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Returning to the Sources: The Literature of Christian Librarianship

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Platform Change Note

The presentation notes and handouts that follow were created in 2009. At that time the “Christianity and Libraries” bibliography was being maintained on the CiteULike platform, and this is reflected in the materials that follow. As of August 2014 the contents of the bibliography were exported to the Zotero platform. The CiteULike version remains live, but any ongoing additions or enhancements to the bibliography are likely to be applied only on Zotero.

Click below to access the Zotero version:

www.zotero.org/groups/christianity_and_libraries
If we are to excel in our calling as Christian librarians, we need to build on the research and experience of others. One tool that can help us learn from our colleagues and predecessors is a database called *Christianity and Libraries: A Selective Bibliography*. This Web-based search tool describes more than 400 sources that explore the connections between Christian faith and the information professions. Insights from these sources can help us develop professionally and engage in productive dialogue about the integration of Christian faith and library practice. Search the bibliography at the following address: [http://www.citeulike.org/search/user/christian_librarian](http://www.citeulike.org/search/user/christian_librarian).

**Database Search Results**

Searching user christian_librarian for: technology* digital [13 articles]

Articles found in this user's library

- **technology* digital**

Search library

**Hide details**

- **The Technological Futures: Foundation of Our Hopes and Fears?**
  - by Henry Dror
  - posted to change information technology librarians by christian_librarian on 2008-02-23 19:34:48 as

- **An Old-Fashioned Ethic in a Digital Age**
  - by Elizabeth Maible
  - posted to purple, house, library, cambridge, england, theological libraries service information services by christian_librarian on 2008-12-04 00:43:22 as

- **Librarians and Information Technology: A Christian View**
  - edited by Graham Hodges
  - posted to christian_librarians information technology by christian_librarian on 2008-03-02 00:45:52 as

- **Print Media vs. Digital Manifest Destiny: Can Breadth of Mind Survive?**
  - by S. David Marsh
  - posted to books digital media learning by christian_librarian on 2008-02-09 19:46:29 as

- **Libraries and Learning: The Search for Justice, Mercy, and Humility in Information Services and Technology—a Yet More Excellent Way**
  - (23 October 2007)
  - by Joseph McDonald
  - posted to learning information technology information services christian higher education christian ethics academic librarianship by christian_librarian on 2008-05-13 04:08:19 as

**Bibliography Profile**

The following lists describe the contents of the database as of mid-May 2009.

- Media types
  - Periodical articles: 270+
  - Books and portions of books: 55+
  - Theses and dissertations: 35+
  - Conference presentations: 30+
  - Other sources: 5+
Bibliography Profile, continued

- Dates
  - 2000s: 175+
  - 1990s: 115+
  - 1980s: 65+
  - Pre-1980: 55+

- Sources
  - The Christian Librarian [U.S.A.]: 60+
  - The Catholic Library World: 35+
  - Christian Librarian [U.K.]: 35+
  - Christian Librarianship: Essays on the Integration of Faith and Profession: 15+
  - Library Journal: 15+
  - American Libraries: 10+
  - Issues in Librarianship 2: The Debate Continues: 10+
  - Librarians’ Christian Fellowship Newsletter [now ceased]: 10+
  - Journal of Religious & Theological Information: 5+
  - Libraries & Culture: 5+

- Subject matter
  - Types of libraries: general, academic, theological, public, school, etc.; church libraries are not covered
  - Theological perspective: evangelical, Roman Catholic, Seventh-day Adventist, mainline Protestant, etc.; non-Christian perspectives on religion and libraries are also represented
  - Themes
    - types of libraries (e.g., theological libraries)
    - types of librarians (e.g., public librarians)
    - issues in librarianship (e.g., change)
    - aspects of library work (e.g., classification)
    - types of literature (e.g., Christian fiction)
    - types of institutions (e.g., Bible colleges)
    - religious and philosophical topics (e.g., truth)
    - titles of works (e.g., Theological Studies [periodical])
    - names of organizations (e.g., American Library Association)
    - personal names—in direct order (e.g., Thomas Bray)

- Full text
  - 25-30% of the entries have a URL or DOI
  - Common aggregated databases will provide access to additional entries

“At this late date in the world’s history very few subjects of research can be entirely original. Even the newest experiment in science has been led up to, and the report on the new work usually gives a bibliography, which is but a pointer to previous findings.”

