon Daly, then President of ATLA, invited the following persons to serve on this committee: Russell Dilday, chair, Jerry Campbell, Maria Grossmann, William Irwin, Lewis Mudge, Lloyd Svendsbye, and John Trotti. Father Daly and Dr. Pacala served ex officio. The initial meeting of the Advisory Committee was held in November, 1981.

Project 2000 was given a fourfold charge:

1. to analyze the roles of theological libraries for the remaining decades of this century;\(^1\)
2. to identify the nature of the resources needed to fulfill these roles,
3. to propose strategies and programs which will assist schools in shaping library resources, and
4. to propose guidelines for library development and evaluation.\(^2\)

\(^1\) The Project was limited to the study of libraries of ATS member institutions. It must be recognized that there are several religious and theological libraries in North America thus which are not included in this discussion. The most important of these are denominational libraries and historical societies. Fortunately, many of these institutions and their officers are members of the ATLA. These libraries certainly must be encouraged to participate in many of the programs discussed in the body of this report.

\(^2\) The Project was asked to propose revisions to the library segment of the ATS accrediting standards. This part of the Project agenda was completed by June, 1983 in order for the ATS Standards Committee to utilize the proposals in its revision work. These proposals have not been included in this final report.
Introduction and Summary of Findings

Purpose and Structure of this Report

The charge given Project 2000 establishes the purpose of this report, outlines its contents, and frames its structure. The fundamental purpose of this report is to assist future planning for theological libraries and it does so in several ways. By clarifying the roles that theological libraries fulfill, it strengthens the foundation on which new initiatives can be established. This report identifies special needs of theological libraries. It identifies trends which have been affecting theological libraries and analyzes the options which these trends suggest for the future. It identifies problems which will hinder theological library development.

This report also recommends ways in which these needs and problems may be addressed. These recommendations for action are not in the form of a blueprint or master plan for library development. Neither are they only general suggestions. The recommendations of the report address specific problem areas. They analyze particular complications and conditions which the problems present. Specific results that any detailed plan of action must achieve are identified, yet these recommendations provide the necessary latitude for the particular action plans which emerge from this study.

This report is written for a particular constituency, a constituency defined by a perspective. It is written for those who plan and provide for theological education, for those who determine the future of theological education. While it is written for those who think programmatically and also critically about theological education, it will not hold unusual interest for historians or theoreticians in their technical pursuits. This report intends to be practical. It intends to be used.

The sections of this report correspond in part to the points of the charge, but certain concerns and themes shape the whole. These themes are neither presuppositions nor hypotheses governing this inquiry. They are not results of the investigation, at least not in a technical sense. Rather, they are conceptional constructs embedded in the present and emerging realities of theological libraries. They are apparent only upon close examination of the libraries and this examination must embrace a very wide scope of factors and
institutions. Yet, these themes, these perspectives provide significant coordinates for the analyses and recommendations of this study.

One recurring theme is that theological libraries must be considered, planned, developed, and evaluated on the basis of the roles they fulfill in our schools, in the churches, and in society, and not, in the first instance, on the basis of the means and materials through which libraries fulfill these roles. The physical and technical aspects of libraries, as well as their financial aspects, are highly visible to educators while their real and indispensable educational and cultural roles often are less visible. Yet, it is the purpose and function of our libraries which must govern our thinking about, and our planning for, these invaluable resources.

Powerful centripetal forces have been at work in academic librarianship generally for several years. These pressures have yielded a desirable uniformity in bibliographic description and systems, but also they have encouraged homogenizing tendencies which may in the long run weaken our libraries. This report, therefore, affirms and aims to reinforce the considerable diversity within the theological schools of North America and within their libraries. This diversity, which reflects different ecclesiastical, theological and national traditions, as well as different teaching and learning styles, different community structures, and different perceptions of the goal of theological education, contains the wellspring of a significant quality in library resources. Yet this diversity must be understood more clearly and nurtured more intentionally in order for its benefits for libraries to be garnered. One of the important objectives of Project 2000 is to marshal the strengths of this diversity for the enhancement of libraries.

