Protestant Theological Seminaries and Their Libraries

ROBERT F. BEACH

This article is concerned primarily with the Protestant graduate theological school, i.e., the institution requiring the A.B. degree, or its equivalent, as a requisite for admission to degree candidacy. Schools of this type are found both within and outside the membership of the American Association of Theological Schools, the accrediting agency for the field. In 1959, eighty-three such schools in the United States and Canada were “accredited members” of the A.A.T.S. An additional forty-four were “associate members,” meeting the requirement of “operating predominantly on a post-college level.” Beyond these two groups are an estimated fifty to sixty theological schools which are not affiliated with the A.A.T.S. but which offer, or are reputed to offer, academic work all or in part at the graduate level.¹ The total group of graduate theological schools of the United States and Canada, approximately 180 in all, 151 in the United States and 29 in Canada, will be considered here.

This article does not treat Catholic and Jewish theological seminaries, with many of which our Protestant schools maintain cooperative relationships, including reciprocal use of libraries. Ample attention is given to these two groups of institutions, respectively, in succeeding articles.

Not included, either, are the approximately two hundred Bible institutes and Bible colleges in the United States and Canada. Emphasizing an undergraduate specialization in Bible and theology, these schools have their own Accrediting Association of Bible Institutes and Bible Colleges. In 1959 it had a membership of thirty-one “accredited schools” and eleven “associate schools.” While the present survey is necessarily limited to the graduate theological schools, it is appropriate to note that this large group of undergraduate institutions,

Mr. Beach is librarian, Union Theological Seminary, New York.

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whose libraries are for the most part small, are in many instances moving in the direction of adequacy for their special purposes. It is not surprising that the earliest American colonists looked "homeward" for their ministers. Not only were trained ministers brought across the water, but young men were sent back to the fatherland to prepare for their sacred calling. With the founding of Harvard College in 1636, however, a beginning was made in higher education on the American continent, for the specific purpose, among others, of assuring an adequate, trained ministry. The non-ministerial students attending Harvard College, along with candidates for the ministry, were required to take the same course of study which included the "divinity subjects."

A backward look at the general pattern of ministerial training in the Colonies, particularly in New England, leads the observer through a little more than a century of adherence to English ideas of clerical education. The Puritan in America patterned Harvard College and Yale College (1701) after the plan of Cambridge University. From them he chiefly supplied his pulpit. During this early period, in addition to college training, the prospective clergyman was apt to pursue graduate study at his Alma Mater; or, more likely, to continue his studies independently at home.

Another favored pattern was that of informal apprenticeship under an experienced pastor, following the tradition of England. By 1750, a more formalized development of the pastor-apprentice relationship appeared. Certain active pastors turned their homes into "schools of the prophets," in which small groups of prospective clergymen received practical instruction in addition to guidance in scholarly religious studies. One should keep in mind that the period during which these "schools of the prophets" were coming into prominence was not only a time of revivalistic zeal, but one during which the colleges were already beginning the shift from theological to secular disciplines. These factors, in association with the confusion and poverty stemming from the French and Indian War and the American Revolution, undoubtedly encouraged this informal type of education. Hence one may assess the "schools" as a natural effort to meet the need for an enlarged, trained clergy. One may also look upon them as direct forebears of the larger, established theological seminaries which the turn of the century was to bring as the essential next step.

Following the establishment of the Dutch Reformed theological school at Flatbush, Long Island, in 1774, and a Presbyterian seminary
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in western Pennsylvania in 1794, denominational theological schools were founded rapidly: a Moravian seminary at Nazareth, Pennsylvania, in 1807; Andover (Congregational) in 1808; the Reformed Presbyterian's first school in Pittsburgh in 1810; Princeton and Union at Richmond (Presbyterian) both in 1812; Bangor (Congregational) in 1814; the Lutheran seminary at Hartwick, New York, in 1816; General Theological Seminary in New York (Protestant Episcopal), in 1817; Colgate at Hamilton, New York (Baptist), in 1819; and others in a continuing sequence. Harvard was established as a distinct divinity department in 1819, as was Yale in 1822.