—Jacques Barzun and Henry F. Graff, The Modern Researcher
Database Tag Cloud
This image illustrates the diverse range of topics covered in the database. A tag's font size is proportionately related to the number of times it occurs within the database.
Prologue to the Bibliography
Images from the prologue to the bibliography appear below. The prologue is available for viewing, printing, and downloading from http://digitalcommons.liberty.edu/lib_fac_pubs/25/.

Christianity and Libraries
A Selective Bibliography
Compiled by Gregory A. Smith, M.L.S.

At this late date in the world’s history very few subjects of research can be entirely original. Even the newest experiment in science has been led up to, and the report on the new work usually gives a bibliography, which is but a pointer to previous findings.—Jacques Barzun and Henry F. Graff

Introduction
Schrödinger’s cat is necessarily curmudgeonly.
Researchers are not in an intellectual vacuum, but execute a program of study that builds on records of previous inquiry. New ideas are generated in the context of old ideas that are accessible to the entire community. This observation is also true of professional discourse in fields such as library and information science (LIS).

Over the course of several decades, many thinkers have explored various connections between Christian faith and practice, on the one hand, and the world of libraries and information, on the other. This is not surprising since Christianity has had a foundational influence on Western culture and is a powerful presence in many regions of the world. However, it is intriguing to note that much research and reflection on the relationship between Christianity and libraries does not seem to build on prior discourse in the field. In fact, sources that can help us view LIS from a Christian perspective are largely invisible for various reasons. Many appeared as grey literature—dissertations, theses, unpublished conference papers, etc.—and never achieved wide circulation. Others were published in relatively obscure journals—publications that are held by few libraries and are slow to migrate toward electronic dissemination. Furthermore, many of these sources are not indexed in the standard bibliographic tools of LIS as a result, locating the literature necessitates searches in numerous specialized databases.

I made an initial effort to enhance the visibility of this body of sources by publishing a bibliography of 147 entries in 2002. Since then I have accumulated both recent and retrospective references, with the result that, as of March 2008, the total list consists of 340 entries. The bibliography now resides in database form at Citelike.org and will hopefully foster more interactive discourse on the relationship between Christianity and libraries.

Scope and Limitations
My original bibliography’s organizing principle was “to direct readers to works that approach the theory and practice of librarianship from a distinctly Christian perspective.” The scope of this bibliography is somewhat broader, including a range of sources that address the connections between Christian faith and the world of libraries and information. Not all are written from a Christian perspective; in fact, some reject any notion of biblical or ecclesiastical authority. Nevertheless, in my judgment, all contribute something to the development of a Christian understanding of libraries and librarianship. Among those that favor Christian principles, there is considerable diversity: Roman Catholicism, evangelism, Seventh-day Adventism, and mainline Protestantism are represented.

The scope includes sources about public, academic, and school libraries, as well as libraries in general. The bibliography provides particularly good coverage of libraries in Christian higher education, including theological education. Since libraries cannot help but reflect the contours of the publishing world, there are several entries relevant to religious publishing. When compiling my original bibliography I determined to exclude any sources related to church librarianship, and I have maintained that editorial approach here.

Geographically, the bibliography’s scope is

The most frequently assigned tags are as follows:
- academic libraries
- book selection
- Catholic libraries
- censorship
- Christian librarians
- Christian librarianship
- Christian libraries
- collection development
- intellectual freedom
- librarians
- libraries
- library ethics
- philosophy of librarianship
- public libraries
- school libraries
- theological education
- theological librarianship
- theological libraries
- values

Search Tips
Below are a few tips to help you get the most relevant results when searching the bibliography.

- The default Boolean operator is OR. Thus a search for “catholic periodicals” will bring up all records containing either one or both of the terms. Force the search engine to retrieve results containing a particular search term by placing a plus sign (+) before it. e.g., “acoustics:periodicals
retrieves records that contain both terms, though not necessarily as a phrase.
- Reduce the size of your search result by using the NOT operator—coded by a minus sign (-). For example, to retrieve entries that include the word Catholic but don’t contain the word academic, enter this string: “catholic:academic.
- Search for forms of a word by using the asterisk (*) truncation symbol. Thus a search for “catholic” retrieves sources containing the words Catholic, Catholicism, and Catholics.
- Search for an exact phrase by enclosing it in quotation marks (“”). A search for “collection management” retrieves records containing that exact phrase.
- Enclose optional terms—those that you want

Link to the bibliography: http://www.citelike.org/search/user/christian_librarian
Creationist Literature in Libraries:
A Timeline of Mostly Unrelated Sources

