

Our Silver Anniversary

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The current school year is the twenty-fifth year of Asbury Theological Seminary. Such an anniversary by no means implies that the seminary has arrived at its ultimate goal; nevertheless it may be a proper time to make an alumni retrospect which will afford some measure for estimating the progress which the school has made through these years.

The first alumnus of Asbury Theological Seminary was the single graduate of the class of 1924. After a class of two in 1925, the first woman to be graduated from the seminary was the only member of the class of 1926. It is in accord with the seminary's emphasis upon world-wide evangelization that the first foreign-born alumni were two members of the class of 1927, who are thus numbered among the first ten graduates of the seminary.

From the small beginning of one alumnus the first year, classes increased to the extent that the one hundredth alumnus was graduated ten years later, a member of the class of 1934. Six years later a member of the class of 1940 became the two hundredth alumnus. The class of 1946 produced the three hundredth alumnus; and commencement of 1948, only two years later promises to see the four hundredth alumnus graduated.

Accreditation of the seminary by the American Association of Theological Schools in June, 1946, was of primary significance for the seminary and its alumni; and the first fully accredited class was graduated in 1947. This class was also the first class to be graduated after the seminary had received the approval of the University Senate of the Methodist Church.

A further indication of maturity of age is the fact that the present student body contains the first two "second generation" seminarians. The first of these to enter was the son of a member of the class of 1944, the other being the son of a member of the class of 1927.

Until 1947, the only academic degree granted by the seminary was the degree of Bachelor of divinity. With accreditation, however, the curriculum was enlarged to include the degree of Master of Religious Education, a two year course intended particularly for women who wish to work in the field of Christian education. The class of 1947 included four women who are the first to receive the M.R.E. degree from the seminary.

Within a quarter century the size of the graduating classes of Asbury Theological Seminary has increased from one, in 1924, to 37 in 1947, composed of graduates of 12 colleges and representing eight denominations: while more than 60 students have applied for degrees in the class of 1948. A total of 357 academic degrees have now been granted. The places of service of these alumni are many and varied. Most, of, them are pastors and evangelists. Forty of the alumni served as chaplains in the armed forces of the United States during the recent war. Approximately fifty are missionaries or are preaching in other nations. About fifteen are teachers. This ministry is truly world-wide, with alumni serving many denominations and organizations in forty-two states and in twenty-one other countries and colonies of the world.