By mid-century, theological schools, both denominational and non-denominational were firmly planted across the country. Eleven institutions date their founding to the years 1820-31; thirty-nine were established between 1839 and 1869. In 1866 the Congregationalists organized the first divinity school on the Pacific coast. Between 1869 and 1924, thirty-nine new schools were founded. By 1924, the date of the first comprehensive study of ministerial education, there were 161 schools which were designated as theological schools by their supporting constituencies (131 in the United States and 30 in Canada). In 1934, 224 Protestant “seminaries” were noted in the United States and Canada, 198 and 26 respectively. A special factor of interest is that of the 198 U.S. institutions, 41 were exclusively for Negro students.

Data supplied by the most recent, comprehensive survey of Protestant theological education (1954-55) reveal a total of 180 existing schools which operate either as graduate seminaries, operate predominantly on the post-college level, or are reputed to offer academic work, all or in part, at the graduate level. According to the “Survey of Theological Education in the United States and Canada,” just mentioned, “there were four times as many genuinely graduate schools of theology in the United States and Canada in 1955 as there were in 1923 and... such schools enroll almost eight times as many students as they did thirty-two years previously.”

Against this brief historical background, let us now make several further general observations which should help to prepare us for a better understanding of the library picture. Geographical spread of the seminaries has been indicated in terms of the historical movement westward during the nineteenth century. The 1959 membership list of the A.A.T.S. locates institutions in twenty-nine states, with relatively large numbers of schools concentrated in California (9), Illinois (12),
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Massachusetts (7), New York (6), Ohio (6), Pennsylvania (11), and Texas (5). One notes the absence of any A.A.T.S. member school in the rapidly-growing northwest. Ten of the fourteen Canadian seminaries which are members of the A.A.T.S. are located well to the east.

The majority of the seminaries are denominationally affiliated. Of the eighty-three accredited members of the A.A.T.S. in 1959, seventy are included within eighteen denominational traditions. Largest in number of the schools are those of the Baptists (10), Lutherans (10), Protestant Episcopal (12), Methodists (10), and Presbyterians (8). Likewise, the great majority of the associate member schools of the A.A.T.S. are denominationally connected. Significant exceptions to the denominationally-related seminaries are those institutions which designate themselves as nondenominational (6) and interdenominational (7).

A further way of examining the graduate seminary picture as a whole is in terms of college-university affiliation. Of 170 seminaries, the 1954-55 survey noted that fifty-six were functioning either as graduate departments of colleges or as schools under the same board of control as the correlated colleges. In addition, fourteen others were under the administrative control of universities. With varying degrees of closeness, many nominally independent seminaries are closely related to colleges directed by the same denominations. The 1954-55 survey helpfully classifies the seminaries into six groups: (1) those which are graduate departments of a college (or, on the same campus, operate under the same board of directors); (2) administratively independent schools which are part of a denominational system; (3) independent denominational schools; (4) schools operating within denominationally controlled universities; (5) university-affiliated denominational and interdenominational schools; (6) divinity schools controlled by independent nondenominational universities.

The various schemes of seminary organization suggest a number of concerns, some of which bear directly upon the role of the library. There is the obvious fact that seminaries exist for a variety of purposes. While in the last analysis all would doubtless profess to prepare men and women for a Christian professional vocation, some emphasize preparation for teaching; some, religious education; some, sacred music; some, missions; etc. Some schools combine several distinctive emphases. A large number concentrate on pastoral preparation. Translated into terms of degrees offered, modern seminaries constitute a potpourri. Based upon 1958 figures, supplied by eighty-two accredited
member schools of the A.A.T.S., the following degree picture emerges. After telescoping a number of probably equivalent degrees whose terminology differs, there remain at least a dozen degrees of apparently discrete intent and content. All of the eighty-two schools offer the B.D. program or its equivalent; with sixteen, or about one-fifth, concentrating almost exclusively upon this degree. Fifty of the seminaries offer some type of master’s degree. At the doctoral level, eight schools participate in a Ph.D. program, while twenty institutions offer the Th.D. or S.T.D. Only three schools offer degrees in sacred music. In connection with this statistical summary of degree programs offered, it is important to note the strong and continuing trend towards theological study at the graduate level.9