Thompson & Flowers (1984)
Pseudoscience, Creationism and the Library / by James C Thompson, Kay A Flowers
*Catholic Library World* 56 (November 1984): 176-79
Tags: science pseudoscience libraries intellectual_freedom creationism collection_management
Citation analysis: cites library literature, but contains no clear references to sources discussing creationist literature in libraries

Berman (1985)
“In the Beginning”: The Creationist Agenda / by Sanford Berman
*Library Journal*, 15 October 1985, 31-34
Tags: books creationism evolution libraries politics public_education textbook_selection
Citation analysis: cites Thompson & Flowers (1984) and other sources that explore connections between libraries and creationism

Miller (1986)
Creation Science: A Wall of Censorship, or at Least a Very Tight Screen! / by Jacob L Miller
Research proposal, University of South Florida Graduate School, 1986
Tags: creationism censorship
Citation analysis: source unexamined; held by a single WorldCat library

Fleury (1986)
Apes or Angels: Creationism and the Religious Right / by Bruce E Fleury
Tags: none assigned
Citation analysis: source unexamined

Fleury (1987)
Creation and Evolution: The Rise of Scientific Creationism / by Bruce E Fleury
*Choice*, June 1987, 1513-22
Tags: evolution creationism bibliography
Citation analysis: source unexamined

Berman (1987)
Three Considerations / by Sanford Berman
*Library Journal*, 15 November 1987, 54
Tags: academic_libraries classification creationism
Citation analysis: article cites no sources

Donaldson (1988)
The Creationism Controversy: It’s Only the Beginning / by Ken Donaldson
Tags: school_libraries public_education evolution creationism collection_development
Citation analysis: footnotes cite 20 sources (none from library literature); references Berman (1985) in bibliography of works recommended for libraries

The inclusion of creationist literature in library collections has been a matter of controversy for more than 25 years. This bibliography documents some of the sources on the subject. The sources exhibit a broad range of perspectives.

As shown in the citation analysis under each source, many of these works fail to interact with previously published sources that address the same topic. This is a characteristic of much of the literature that addresses the connections between Christianity and libraries.

We who would integrate faith and librarianship need to build on the shoulders of previous research and opinion, whether choosing to affirm, disagree with, or complement others’ conclusions.
Bergman (1996)
Censorship of Information on Origins / by Jerry Bergman
*Creation Ex Nihilo Technical Journal* 10 (December 1996): 405-14
Tags: censorship creationism origins
Citation analysis: cites Berman (1985) and other library literature not on this list

Matsumura (1998)
*Reports of the National Center for Science Education*, September 1998, 11-13
Tags: science school_libraries donations creationism collection_development
Citation analysis: cites no library literature for or against creationist literature

Lee (1999)
A Warning about the Teaching of Evolution in Kansas / by Earl Lee
*American Libraries*, November 1999, 36
Tags: school_libraries public_libraries evolution creationism collection_development
Citation analysis: article cites no sources

O’Sullivan & O’Sullivan (2005)
Monkey Business / by Connie O’Sullivan, Michael O’Sullivan
*School Library Journal*, November 2005, 42-45
Tags: science school_libraries creationism collection_development censorship
Citation analysis: cites no library literature

Stinson (2006)
Politically Correct Science: Why Johnny Can’t Read Scientific Creationism / by Bart J Stinson
Tags: censorship creationism science
Citation analysis: cites no library literature

Wood (2007)
Evolution, Creation, and Intelligent Design / by Clair G Wood
*Choice*, October 2007, 207-17
Tags: intelligent_design evolution creationism bibliography
Citation analysis: as a bibliographic essay, references sources that document the controversy between various views of origins; does not address the appropriateness of adding anti-evolutionary/pro-creationist works to library collections, and thus does not cite any library literature; by including prominent creationist/intelligent design works in the bibliography, implies that libraries should acquire them

Veak (2008)
Academic Libraries and Creation Science Resources / by Tyler Veak
Tags: science intellectual_freedom creationism collection_development academic_libraries
Citation analysis: cites Bergman (1996) and Matsumura (1998)
Returning to the Sources:
The Literature of Christian Librarianship

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Conference Planner Ad
Christian + librarian—how are the two connected? If you’re interested in practicing librarianship that is equally professional and faithful, come to this workshop! We’ll spend much of our time searching a database of 370+ sources that explore the connections between Christian faith and the information professions. You’ll be challenged to read, reflect, and dialogue about professional issues from a Christian perspective.

