Building a Theological School Library from the Scratch

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Abstract
The library has become an essential part of any academic institution. The educational process relies on its resource for intellectual development of both faculty members and students in theological or bible schools. This article examines the term "library", the purpose of the library, its functions and activities. How to plan for a new library and checklist in planning a library building are enumerated. Staffing, the library and budgeting also examined. Finally, a proposal for the funding of theological and bible school libraries in Nigeria are suggested.

Introduction

Traditionally, the library is being defined as the store of knowledge, where printed and non-printed materials are acquired, processed and organized to ease its community of users.

Association of Christian librarians (1994:1), explained that the term "library" is derived from the Latin word *liber* meaning book, and therefore the library is referred to as "a collection of books" whether for public or private use. The association further explained that modern libraries do not only contain variety of printed materials such as books, magazines and pamphlets but also non-printed resources such as tapes records, films, slides and a variety of other formats produced by the explosion of technology.

In another development Fatuyi (2001:58), stated that the library is a complete place filled with all the information one needs for a successful research and academic activities. She also stated, that the library is an information based organization that requires effective use of information technology and that it requires getting the right information to the right person and at the right time.

Purpose of the Library

Association of Christian librarians (1994:1) informed that the library has become an essential part of the academic institution. The educational process relies on it as a resource for the intellectual development of students. The library provides the tools, which support the classroom instruction and the curriculum of that institution. In a Christian setting, information in printed or non-printed forms must be presented with a view

to its integration of learning in the context of Biblical revelation and Christian values.

It is expected in an ideal situation that the library must adapt to the needs of the institution, its teachers and its students. Association of Christian librarians (1994:1) also pointed that some students may come with no reading skills or have no library experience, which is in contrast to the scholarly instructors. It is, therefore, expected that the librarian may need to take on the task of developing readers and helping to establish lifelong patterns of reaching and learning.

Functions and Activities of a Library

Basically, all libraries are very similar in their function and activities, which include the following as expressed by Association of Christian Librarians: Materials are selected and acquired, materials are organized so that they can be found easily, and materials are made available to the users. From these basic functions the interests and needs of the particular user population are considered and thus institutional uniqueness is developed underlying these functions and activities are the people who make it all happen the administration and library staff.

Planning a New Library

The need to plan a new library is a great responsibility. The librarian needs to be aware space complexity of the library's operation. Adequate space for each function of the library must be allowed. The collection of books and non-books will need ample shelving and storage. The study space for students and faculty must be furnished with tables, chairs and special workstations for audiovisual equipment. Acquisitions, cataloguing, and other technical service functions will require both work and storage spaces. Future growth must be projected and provision made for expansion of the facility as growth demands. Objectives of the institution and of the library need to be clearly stated as a guide in the development of the plans for a new library.

Planning a Library Building

The following list of steps should help when one is to begin the planning process. Begin with a notebook of ideas. First, learn as much as you can from reading about library building. Time should be set to identify and obtain books from within the country or abroad. Secondly, if possible, visit other library buildings. Write down what you observe to be useable features for your library. Thirdly, interview staff working in these libraries. Note their comments about what works and what does not work in their libraries.

Then develop a clear statement of objectives for the library. The statement should list all of the space needs for resources such as books, periodicals, newspapers, pamphlets and fi⫮e folder, pictures, microforms, audio and visual recordings, slides, filmstrips, and other non-book media. Then identify all of your goals for services such as study space, reference, library instruction, reserved reading section, circulation and technical processes like acquisitions and cataloguing.

The next step is to prepare a program statement for the library building. A program statement is a carefully written guide prepared for the architect or building contractor. The librarian usually works closely with the school's administration in writing this description of the library's functions and their interrelationships. The program statement may also express the philosophy underlying the library's services to the school. A very important part of the statement is an estimate of future growth. For the program statement, a few questions may be helpful. How many resources does the library have? What kinds of resources are they and how must they be stored?

What rate of increase do you anticipate over the next ten years? How many students and faculty are to be served? What is the level of the student populationsecondary school, postsecondary, bible school, undergraduates, seminary and graduate? Do the faculty need special research resources and facilities? Will the library need to serve as a study hall or do students have other study facilities to use when they ~~when they~~ do not need access to library resources?