While the library implications related to the range of degree programs offered will be treated more fully later in this article, it is evident that such academic programs call for: (a) imaginative “gearing in” of the library with the educational purposes of the seminary; (b) financial support proportionate to the demands; and (c) library personnel of appropriate caliber and number to match the opportunities offered.

Thus far, in our overview of the seminaries, we have commented briefly upon their historical background, denominational affiliation, geographical location, and academic structure. Perhaps it will now be helpful to draw together some facts and figures to indicate the “outward size of the enterprise.” Specifically, when we speak of the total group of graduate theological seminaries, what are we talking about in terms of enrollment, faculties, budgets, plants, etc.?10

First, as to enrollment, statistics gathered for the 1954–55 survey indicate that not less than twenty-five thousand students were enrolled at that time. Since that date a number of new seminaries have been established. Using the 1954–55 survey figures: one hundred and forty-two schools had an average enrollment of 165 students per school. Using the same statistical source, we discover that the one hundred and forty-two schools reported 1,384 full-time and 536 part-time faculty members. Thus the average school had between nine and ten full-time and between three and four part-time faculty members.10

As to budget and finance, there are four main sources of seminary income: endowment, student fees, private gifts, and denominational support. In 1954–55, it is estimated that approximately $26,000,000 was spent by the Protestant seminaries of the United States and Canada in carrying on their work. Some indication of the size and value of the
physical plants is suggested by the information that, between 1946 and 1954, eighty-eight schools spent approximately $50,000,000 on new construction or on major renovations.

In concluding this general summary of the seminary situation, it remains only to suggest something of the intangibles of tradition, initiative, and sense of purpose which characterize these institutions, and the movement of which they are a part. Such factors have much to do with the dynamics of the total seminary program, including the role of the library. When one reflects upon the pluralistic pattern of modern American Protestantism, one may conclude that this pattern—whatever weaknesses it may contribute in certain areas of religious relevance to our time—has been responsible for something of the range, vigor, and strength of theological education. Rightly conceived and used, differences of theological inheritance and emphasis weigh on the positive side of the scales. In an institutional, organizational sense the appropriate national departments of the denominational body involved can be an effective means of “telling the educational story” to the proper constituency, and of securing the financial support which is imperative. In this connection, however, it is interesting to note the comment of the 1954-55 survey that thus far it appears that the national denominational departments charged with responsibility for the seminaries are less effective in securing support than are those which state the case for other areas of the churches’ work, such as missions.

One cannot study the development of the Protestant theological seminaries of America without observing the signal role of the A.A.T.S. The Association goes back to the “Conference of Theological Seminaries and Colleges in the United States and Canada” in 1918 at Harvard University. By 1936, the present organizational name was adopted. From its founding, the A.A.T.S. has served as the key agency in the encouragement and coordination of graduate Protestant seminary education. Working through standing committees, especially appointed commissions, an executive director, a national headquarters office and supporting staff, etc., it has invited constructive explorations of new approaches, secured and administered large foundation grants, inaugurated comprehensive surveys of theological education (i.e. 1930–32, 1954–55), served as the official accrediting agency in the field of the graduate theological seminary, and performed other significant tasks. Its biennial meetings are held in association with sessions of other national groups which also reflect the life and work of the
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seminaries (i.e., Association of Seminary Professors in the Practical Fields, etc.). The record makes it abundantly clear that the A.A.T.S. has constantly encouraged library improvement in relation to seminary programs. Not only was it instrumental in supporting the establishment of the American Theological Library Association in 1947, but it has worked closely with the A.T.L.A. ever since in such matters as the development of minimum library standards. From 1948 to 1958, the annual conferences of the A.T.L.A. were held in planned conjunction with the biennial sessions of the A.A.T.S. The partnership here indicated is an asset of large influence in the continuing development of the seminary libraries.