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3 See below, Chapter 4 for a full discussion.
4 This diversity is amply documented in Ministry in America, edited by David Schuller, Merton Strommen and Milo Brekke, (New York: Harper & Row, 1980).
5 This affirmation of diversity in theological education does not disregard important nuances of ecumenism. Nevertheless, it will be argued below that part of the essential role of theological libraries is to keep contemporary theological education mindful of its historical, doctrinal, and ecclesiastical moorings. In this the work done by George Lindbeck with Karl Deutsch and Nathan Glazer,
Introduction and Summary of Findings

A primary challenge of library development will be to foster a vital diversity within systems and structures of cooperation. Cooperation in most facets of theological education has been endorsed strongly by the ATS in its accrediting standards since 1972. In the library community increased reliance on computer technologies and especially the large bibliographic utilities has established a climate, indeed, the fact of cooperation far beyond that which was reasonably anticipated a decade ago. The electronic environment into which we have moved forces libraries in the direction of an interdependence which requires a posture of concentrated cooperation. The urgent task now is to harness the means of effective library cooperation to achieve goals which sustain excellence in theological library service.

Another theme in this report is that an enlarged partnership between the ATS and theological librarians must be forged in order for the necessary and legitimate needs of theological libraries to be met. Ways must be found to give greater coordination to library development without compromising the local initiatives which have brought strength and distinction to many theological schools. Librarians must, and must be prepared to, enter the central educational and planning processes of our schools more vigorously. In all, there must be an intentionality and a sophistication in these measures else our schools may foreclose prematurely highly significant educational service in the longer future.

This report, as indeed the entire Project 2000 investigation, reflects the convergence of these several influences. But, one perception and one conclusion stands above all others in the work of Project 2000. Apart from all their individual strengths and weaknesses and beyond all the local obligations borne by these libraries, the theological libraries of North America constitute a collective resource which is the enduring foundation for vigorous theological inquiry and for the skillful education of men and women for ministry. These libraries need much local development and must always serve local needs, yet the collective reality which stands behind and around the theological libraries must not be neglected in the planning and development of these resources.

*University Divinity Schools: A Report on Ecclesiastically Independent Theological Education* (The Rockefeller Foundation, 1976) should be recalled.
Summary of Findings and Recommendations

Chapter 3 presents an analysis of the local and collective roles of theological libraries. These libraries have and will continue to serve four essential roles. Moreover, it is unlikely that theological libraries will serve substantially new or different roles in the foreseeable future.

1. Seminary libraries represent the historical breadth of theological thought and religious practice for the benefit of contemporary scholarship and education for ministry.
2. Libraries preserve the intellectual diversity, both past and present, of theology.
3. Libraries support the instructional curriculum.
4. Libraries nurture research and fresh understanding of religious thought and practice.

Collectively, the theological libraries are the stewards for much if not most of the religious documentation which will be acquired and preserved for the use of future generations of scholars and theological educators.

Chapters 4, 5, 6, and 7 each conclude with a summary of the recommendations dealing with their respective topics. Many of these recommendations can be implemented in local settings and can be incorporated in short-range planning for library service. Others can guide regional library development through consortia and similar cooperative programs. Some of the recommendations need new structures for their implementation.

Two recommendations have a significance which intersects virtually all theological institutions and should be given priority by the ATS, the ATLA, and local institutions.

1. Continuing structures for planning and promoting library service must be established. These structures must monitor the library resource needs of theological education. Because these structures must include academic and administrative officers from many sectors of theological education, it is recommended that these structures reside chiefly within the programs of ATS. Without these structures many of the other needs of the libraries and
Introduction and Summary of Findings

other recommendations of this report cannot be implemented satisfactorily.

2. Preservation of the irreplaceable resources already gathered in the theological libraries of North American seminaries must be assured. The work of future generations of theological students and scholars will be disabled seriously if this work is not now begun.

