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*Rooted in the Wesleyan tradition
And committed to inspiring passion for ministry
In diverse Christian bodies,*

*Saint Paul School of Theology
Educates leaders
To make disciples for Jesus Christ,
Renew the church,
And transform the world.*

“What do leaders of the church need to know, and how can they best learn it?” Like other Saint Paul faculty engaged in our seminary’s mission to **educate leaders** for the church, I am concerned to have thorough responses to these questions. Such answers capture the essence of my work as library director and member of the faculty.

I focus my work on establishing, maintaining, and promoting interlocking systems of access to an expanding universe of information. To speak merely of an information explosion is to far underestimate the world transformation we all have experienced in the last fifteen years. What’s happening is much more like a “big bang” than a supernova. Our place in the universe of knowledge has shifted so suddenly and is moving so rapidly that we struggle to find a fixed point for navigating our way. We must explore the potential benefit of this new context for the future of the church. If our present and future graduates are to **make disciples for Jesus Christ, renew the church, and transform the world** in the context of a new information universe, they will need the best navigation tools and skills.

Because of this need, I used part of my recent sabbatical time to develop a course in “Information Navigation.” It will provide our students with many fixed points for understanding where and how information can be found, sifted, and used effectively throughout their lives of teaching, learning, and ministry. The major assignment in the class requires students to articulate and explore their **passion for ministry** by developing a five-page bibliography of the best resources for an area of ministry that has deep and enduring life interest for them.

Another project I took on during my sabbatical was to lay the foundation for a new fixed navigation point for all seekers of religious information. I will continue to work on this online database, which will be invaluable to those involved in lay and professional theological education, as well as anyone interested in religious and theological topics.

As library director, I am especially concerned about the future place of libraries in education and culture. A rapidly expanding information universe places unique challenges on libraries and library personnel to help **educate leaders** for the present and future church. Long considered the revered sanctuary for all recorded knowledge, almost overnight libraries now face challenges undreamed of in previous decades. Questions of libraries’ continued cultural relevance and

effectiveness are now commonplace, when previously such notions were not imaginable. Competitors in the information universe are found at every turn, and libraries are stretched and pulled hard to reexamine and redefine their place in a transformed world. The library for the twenty-first century must reorient itself from the ground up to the new universe of challenges, expectations, and needs presented by a future church and future church leaders who will minister in **diverse Christian bodies**.

Theological libraries of the future must continue to collect, organize, and preserve the knowledge of past generations while at the same time seeking more effective and innovative ways to remain one of the knowledge hubs around which the new information universe revolves. To do that, libraries need to embrace more fully the characteristics of what Chris Anderson calls “long tail” operations (Chris Anderson, [The Long Tail: Why the Future of Business Is Selling Less of More](#) [New York: Hyperion, 2006]). “Long tail” operations are those, like Amazon.com, that can scale to fill the most arcane wants and needs of a single individual just as easily as they can fill the needs and wants common to the majority of their constituent base.

Establishing, maintaining, and promoting interlocking systems of access to information in our expanding universe will require libraries to become more self-aware as long tail operations. In order to maintain and grow the scope of their constituent base, libraries must find ways to promote all information needs for new generations of information seekers, church leaders and laity alike.