Mention has already been made of the strong trend towards graduate-level theological study in the seminaries, and we have noted the wide range of degrees offered. Much of the 1954-55 survey deals with changes in seminary curricula. In all of these factors there are important library implications. A final observation which has a bearing upon the library in the seminary is the development of special programs as formal or informal extensions of the curriculum. To mention two which are best known to the writer, there are the special programs of psychiatry and religion, and religious drama at Union Theological Seminary in New York. These and similar specialized programs at other seminaries add to the requirements for adequate library correlation and support.

Before attempting an appraisal of the seminary libraries today, it may be helpful to remind ourselves briefly of the period through which they have come. Above, we have observed three eras in the development of Protestant theological education in America: college, tutorial, and seminary. There are three corresponding stages of library development. Starting with the libraries of Harvard and Yale, the first printed catalog of the former’s library (1723) listed a meager 3,517 volumes. However, nearly 60 per cent of the books were in the theological field. It is significant that the founding of Yale in 1701 grew out of a meeting of ministers in Branford, to which each man brought a cherished book from his own collection, thus forming the nucleus for the college library.

The “library” situation during the period of tutorial or parsonage preparation required relatively few books, and the supply of these depended upon the choice and pocketbook of the individual minister involved. As one recorder puts it: “Some, at least, of those libraries were meager. Thus the Reverend Asa Burton (1752–1836), Congre-
gational minister in Thetford, Vermont, trained about sixty men. His entire library is said to have stood on one long shelf."

With the founding of the first seminaries, formal collections were instituted to meet instructional needs. These early libraries were weak, judged by later standards, and suitable scholarly titles were not easily procured. However, toward the middle of the nineteenth century, several remarkable collections were purchased en bloc abroad, thus strengthening local resources. During the nineteenth century the steady importation of German titles added much to the stature of individual seminary libraries.

R. L. Kelly's over-all survey of 161 theological schools in the United States and Canada, published in 1924, has little to say about the role of the library. Both from the absence of comment, and from the following type of report, one may conclude that, with few exceptions, much was to be desired: "The cases in which the lecture method is used with stimulating effect and with evidence of extensive outside work by students are outnumbered by those exemplifying its abuses on the part of the teacher and the taught. . . . the libraries in seminaries visited were sometimes found locked and unheated, with little to indicate workshop conditions." 12

Despite this negative appraisal, Kelly's tabulation of data on one hundred individual seminaries shows that by this date some of the library collections had reached substantial proportions. The largest library noted contained 150,093 volumes, 73,730 pamphlets, and 291 manuscripts.

Most factual and comprehensive of theological library surveys, prior to the present era, is the study made by R. P. Morris in 1930. 13 Morris, then assistant librarian of Yale Divinity School, conducted a research survey of the status and function of seventy-eight Protestant seminary libraries in the United States and Canada. Morris was concerned not only with such matters as size of collections, budget support, adequacy of space, but with the larger intangibles which are primary, such as the method of library administration, adequacy of staffing, and recognition of the role of the library in the educational program.

As a roughly comparable norm, Morris had in mind college and university libraries as the group with which some parallel observations were pertinent. He noted that during a period when American college and university libraries were undergoing rapid growth and development, the theological seminary libraries were "decidedly inferior" in
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equipment and management. He expressed the view that the chief reason for this lay in "the prevailing teaching methods in theological schools, the character and training of the faculty, and the subject matter taught." Further, he states: "The prevailing atmosphere of theological libraries is that of an institution whose spirit, development, subjects emphasized, management and activity have lost touch with the educational stress and development so prominent in college and university libraries... it is probably correct to assume," he adds, "that the majority of theological students graduating from American seminaries never have the opportunity to acquaint themselves with good libraries, and graduate with but a limited knowledge of any subject." 14