Theological libraries will need to undertake substantial collection development programs in two areas. The diversity and vigor of North American religion must be thoroughly and fully documented. The chief way to accomplish this is to strengthen existing special library collections and to promote the establishment of new special collections. Furthermore the North American theological library collections must be broadened substantially to reflect the international scope of religious life and theological work. An international collection and collection development profile is essential to facilitate these goals. The conversion of bibliographic records to a computer readable format also will buttress these efforts. Special programs will be needed to assist the libraries in Third World documentation.

Many theological libraries are operating in the context of a consortium or another explicit cooperative program. It is now important to evaluate not only the effectiveness of these arrangements, but also to determine their proper future role in light of emerging national bibliographic systems as well as changing local needs.

In order to meet the service and collection obligations of the next two decades, theological libraries will face three major personnel needs.

1. Many schools will need to appoint additional librarians. These appointments must be in relation to specific educational objectives of the schools.

2. The pattern for initial preparation of theological librarians should be normalized to include, minimally, post-baccalaureate degrees in divinity and librarianship. Soon the research doctorate will be the expected terminal
degree for senior library administrators and for other library officers with specialized responsibilities as well.

3. Continuing education for theological librarians, especially in management, must be strengthened and integrated with that provided for other academic officers.

Approximately half of the theological libraries will face severe stack space shortages in the next two decades. In many cases local facilities will be enlarged to meet this need. There are, however, alternatives in the cooperative sector which can alleviate this building pressure. Cooperative book storage and microfilming may be utilized to alleviate some of the pressures on library buildings.
Chapter 2

CONTEXT AND METHOD OF PROJECT 2000

The Context of Project 2000

While there is no present sense that this Project comes at a watershed in theological librarianship or theological education, certain observations confirm the timeliness of this investigation. We are mindful that ours is a time of unusually rapid technological development and much of this development impacts on information, documentation, and communication—matters at the center of librarianship. Indeed the survey of theological libraries conducted as part of this Project reveals extensive and rapid development of computer resources in these libraries. The substantial attention focused on electronic technologies and particularly on the real and potential applications of these technologies to information services and communications also focuses considerable attention on libraries. At the same time scholars and librarians are becoming alarmed at the extent and rate of deterioration affecting printed materials. This is a major concern of researchers and ours is the first generation that has faced seriously the enormity of this problem. These two major concerns intersect theological libraries after more than a decade of intense cooperative library development. Yet there is now much uncertainty about the strength, purpose, and future viability of much library cooperation. Taken together, these vectors point to the need for a project focused on the nature and needs of theological libraries. That is, the convergence of many important and interrelated issues indicate that we are certainly at the threshold of a fresh, vigorous, and crucial era of library development.

6 P. 79 ff. summarize the use of computers in theological libraries.

7 It is more difficult to assess the state of theological education generally. Two recent developments, however, may be important harbingers. The same decade which has witnessed the emergence of much library cooperation also has witnessed enormous growth in the enrollment of D.Min. candidates in ATS schools. (In 1971 these candidates represented 2.4% of students enrolled in ATS school, and in 1981 they constituted 12.6%, or a net growth of 5,224 students. Data is taken from the 1982-1983 ATS Factbook.) Now we are seeing the rapid emergence of extension education. If these and related phenomena point to a decided shift towards professional as opposed to academic focus in our schools, then theological
The focus of Project 2000 is on the remaining decades of this century, but surely these years themselves will be but preparation for a future that is increasingly difficult to imagine or forecast. Thus this Project does not speculate on a future vision of libraries. We already have entered the information revolution. Its contours are becoming familiar; scholars and librarians already use its tools with facility. That the electronic revolution will profoundly affect scholarly communication as well as libraries is unquestioned. What is appropriate now is to consider those aspects of theological libraries and theological librarianship which are most needful for theological education. This is precisely the time to clarify and affirm the central concerns of theological libraries. Technology will not replace these concerns no matter how much it changes the ways and means by which we deal with them. Hence librarians and academic administrators must not lose sight of these central concerns if they are to use the new electronic technologies to the highest service of theological education.

