The Theological Needs of the General Academic Library

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Blissful Ignorance

- Widespread ignorance that there even is a discipline of theology
- Determination to keep the church out of the academy
- Reluctance even with religious studies

The Modern Academy

- The western universities were based around theology and other crafts
- Some universities which grew out of theological institutions (Harvard, Princeton, Yale)
The Secular Tradition

- Enlightenment hopes and fears
- Creating secular institutions
- Religious colleges and their issues

Debate between state and church over education in France 1904

Australian and New Zealand Universities

- Secular traditions of various kinds
- Chaplains in the secular university
- Theology in the secular institution
- Religious Studies in the secular institution

Bible in Schools supporters try to intimidate government, Observer 5/10/1912 p. 12
Vocational Pressures

- Huge increases in tertiary enrolments
- Strong pressure from government towards applied degrees
- Traditional degrees in search of relevance

Critical Losses

- Problems for research
  - Basic knowledge
  - Specialist sources
- Problems for students
- Religious Studies and Theology
- History and Theology
- English and Theology
- Philosophy and Theology
Beyond Laments

• There are good reasons to lament the loss of knowledge
• Advocates within faculties need to be given a voice
• Bible as Literature papers

Needs of History Students

• Historical theology
• Biblical knowledge
• Understanding of the church
• Understanding of critical schisms in the church
• Understanding that religion is important
Biblical Studies

- This is the most difficult area for libraries
- Scholarly English language commentary sets
- Historical commentaries

Matthew, from Charlemagne’s Gospel Book, 800

Church History and General History

- Strong church history stock is needed
- Key journals (JEccH, JRH, Church History)
- Specialist journals
- World church historical perspectives

The Jesuits in China, by Kircher
Theological Needs

- Abysmal range of resources
- Handbooks and Encyclopedias
- Range of broad theories
- Catholic and Orthodox traditions
- Protestant traditions

Religious Phenomenology

- Some collections build in areas of sectarianism and sociology of religion
- Demographic aspects can be developed

Concentrations of religion in northern New Zealand (2013 census)
World Religions in the Library

- Islamic commentaries, traditions, perspectives
- Jewish materials
- Buddhist materials
- Hindu traditions, scriptures, theologies

Going Solo

- My story and my solution
- This is not very practical for most
Some Solutions

- Using seminary libraries:
  - St John’s College Library
  - Other theological libraries
- Recommending suitable “bundles” of journals

Electronic Age

- Major electronic resources are assembling fine commentary sets
  - Logos, etc
- Are these stable platforms?
Basic Resources

- Could theological librarians have recommendations for general libraries?
- Book exchanges?