In addition to Morris' assessment of important intangibles, some of his statistical data are relevant here. As to size of collections, the range is from a minimum collection of three hundred volumes to a library of 177,542 volumes. The average library contained 31,956 volumes. Twenty-eight seminaries had collections falling below 10,000 volumes. Financial support is an important index. Morris gives $1,438.48 as the average annual book and periodical expenditure for twenty-six libraries, the range extending from a low of $68.81 to a high of $4,800. Perhaps the figures which convey most sharply the inadequacy of financial support are those for the total amount spent for all library purposes, i.e., salaries, books and periodicals, binding, and supplies. Here Morris' finding for one hundred libraries is an average of $4,781.44 per seminary, for inclusive library expenditures. It is no wonder that Morris found book collections frequently inadequate, especially in reference titles. Scholarly foreign language periodicals were frequently lacking, and an over-supply of gift subscriptions of ephemeral journals is noted.

A final observation to be abstracted from Morris' comprehensive survey has to do with staffing. Fewer than half of the institutions reported librarians devoting full time to library duties. Of these persons, four out of five had college training, less than two out of five had theological training. Only twenty out of forty-five had either professional library training or previous library experience. The average salary for the librarian, in the case of twenty-three reported, was $1,730. This figure falls considerably below the average for all teaching faculty members except for that of the rank of instructor, which it exceeds slightly.

Moving to the level of full-time library assistants, the survey reports
that forty-four out of seventy-eight of those reporting had a college
degree, fewer than one-third had either professional library training or
previous library experience. Only six reported a degree in theological
or religious study. Average salary, in the case of thirty-eight library
assistants reporting, was $1,360.46.

Morris concludes with the judgment that, "the libraries considered
in this study are as a group improperly and inadequately staffed to
carry on a successful type of library service."

While acknowledging fully the inadequacies of the seminary li-
braries, as reflected in the Kelly and Morris surveys, we shall perhaps
now be in a better position to estimate the present seminary library
situation, including both its strengths and its unfulfilled potential.

We are now at the point of attempting an over-all appraisal of the
seminary libraries today. Some basic questions worth attention are
these: What is the essential information concerning size and growth
of collections? What are the most significant trends in matters of
budget and financial support? What is the staff situation? How has
the library program been adapted to meet changing curricular and
extra-curricular needs? What steps have been taken along the road
of inter-seminary library cooperation, of area or denominational plan-
ing? Most important, what about the role of the library in the total
program of the seminary? Keeping in mind the range of degree pro-
grams offered, has the library moved from the secondary place so
often characteristic of it in the periods examined by Kelly and Morris
to a more central position, integrally related to the purpose and pro-
gram of the seminary?

In attempting to provide concrete evidence in response to these
questions, it is necessary to draw upon a number of sources. Factual
data based upon the A.A.T.S. Report of the Committee on Library
Standards, although gathered in 1951-52 and hence somewhat out-
dated, are still pertinent. Observations of library programs form an
important, although secondary, part of the 1954-55 survey of theologi-
cal seminaries previously mentioned. Inquiries made to the head-
quartes office of the A.A.T.S. have provided helpful materials. The
Summary of Proceedings of the annual conferences of the A.T.L.A.
constitute a basic source of information on the development of the
seminary library program. Moreover, one cannot have participated
in the field in recent years without gathering personal knowledge,
however sketchy and impressionistic, about library developments.
Finally, one should be reminded that a number of the topics here

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briefly treated will be discussed more adequately in articles which follow this introductory survey.

That libraries have gained substantially in size of collections is attested by the 1952 Report of the Committee on Library Standards. Seventy-three accredited member seminaries of the A.A.T.S. reported a total of about four million volumes, the average library having approximately fifty thousand volumes. This average compares favorably with the 1930 figure of 31,956 volumes, the average reported by Morris for eighty-one libraries. Moreover, whereas Morris indicated an average current subscription list of 96 periodicals, the 1952 Report shows an average of 182 journals in current receipt per institution. Further evidence of growth is suggested by the large number of new or remodelled library buildings, in addition to several major plants now in the planning or construction stages.