Method and Project Plan

Project 2000 represents the work of the Project Associate who was assisted substantially by numerous other individuals and groups. The Project Advisory Committee set the Project agenda, recommended special areas of investigation, provided general counsel to the Project Associate, and has approved this report.

The Project received significant shaping from consultations with librarians and academic officers. These consultations were held on a regional basis and most were organized within the framework of library consortia. These regional consultations con-

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8 For a general discussion of this phenomenon see Rutherford Rogers, "The Information Revolution," [unpublished paper prepared for the American Association of Universities], 25.

9 Consultations were held in Philadelphia with the Southeast Pennsylvania Theological Library Association, in Nashotah (Wisconsin) with the Chicago Area Theological Library Association, in Kansas City, in Louisville with the Theologi-
Context and Method of Project 2000

distributed specific substance to the Project. They provided the Project Associate an opportunity to learn of grassroot concerns facing seminaries and their libraries. They provided an early sounding board and corrective for proposals and directions emerging in the Project. More importantly, they engendered a base of collegial support upon which the Project Associate has been able to call throughout the study.

Specialized consultations also have been held. Officers of the Council for Library Resources gave constructive assistance to the project in its early stages. The ATLA Board of Microtext provided much valuable assistance on questions dealing with preservation. Several officers of OCLC,Inc. consulted with the Project Associate on the research and development program of this bibliographic utility. The ATLA Board of Directors, under the leadership of two presidents, Robert Dvorak and Martha Aycock, has followed the progress of the Project with encouragement and in its two mid-winter meetings has provided helpful criticism and advice.

Librarians from nine university related divinity schools with large research library collections convened to address specific problems relating to these institutions. While the agenda for this consultation was aimed at the special needs of university related theological research libraries, the discussions included many of the topics which form the center of Project 2000. These issues affect university related research libraries with greater intensity and complexity than they do other libraries, although essentially the

cal Education Association of Mid-America, in Toronto with Librarians of the Toronto School of Theology, and in New York with the New York Area Theological Library Association. Approximately 120 persons participated in these meetings.

The needs of these institutions has been a specific concern of the Lilly Endowment which asked that this consultation be included within the agenda of Project 2000. Representatives attended this meeting from the University of Chicago, Duke University, Emory University, the Graduate Theological Union, Harvard University, Princeton Theological Seminary, the Toronto School of Theology, and Union Theological Seminary (NY). Yale University was represented through the Project Associate. David Stamm of the Research Division, the New York Public Library assisted the consultation as an observer/commentator. Leon Pacala also joined the discussion.
differences are of magnitude and not substance. The particular problems which accrue to these libraries precisely because of their research orientation and/or their relationship with universities are noted throughout this report.

Much more specific data was supplied to the Project by means of a questionnaire sent to all full and associate members of the ATS. The questionnaire was designed to obtain information about our theological libraries that is not available elsewhere and to gather information which was thought helpful in identifying trends as well as long term needs. One hundred forty-one institutions responded to the survey and this data provides the foundation for much of this report. The full description of the questionnaire and a tabulation of its results are found in Appendix A.

Historical Setting of Project 2000

Although not intentionally, Project 2000 is part of a minor current of concern for libraries reflected in other studies and analyses of theological education. This current needs clarification in order for Project 2000 to be seen both for what it is and what it is not.

*The Advancement of Theological Education*, while finally focusing on human resources, i.e., "providing and maintaining the most able corps of teaching theologians and theological teachers possible," was not unconcerned with libraries. Three needs emerged with unusual poignancy in this study. The first was a concern for quality in collections. The report postured theological enquiry firmly in the context of secular learning and called for library resources as well as faculty resources to sustain this posture. These book collections additionally were to be focused on theological research and not only the classroom teaching of the theological faculty. In keeping with its general tenor the study also called for quality in librarians. This call centered rightly on the librarian as teacher.