Presentation Objectives
• To expose attendees to information resources that aid in the integration of Christian faith and librarianship
• To inspire attendees to consult these sources and interact with them via presentations, publications, listservs, blogs, etc.
• To demonstrate an online bibliographic database that supports the aims listed above

Introduction
• The cumulative nature of research
  o At this late date in the world’s history very few subjects of research can be entirely original. Even the newest experiment in science has been led up to, and the report on the new work usually gives a bibliography, which is but a pointer to previous findings.—Jacques Barzun and Henry F. Graff
• Lack of “exchange” in literature concerning Christianity and libraries
• Examples of recent articles from TCL and elsewhere--almost no acknowledgment of sources
  o Case study: the collection of creationist literature in libraries
    [See separate handout documenting lack of references to previously published sources]
  o Similar patterns apply to other common topics in this disciplinary specialization (e.g., Christian view of intellectual freedom and censorship, Christian philosophy of librarianship).
  o Too often it seems that authors re-invent the wheel, showing little awareness of the fact that others have addressed the same topics before.
• Fact: “Christianity and Libraries: A Selective Bibliography” indexes 450+ entries, most of which are amicable to the integration of faith and librarianship, and many additional sources are yet to be indexed.

Brief Description of CiteULike (http://www.citeulike.org/)
• Integrates several functions (get screen shot of http://www.citeulike.org/)
  o Citation management (e.g., EndNote, RefWorks)
  o File storage
  o Social networking (e.g., del.icio.us, LibraryThing)
• Is geared toward scientific communities (genetics, information technology)

Demonstration of Search Techniques & Database Contents
• Locating sources
  o Browsing--do this as a serendipitous exploration with a launching point of a term such as libraries
    • Authors: follow “Authors” link
    • Subjects: follow “Tags” link
Searching

- Operators
  - By default, OR separates multiple terms
  - Plus sign (+) forces inclusion of a search term
    +catholic +periodicals
  - Minus sign (-) signifies the NOT operator; however, this only works within a given field (e.g., title, abstract)
    +catholic -academic
  - Truncation--the truncation symbol is the asterisk (*)
    +librar* +ethic*
  - Phrases--enclose the string in quotation marks ("")
    "school libraries"
- Other conventions
  - Group terms with parentheses
    +values +(fiction literature)
  - Limit search to one of the following fields: title, journal, abstract, or tag
    journal: "library journal"
- Deficiencies
  - Certain fields (e.g., editor names, titles of edited works) are not searchable
  - Author names cannot be combined with other keywords
  - Site does not provide for limiting (date, format, etc.)
  - Sorting results is complex; for example, append /order/year,desc,last to the URL assigned to your tag browse

Database contents

- Media types
  - Periodical articles: 270+
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  - aspects of library work (e.g., classification)
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  - types of institutions (e.g., Bible colleges)
  - religious and philosophical topics (e.g., truth)
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  - book selection
  - Catholic libraries
  - censorship
  - Christian librarians
  - Christian librarianship
  - Christian libraries
  - collection development
  - intellectual freedom
  - librarians
  - libraries
  - library ethics
  - philosophy of librarianship
  - public libraries
  - school libraries
  - theological education
  - theological librarianship
  - theological libraries
  - values
- Personal library features
  - Upload articles
  - Discover peers, explore their reading interests, and import citations into your library
  - Export your library to common citation managers

Conclusion: Exhortation to Engagement
- ACL has an important role to play as a “nursery” for the integration of faith and librarianship
  - If anyone should prize the literature of Christian librarianship, it should be us
  - The discussion has ebbed and flowed over the last 30 years; we need to keep it going
- So how can we advance the integration of Christianity and librarianship?
  - Reading
    - We have to become familiar with what has been published in the past and what is appearing currently
    - Obviously, the bibliography featured in this presentation has a big role to play in exposing existing literature
    - Blogging about the bibliography and/or linking to it will help to expose it to others
- Reflection
  - We need to give serious thought to what we read, then modify and/or expand on others' ideas
  - This may take place through blogs, informal exchanges via email, conference panel discussions, etc.

- Research
  - We need to take our best ideas and carry them forward through a systematic study of topics of concern
  - At times we may need to engage colleagues from outside the boundaries of the LIS profession (e.g., law, history, communication, religion, education, philosophy)
  - We need to publish the results of our research both in Christian and secular publications