Seminary collections, like other scholarly libraries, are increasingly taking advantage of the resources being made available in microtext form. The program of the A.T.L.A. Board of Microtext, supported by the Sealantic Fund, has been widely beneficial.

A few seminaries are able to secure special support which permits them to continue the purchase of rare or semi-rare books.

Quantitative measures are by themselves inadequate guides in the area of collection growth. Moreover, even though the evidence of numerical growth is incontrovertible, we should keep in mind that many libraries are growing from weakness, and have a good deal of ground to make up. Also, student enrollments have increased, enlarging library demands. We have already noted the increasing stress upon graduate level study, the changing curricular emphases, and the setting up of new and specialized study programs. These factors call for a strengthening of library resources.

The 1954-55 survey comments upon many phases of the library program. The following observation, quoted from its report, will serve to guard against too optimistic an appraisal: "Keeping in mind the impossibility of applying a general rule, we can say that the data gathered in our survey show that a large number of libraries are barely managing to keep a minimum standard for staff and book collection, and that the maintenance of genuinely adequate libraries is becoming an increasingly acute problem for nearly all the schools." While modest progress has continued since the time of the survey, inflation of book prices has reacted adversely on purchasing power. There is no justification for complacency.
Since the need for larger library support has been noted in each seminary survey it is pertinent to go a step further and consider the main elements of expense involved.

First, as to staff salaries, Morris reported the average salary for the librarian, in twenty-three institutions, to be $1,730; and the average salary, in the case of thirty-eight assistants reporting, to be $1,360. That there has been improvement, even allowing for intervening inflation, is indicated by A.A.T.S. library figures reported in January 1960. For seventy-two accredited schools the salary of the librarian ranges from a minimum of $2,400 to a maximum of $13,200. Median figure for the group is $5,916. The largest concentration falls within the $5,000-5,999 level, with twenty-three librarians in this category. Twelve receive between $4,000 and $4,999. Salaries for other professional staff members are limited to data supplied for the cataloger. Here, salaries range from a low of $2,000 to a high of $6,145, with $4,264 as the median figure. For twenty-five associate schools, salaries are correspondingly lower, the median salary of the librarian standing at $4,848, and the cataloger at $3,350.

In assessing the salary situation, several factors should be kept in mind. One is that these figures represent the situation in the A.A.T.S. member schools only. One may safely surmise that the fifty to sixty other seminaries in the United States and Canada, at least part of whose academic work is reported to be of graduate level, pay lower library salaries. A more important consideration relates to the basic conception of the position of librarian. As the 1954-55 survey reminds us, the librarian is frequently in a strategic position in the learning process. Increasingly, seminary administrators have acknowledged that he should be a person of such maturity and training as to merit, and receive, faculty status. With this fact in mind, it follows that the salary of the qualified librarian should stand in an equitable relationship with those of his classroom teaching colleagues. While analysis of comparative salary figures is misleading, because of hidden qualifying factors, it is evident from the A.A.T.S. accredited school figures supplied for maximum and minimum professorial salaries by rank, that the largest concentration of librarians’ salaries (i.e., twenty-three falling within the $5,000-5,999 bracket) equate with the lowest, or instructor, group of professorial salaries. When it is recalled that Morris’ analysis showed that the salaries of the librarians reported were, however low, larger than those of instructors, one is compelled
to conclude that salary progress, however evident, is still relatively inadequate.

Further testimony in support of this conclusion lies in the fact that qualified library school students now command, upon graduation, beginning professional salaries several hundred dollars higher than the median figure noted by the A.A.T.S. for the cataloger, who, in many cases, is a staff member with some years of experience.

