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A HISTORY OF CINCINNATI BIBLE COLLEGE LIBRARY

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It was the 1800s and the drift in higher education went from rationalism to secularism and skepticism, and from a God-centered belief to man-centered humanism and agnosticism. A group of evangelical leaders felt that another type of institution was needed to fulfill Christ's great commission to take the Gospel to all the world and teach all nations. The revivals which had taken place showed unmet spiritual needs of the masses, and young people were volunteering to be missionaries, Sunday school teachers, evangelists and ministers. There was a need for training of these workers. Cincinnati Bible College was one of those schools that came about to meet this need.

Cincinnati Bible College, located on one of the seven hills that make up the southwestern Ohio River town, was created on September 23, 1924, by the merging of two institutions, McGarvey Bible College in Louisville, Kentucky, and Cincinnati Bible Institute. At the time of this merge the Restoration Movement, a movement to restore New Testament Christianity to the churches, was taking place. According to the first

catalog of the school, this movement was suffering at the time from lack of an oncoming generation of leadership loyal to the New Testament scriptures, on fire with evangelism and committed to the task of restoring the New

Testament church in the world.

Certain missionary leaders believed that unless some institution was speedily established which would make available a large number of rightly trained men and women, the future of the Restoration Movement in America will be exceedingly doubtful. These two schools, having the same ultimate goal, brought together the need of the Restoration Movement for leadership in the churches that would be grounded in the

Bible. The Church of Christ/Christian Church brotherhood were churches that were involved in the Restoration Movement, and Cincinnati Bible College is associated with these fellowships. The mission of Cincinnati Bible College and Seminary has changed in wording and application to the times we are in today from that of the early 1900s. Much of the mission

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was to prepare men and women for work in the church whereas today it is the following, as taken from the Strategic Plan for 1994-1999.

"The mission of Cincinnati Bible College and Seminary is to teach men and women to live by Biblical principles and to equip and empower them with skills, insight, and vision both to lead the church and impact society for Christ. This will be fostered in an atmosphere of high standards with a conservative, Bible-based, Restoration-principled faculty, curriculum, administration, and staff."

The mission and purpose of G. M. Elliott Library, as taken from the revised mission statement of 1997, is to "collect, maintain, and circulate materials and to provide services and access to information needed to carry out the objectives of Cincinnati Bible College and Seminary with the primary focus of supporting, supplementing, and continuing classroom instruction. There was a program from the very beginning of Cincinnati Bible College to build up a library. The proposal for an administration building that was to house a well-lighted library for thirty thousand volumes was made public in the 1928 school newsletter, *Nautilus*. In these early years the library was on the first floor of the boys' dorm, which was a small room with books mostly donated by preachers from the Churches of Christ and Christian Churches.

By 1928 there were about three thousand volumes in the library. Students also had access to and used the Cincinnati Public Library.

The first and most important book in the beginning library of C.B.C. was the Bible. Since funds were not available to purchase books, appeals were made through church newsletters, and according to the school's first librarian, Prof. W. C. Sayrs, as taken from *The Cincinnati Bible Seminary Bulletin* 1930, they had increased to five thousand volumes. No mention of a formal budget could be located in the research of those early years. In 1937 a total of two books was purchased.

In 1949 the library moved to the third floor of the administration building and was remodeled from what was a dark attic-like place to a room with fluorescent lighting and tiled floor. There were only forty chairs so students had to wait for seats, and there were also only thirty inches between book shelves making the situation a crowded one. The books were cataloged according to the Dewey Decimal System, and the library regularly received about fifteen theological quarterlies. In 1952 the graduating class contributed toward a card catalog case for the library, and the theses of graduates were filed by subjects for the

students to use in the library.

In the early years, the library was directed by faculty from the college. The first librarian was Prof. W. C. Sayrs. During the years 1937-1943, Miss Jewell Bishop, along with Prof. George Elliott, cared for the library. In 1944 the library was under the supervision of Prof. Elliott, with help of student librarian, Richard Crabtree, and was under faculty supervision until 1966. It was kept functioning in an efficient manner through student assistants. Early Sims, who became the next librarian, worked as student librarian for Professor Elliott. Dr. Sims served as the head librarian as well as the registrar and bookstore manager from 1953-1966. He had his degree in theology and had taken some library courses at the university. The library had seating for twenty-five students with about three hundred students in the school. There was no automation, and therefore catalog cards with only four lines of information, and labels on the spines of books were done by hand. The subject headings were taken from the librarian's head rather than books, such as Library of Congress.

Most of the books were from donations, a large part from the churches. With the establishment of the graduate school in 1956, a consideration of separation of the library into two libraries was considered. Since that, however, a graduate reference room housing a special collection was established, and the two separate libraries were not brought to pass.

By 1961 the library was growing at a rate of about one thousand volumes per year, and with a student body of 496 a need arose for a separate and larger library. The need was published in the school and alumni newsletters which mostly went to the Churches of Christ/Christian, and money came in to build the Edwin G. Crouch Memorial Library and Graduate School building.

From 1966-1968 a librarian, Miss Claudia Moore, who was qualified by virtue of education and experience, served. Accreditation with A.A.B.C. came into being in 1966. The total book collection for the 1966-1967 school year was 18,053 volumes, and the circulation of library materials was 9,096. About 65% of the library holdings were in the area of religion.