The next step is to work closely with the architect or building contractor, as the architectural drawings for the building are prepared The architect or building contractor usually submits preliminary plans for review by the clients. The librarian and the administration will want to look at these plans in great detail and compare them to the program statement. It is important to take time in this process one will need imagination, an eye for detail, a ruler and notebook. It is helpful to be able to read and understand the architect's drawings (blue-prints). The drawings include the specific locations of electrical outlets, lights, built in furniture, and other features. You want to be sure that each item, such as light switches and electrical outlets, is conveniently located and will not be covered by furniture and equipment.

In this preliminary stage, changes can be made quite easily. Once the plans have been accepted and approved by the school administration, changes in the mechanical and electrical design are usually very costly. Also, complications develop when the changes affects other parts of the projects for example, changing wall locations affects the heating and electrical installations.

The next stage has to do with coordinate the planning of the interior

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layout of the building with exterior design. This is important, so that the proper space allocations will be made for placement of bookshelves, tables and chairs for library users, and workstations for staff members. The furniture must be placed so that there is enough space for people to walk around when users occupy the chairs. Normally, this requires four or five feet (1.3 1.55 metres) between tables and between tables and shelves.

This should be followed by the furnishing of the interior. The following dimensions for bookshelves, tables and chairs may be helpful. They are useful both in planning a new building or in remodelling or rearranging an established library. This should be followed by the making of book shelves. Bookshelves, sometimes called stacks, are usually 3 feet (1 meter) in width for each section with several of these 3 foot sections joined together. Each shelf of a section is 8 inches (20cm) or 10 inches (25cm) deep. The number of shelves in section depends upon the height of the shelf section and the average height of the books to be stored. High stacks of approximately 82 inches (211cm), which are used for most of the book collection usually, have seven shelves.

Reference volumes are generally taller than the average circulating book, thus adjustable shelving units are very desirable. Medium   height stacks of 58 inches (149cm), sometimes used as room dividers, have four shelves. Counter height stacks of 39 inches (100cm) have three shelves.

Double face shelf sections, often called free standing shelves, permit books to be stored on both sides. Only use single face shelf units against a wall so that they can be fastened securely to the wall by screws or braces. High stacks must always be secured to a wall or braced so that they cannot tilt or fall over.

To determine the number of shelf units needed, estimate storing 20 volumes per shelf. A 36 inches or 1 meter shelf will hold about 30 volumes. By estimating 20 volumes for each shelf you will leave room for growth in your collection. The aisle between the rows of stack should be 36 inches (1 meter). Such will permit staff to shelve books easily and allow easy access by more than one person. The reference section may use only 6 shelves per 82 inches (211cm) unit. Since the books are wider as well as taller, you will be able to shelves fewer books per shelf.

Tables and chairs should also be supplied. Tables and chairs for libraries are usually made of wood but other materials are satisfactory also. Furniture of high quality, which will last a long time should be chosen. For adequate study space at tables, the space per person should not be less than 30 inches by 20 inches (76cm x 51cm). A table with dimensions of 90 inches by 40 inches (2.28 meters x 1.01 meters) could seat six people. Try to avoid seating more than six people at one table. Chairs should be well made with the seat height not less than 10 inches (25cm) below the height of the tables.

Try to provide seating for half of thee student environment at one time. More seating may be required if students must use the library as a study hall.

The general atmosphere should be comfortable for readers and workers alike. Colours and materials chosen for walls, draperies, etc, affect the general atmosphere. The two most important considerations are ease of maintenance and economy. For example, a brick wall on the exterior does not need painting. Floor maintenance is crucial but the noise factor should also be considered.

There is also the factor of flexibility. Flexibility is a significant factor in a library building. Some changes can be made by using non-weight bearing walls (located between weight-bearing pillars), large open between weight-bearing pillars. Large open areas can be divided into smallest study areas can be divided into smallest study spaces with the use of freestanding bookshelves. Smaller study areas are preferable as noise is absorbed by the bookshelves.

Other important considerations include the plans (building) as finally revised must be approved by the administration; the Administration should hire the builder or contractor to complete the building according to the drawings, the Administration should designate an on-site supervisor and the school or institution should request a warranty period from the builder.