Let us examine briefly the question of financial expenditures for books and periodicals. In the 1952 Report of the Committee on Library Standards we find that average annual expenditures of seventy-three accredited members of the A.A.T.S. were $2,817 for books and $508 for periodicals. The latest figures available for the year 1958-59, show comparable expenditures of $6,265 for books and $973 for periodicals respectively. Again, as in the case of staff salary increases, such apparent improvement must be placed in a proper context in order to permit a fair judgment as to adequacy. In view of the lowered purchasing price of the dollar for the period between 1951 and 1959, it is evident that budgets must show increases merely to keep from falling further behind. In the writer's own institution, for example, the average cost per volume rose from $3.34 in 1957-58 (2,636 items tabulated) to $4.71 per volume in 1958-59 (2,142 items tabulated). An increase of 41 per cent!

A suggestive comparison might be to examine the respective library budgets of specialized divisional units within a university library system, i.e., a law school library and a medical school library, and a divinity school library. In one such instance, support for the divinity school library is far lower than that for the comparable professional library units.

In its effort to raise the level of library financial support, the A.A.T.S., with the assistance of the A.T.L.A., has developed standards which include stipulations for minimum library budgets. As approved in 1952, these standards required that an accredited school, without library notations, should spend not less than $10,000 per year for its total library budget, not including equipment and janitorial maintenance; or $35 per student, whichever was larger. It was also required that a minimum of $2,500 of this amount was to be spent annually for books and periodicals, exclusive of binding and repair. In 1958, these standards were revised upwards. For seminaries specializing in the B.D. and master’s programs, a total minimum budget of $12,500 was required, or $45 per student and faculty members, whichever is
more. Not less than $3,200 was to be spent for books and periodicals, apart from binding. While these financial standards are stated in minimum terms, providing no guidance for the larger institutions whose libraries must operate at far above this level of annual budget, it must be noted that eleven seminaries, out of eighty-two accredited members of the A.A.T.S., carried the notation in 1958 of "inadequate library support."

That the A.A.T.S. acknowledges the specialized library resources required to meet the needs of doctoral programs, as distinct from B.D. and master's programs, is indicated by the following statement in the 1958 library standards: "Doctoral study should be offered only where a library of a good university standard is available in the immediate vicinity to faculty and graduate students. It must be recognized that a library adequate for instruction of B.D. candidates may be inadequate for a doctoral program, and a library adequate for instruction in certain fields may not be so for others."

One further word should be said about staffing. There has been a dearth of qualified personnel for even the limited number of seminary library positions recently available. From its founding in 1947, the A.T.L.A. has been working at the problem. Among other things, it has been concerned to develop a consensus as to what constitutes optimum preparation for the field of theological librarianship. One attempt at such a statement was published in 1956. Through standing committees, the A.T.L.A. has worked at recruiting, the setting up of cooperative study programs between library schools and adjacent seminaries, the provision of information on candidates for positions to administrators, and on positions to interested candidates. For the past two years, grants from the Lilly Foundation have been made available, through A.A.T.S. and A.T.L.A., to enable theological library staff members to extend their training. During the summer of 1960, two library schools, Chicago and Columbia, offered special courses aimed at preparation for theological librarianship.

It is to be hoped that these developments, joined with the factor of slowly improving salaries, will result in a more adequate supply of qualified personnel for the seminary libraries.

Both necessity and common sense call for further cooperative strategies among seminary libraries. Before suggesting some possible patterns for further development, let us take a brief look at some of the recent and continuing efforts in this direction.

First of all, the vigorous and imaginative work of the A.T.L.A. from
its founding in 1947, is a total story of cooperative effort in the seminary library field. Since this record will be more fully recounted elsewhere, only several of the concrete projects developed will be mentioned here. In the area of publications, one thinks at once of the *Index to Religious Periodical Literature*, N. H. Sonne's *A Bibliography of Post-Graduate Masters' Theses in Religion*, and the series of denominational bibliographical papers given at successive annual conferences and contained in the *Proceedings*. From the far-sighted efforts of the Board of Microtext have come microfilms to replace deteriorated printed materials. Since 1948, the A.T.L.A. has maintained a plan of periodical exchange among member libraries which has been a source of considerable assistance, particularly to the smaller or newer institutions.