In 1968 Mr. Victor Maxey, former graduate of Cincinnati Bible Seminary, librarian and educator, became the director and served for eighteen years. Major events took place during these years that affected the library as well as college. The Edwin G. Crouch Memorial Library and Graduate School building,

named in honor of the late chairman of the board of trustees of the seminary,

was completed; and on February 6, 1969, students, faculty members, administrative officers, alumni, and librarians moved the library from the old quarters into the beautiful new facility. The main library, which is on the second floor, housed the approximately twenty-five thousand volume collection as well as provided study space for at least two hundred students.

Mr. Maxey was one of the founding fathers of the

Greater Cincinnati Library Consortium (G.C.L.C.) which opened the way for students to get materials at twenty-one other libraries in the city. Networking was a big part of the library during these years. A modern computer, the Cathode Ray Tube, which was

part of a nation-wide network of more than two thousand libraries and programmed with data for over seven million volumes, was installed in 1971. In 1973 Cincinnati Bible College and Seminary became the first Bible College to join OCLC (Ohio College Library Center), now called Online Computer Library Center, which gave student more interlibrary cooperation. By 1985 there were 52,272 volumes in the library and there was a real thrust to build the

Restoration Movement collection at this time. The library staff under Mr. Maxey consisted of an assistant to the librarian at first, and in his last four years two more employees were added to the staff.

In 1986 after serving as assistant to Mr. Maxey for two years, Mr. Jim Lloyd became director of the library and continues in that position to this day. He has degrees in theology, library science, Bible, and Christian ministries and is well qualified to serve the purpose of the college as well as the library. He has advanced the performance of this purpose as 75% of the collection is in Bible and theology.

The library seeks to fulfill its purpose in some of the following ways: by providing materials that inform and build faith and character; assisting in faculty research, preparation, and professional growth; providing services that train students and faculty for library use and maintaining a facility that is conducive to study and re-

search. Each library has a personality, as does its parent institution. In the year 2000 the clientele at the college and library are mostly from outside the city (674 from outside the city to 272 from the Cincinnati

area). About 13% of the undergraduate students are non-traditional, some being international students. The library is open every day of the week except Sunday. The approximate number of volumes in the library is 100,000 paper, 40,000 microforms and 15,000 in A/V. The film and video materials and sound recordings are housed in a separate audio visual room in the library. A rare books room and archives room have been added to the

The library staff of Cincinnati Bible College is under the leadership of Director, Jim Lloyd.

library over the past fifteen years and houses historical materials of Cincinnati Bible College and Seminary and the Restoration Movement, as well as one thousand or more rare books.

Under Mr. Lloyd there is a staff of five people which include the following: a technical services librarian, information services specialist, audiovisual supervisor, clerical assistant and an administrative assistant/secretary. With accreditation in 1966 to A.A.B.C. came the first evaluation in 1976 of the school and the library. Significant additions were made in eight different subject areas at this time. The school considered that, in light of its participation in the Ohio College Library Center (OCLC) as well as the greater Cincinnati Library Consortium, the collection was adequately broad. In 1989 the college was accredited by the Commission on Institutions of Higher Education of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools. As to the importance of accreditation in the library, Mr. Lloyd states that he has been made more aware of the mission of the school and the library's part in helping the college achieve its mission by supporting the classroom and curriculum and taking them beyond this to be able to go out to minister.

In maintaining a facility conducive to study and research and better provision of materials Cincinnati Bible College Library has become a member of Ohio Link (one of the nation's premiere statewide consortia of academic libraries). This is a research database with full-text services for books and periodicals and newspapers. Automation of the library has been in existence since 1997. It has been found, according to Jim Lloyd, library director, that since their library joined with Ohio Link in 1999 they have gone from about six databases to over seventy databases that they can provide to faculty and students. And furthermore they not only have access to these on campus, but they can access many of them remotely. OhioLINK also provides a statewide delivery service so that

students and faculty can initiate their own interlibrary loans and receive them in two to three days. Mr. Lloyd states that OhioLINK has provided them with the most significant benefit in the history of their library. It provides them with electronic indexes, full-text databases, full-text e-books, and significant services — things they never would have been able to afford as an individual library without this membership.

The biggest challenge they have faced, as stated Scott Lloyd, Information services specialist, was networking on campus and they pulled in a networking consultant to handle this. There has been an increase in circulation and people using the library since the webpage and automated catalog. The library was one of the first libraries in the country to subscribe to Proquest which includes several products that provides access to more than seventy full-text religion journals. One can use electronic journals from home through ProQuest. The ATLA Religion Database is also used now.

Since 1924 and the founding of Cincinnati Bible, the college has remained true to its mission to be a one-hundred-percent gospel training school, to prepare preachers, missionaries and church workers for Christian service. The library has followed the mission statement of the college in its purpose, goals and objectives and has followed the description of a Bible college library as given by the Accrediting Association of Bible Colleges. The personality of Cincinnati Bible College Library and its parent institution is and has been that of a Christian, conservative, Bible-based institution with outreach in service to others. Students should graduate with a sound theory of practice of ministry that will meet the current and future needs of a growing church, according to the Report of 1988-1989, and have the methods and tools of research for continuing personal and professional growth.

Changes have occurred in the college and the library in location and

structure, student population, library staff, and services but not in the goals. The future of Cincinnati Bible College and the library looks bright as they hold true to the vision and purpose God has entrusted to them.

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