Checklist of Items to Consider in Planning a Library Building

Association of Christian Librarians (1994:259) suggested that since it is easy to overlook important items in a large project, a sample checklist of consideration was proposed as follows: Location central, accessible, visible, architecture match existing style or change style or change style, atmosphere to be created within the building formal or informal, warm, friendly, open; functions to be performed list them; Interrelationships of functions, e.g. staff work area close to card catalogue and public access to card catalogue; storing library resources. List resources by type, amount, anticipated growth; expand ability of building; flexibility within the building (non-weight-bearing walls, book shelves as dividers, etc); cost of administration plan exists and traffic control for minimum staffing during slow exists and traffic control for minimum staffing during slow periods; one combined main entrance and exit is highly desirable; book return area when library is closed; adequate storage e.g. a gift book area to hold books before they are processed; Lighting according to local standards, adjusted to various areas and needs; heating ventilation, and air conditioning; stable humidity to protect resources; special looked storage area or vault, for rare or precious items; special storage space for projectors and other audio and visual equipment; space for custodial supplies and equipment; if more than one floor, a mechanical or electrical lift for book trucks; toilet facilities; staff

room for meeting or eating; an entrance for delivery trucks bringing cartons of books or supplies; bulletin boards and other display areas for promoting the library and its materials and small furnishings like pencil sharpeners and rubbish containers.

Staffing

A library is a service organization. Therefore, the attitude of the staff towards its work and the kind of service they give to the people using the library directly affects its success: Library personnel must be friendly sincere, thoughtful and have a co-operative spirit. ~~In library work little details are very spirit. In library work little details are very spirit.~~ In library work, little details are very important, so it is essential that work be done carefully and correctly as expressed by Association of Christian Librarians (1994).

It is a truism that the librarian not only carries the key, he or she is the key to a successful church library. In the opinion of McMichael (1977:29) that a fine library location, good selection of materials and adequate good selection of materials and adequate financial support will not in themselves make a library successful. But a good librarian can make a library worthwhile in spite of poor facilities and limited financial support.

According to McMichael (1977:30) that in a church library, it is the librarians' responsibility, along with co-workers to pray for the ministry of the library, keep informed about books and other resource centre materials, select books and other library materials, purchase library supplies, process material for circulation, oversee the operation of the library, promote library use, coordinate library services with other church activities and plan for future needs and services of the library.

I concord to these responsibilities of the church librarian and recommend it to all church institution libraries. It is helpful to have minimum educational requirements for some library positions. When possible, workers should have completed secondary school or its equivalent. In many areas it is unrealistic to expect new workers to have previous library training or experience. Thus, a thorough in-service training program is necessary as expressed Association of Christian Librarians (1994).

The Library and Building

The library is a dynamic organization, which needs to grow. Its growth is guaranteed if there is proper budgeting. By definition a budget is a financial plan for buying materials and monitoring other expenses over a definite period of time. It is an estimate of expenses for a period of one year. The starting and ending dates of the budget year may differ from one school or institution to another (Association of Christian Librarians, 1994:22). There

are two major types of budgets namely capital and recurrent. A capital budget covers new buildings, renovation, and major purchases, of equipment and furniture. These are usually large and less frequent expenses. A recurrent budget includes the cost of library materials and day-to-day operations. This sometimes referred to as an operating budget.

Importance of a Library budget

A budget encourages the librarian to prepare for the future-after looking at the past. Budget preparation has two major goals namely: using past experience, you calculate how much it will cost to maintain current services. (Always note country's rate of inflation). It provides an opportunity to find financial support for new programs and services. These new programs and services may be outlined in a long-range plan for the library or for the institution as a whole. They may focus on library support for new courses and majors in the curriculum, special collections for research purposes or new services such as multiple copies of textbooks to supply a reserved reading room. The librarian needs to request help from the administration in funding such programs and services.

Funding of Theological or Bible School Libraries in Nigeria

I wish to propose the following ways as means of generating revenue to fund theological Bible schools libraries in Nigeria. Each Bible school should allocate 15–20% of its annual budget to the library. The actual money for this allocation should be paid into a library account. In every semester, each student should pay a minimum library fee of N300.00, and such fund should be paid into the school library account. Every Regional church council or Diocese or District (as the case may be), Local Church Council and Church congregation respectively should make special offering to aid the funding of the Bible school library located within its jurisdiction quarterly. All monies collected should be paid into the library account. Students Union in conjunction with old students and friends of the school library should organize free will offering for theological or bible school library development on regularly bases.

Conclusion

Establishing and building of libraries in theological and Bible schools in Nigeria is long overdue, it is also very essential that every theological institution and Bible school should have a functional, well equipped and organized library in Nigeria and other developing countries at large. Theological being one of the old age professional bodies in the worlds needs to keep pace with technological advancement. Therefore, the library should not be considered as a luxury in theological or Bible schools but as an essential arm of development.

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