In the area of cooperative acquisitions, the record of the Protestant theological seminaries is not impressive. As far back as 1928, E. C. Richardson pointed towards the possibility of cooperative acquisitions among theological libraries. Since that time one can find much more evidence of theorizing than of actual implementation of cooperative procedures. Nevertheless, some steps have been taken. R. M. Pierson documents comprehensively the existing patterns of intradenominational library cooperation as of 1959. Particular attention is given in Pierson's article to cooperation among the denominational seminaries and their respective historical societies. Cooperation in avoiding the purchase of expensive, little-used materials is followed. Book lists are distributed. Some approaches to collecting along regional lines have been effected. In the area of cataloging and bibliography, Pierson comments upon the work of the Mennonites, Disciples, and American Baptists in publishing or projecting denominational bibliographies. At least four national church bodies are engaged in cooperative microfilming projects, the work being done through their respective historical societies. The Southern Baptists published a *Union List of Baptist Serials* in 1960.

The Presbyterian and the Methodist churches have taken initiative in encouraging and subsidizing meetings of their respective seminary librarians, with the thought that further acquaintance and cooperative ventures will strengthen the seminary library program.

In the realm of specialized cooperation among the seminaries of a local area, we should record the Union Catalogue at Pacific School of Religion, which is comprised of author cards from ten schools of the area. The seminary librarians of California have taken the lead in
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other cooperative measures as well. In the Berkeley-San Francisco area, an experiment is under way in the cooperative purchasing of books. At Fuller Theological Seminary in Pasadena, a union catalog of periodical holdings is maintained.

It would be unrealistic to conclude that all such cooperative projects have justified the time and cost involved. Probably most have. In other cases new ground has been planted, but without commensurate harvest.

In attempting a long look at the possibilities for further inter-seminary library cooperation, the following appear to be reasonable areas for continuing exploration and expanding development:

1. Clearance among seminary libraries in the building of specialized collections, particularly among seminaries of a denomination or of a geographical region. Such planning would involve the denominational historical societies in many instances.

2. Partnership between seminaries and educational institutions of other types which are situated so as to make practicable reciprocal library use; for example, complementary acquisition policies between a seminary library and an adjacent college or university library.

3. Expanded use of inter-seminary library borrowing, including the lending of microtext copies of specialized materials.

4. Preparation of additional bibliographical and directory “tools” in the field of religious scholarship, as determined by gaps in the field.

In this over-all review of the Protestant theological seminaries and their libraries, we have been concerned to trace briefly their historical development, and to suggest the major influences which have been at work in creating the present library situation. We have commented upon the trends in the growth of the collections, the gradual increase in financial support, the construction and remodelling of library buildings, and the efforts at recruitment and training for theological library service. The extent to which seminary collections are being developed, following past weaknesses, has been noted. The wide range of claims made upon library service by the spread of degrees and special programs offered, and by the increasing emphasis upon graduate-level study has been observed. The important role of inter-seminary cooperation has been stressed as an essential ingredient in future developments.

The most important requirement in the library picture is the careful delineation of the basic functions of the library in relation to the larger
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purposes of the seminary. This means regarding the library as a means to an end. It calls for communication and high statesmanship among administration, classroom faculty, and library staff.

As has been wisely said: “The primary characteristic of a good academic library is its complete identification with its own institution. The measure of its excellence is the extent to which its resources and services support the institution’s objectives.”

To achieve this standard is a high order indeed!

References

5. Kelly, op. cit. (A large number of the schools examined were not graduate schools.)
6. May, M. A., et al.: The Education of American Ministers. Vol. I. New York, Institute of Social and Religious Research, 1934, p. 85. (It is important to observe that, by the terms of this study, the 224 Protestant “seminaries” included a large number of undergraduate Bible colleges and Bible institutes. Hence the figure must be scaled down to keep the comparative picture clear.)
8. Ibid., pp. 50-51.
10. Ibid., p. 15.
19. American Association of Theological Schools, ref. 15.