12 Ibid., 65, 130-132.
13 Ibid., 66, 129.
terms which now sound too facile, the need for inter-library cooperation, particularly cooperation which strengthened the reliance of theological libraries on general university research libraries.\textsuperscript{14}

The Library Development Program\textsuperscript{15} followed the Niebuhr study and addressed these concerns directly. The LDP primarily was concerned with library collections, although its consultation component served to extend faculty and administration understanding of theological libraries. In that its procedures insisted on unusual rigor in bibliographic practice, the LDP made a substantial contribution to professional development. Certainly the program was a formative influence in Canada and the United States for strengthening library collections and services.

The Resources Planning Commission of the ATS,\textsuperscript{16} which worked from 1966 to 1968, paid little attention to libraries. This was due, no doubt, to the fact that the Library Development Program still was being evaluated. Yet the reports of the Resources Planning Commission were preoccupied with the issues and problems of cooperation in theological education.\textsuperscript{17} These issues carried considerable portent for the libraries. Therefore a new study of theological libraries soon was inaugurated.

Between 1971 and 1973 the ATS and the ATLA formed a Library Task Force to address several library issues of mutual concern.\textsuperscript{18} This Task Force did its work in a context shaped primarily by three factors; a concern for theological education with a "pronounced professional stance," new accrediting standards with a certain flexibility in matching educational resources and pro-

\textsuperscript{14} Ibid., 132-133.
\textsuperscript{15} Funded by the Sealantic Fund, 1961-1966.
\textsuperscript{16} Then the American Association of Theological Schools (AATS).
\textsuperscript{17} The following documents constitute these reports: "Theological Education in the 1970's: Redeployment of Resources," \textit{Theological Education} 4:750-845 (1968); "Cooperative Structures for Theological Education," \textit{Theological Education} 4 Supplement 1:1-80; "The Economics and Organization of Theological Education," \textit{Theological Education} 4 Supplement 2:1-84; and "Theological Curriculum for the 1970's," \textit{Theological Education} 4:668-745.
\textsuperscript{18} This Task Force was chaired by John Dillenberger. Its final report is found in the \textit{Summary of Proceedings of the Annual Conference of the ATLA}, 27:115-121 (1973).
grams, and shrinking budgets for theological education. The Task Force called for ATS to establish two fulltime staff positions to pursue many of the recommendations of the Final Report. While these positions were never established, many of the other recommendations have been implemented—some by fortuitous circumstance and others by design.

In 1980 Jackson Carroll undertook an examination of the ATS by means of a survey of officers, trustees, and faculty of ATS members. The design and analysis of this study are sufficiently well known not to need further elaboration here.\textsuperscript{19} It is useful, however, to review the library data provided by this project. Of particular interest is the area of future ATS services. Respondents were asked to evaluate an extensive list of possible future program possibilities and to rank these on a scale of importance.\textsuperscript{20} "Developing criteria of adequate theological library" was the sixth most important anticipated need. Three other library concerns were ranked somewhat lower, but still above the fiftieth percentile. They are "promoting use of new library and educational technologies" (factor 12), "methods to facilitate more effective library use" (factor 13), and "continuing education for library staff" (factor 14). Overall these library concerns constitute a theme which ranked fifth among the nine themes which Carroll identifies.\textsuperscript{21}

Thus these several studies form an instructive and advantageous context for Project 2000. The Niebuhr study knew what constituted an adequate theological library and what the role of that library was. The Library Development Program helped some eighty schools strengthen their libraries very much according to the model assumed by the mid-century report. The 1971-1973 Library Task Force was attuned to several critical issues which questioned much of the inherited understanding of theological libraries. Carroll's inquiry has brought most of these issues to the anxious bench. Project 2000 is then most timely born.

\textsuperscript{19} For the full report see, "Project Transition: An Assessment of ATS Programs and Services," \textit{Theological Education}, 18:45-165 (1981).
\textsuperscript{20} Ibid., 154-158.
\textsuperscript{21} Ibid., 114.