A Guide to the L. Harold DeWolf Papers
1931-1981

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Biographical/Historical Sketch

L. (Lotan) Harold Dewolf (1905-1986) was a native of Columbus, Nebraska. He received his A.B. from Nebraska Wesleyan University in 1924 and his S.T.B. in 1926. He earned a Ph.D. from Boston University in 1935. From 1926 through 1936, DeWolf served as a Methodist minister in Nebraska and Massachusetts, respectively. From 1934-1944 he was a professor in the Department of Philosophy at Boston University before becoming a professor of Systematic Theology at Boston University.

Dr. DeWolf was the author of several books, including *The Religious Revolt against Reason*; *Eternal Life: Why We Believe*; *What Americans should do about Crime*; and *Crime and Justice in America: A Paradox of Conscience*. He is also the author of several other publications, including "The Case for Theology in Liberal Perspective" and "Responsible Freedom: Guidelines for Christian Action."

While at Boston University, L. Harold DeWolf was the dissertation advisor to Martin Luther King, Jr. The two remained in contact in the following years and Dr. DeWolf supported King's efforts in the Civil Rights Movement. Dr. DeWolf was invited by Martin Luther King to help with his desegregation campaign in St. Augustine, FL. Dr. DeWolf and three colleagues from Boston University were part of the tense civil rights discussions in St. Augustine. They were forced to move to the 4th floor of the Jacksonville Courthouse due to tension between the black and white neighborhoods in St. Augustine. However, despite these tensions, an agreement was reached. In 1964 DeWolf facilitated the donation of Martin Luther King's papers to Boston University. DeWolf spoke at King's funeral on April 9, 1968, calling him "an exemplar of faith, hope, and love." L. Harold DeWolf later testified before congress during the efforts to set aside a national holiday honoring Dr. King.

In 1965, DeWolf became dean and professor of Systematic Theology at Wesley Theological Seminary in Washington, D.C. He retired in 1972.

His teaching of Christian Ethics led him to study the problems of justice as an ethical problem. He received a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities to travel abroad to study criminal justice systems. He believed that correctional institutions should not be given over to "social revenge" but rather to human redemption.

In the 1970s he relocated to Lakeland, Florida, where he lectured periodically at Florida Southern College. He also worked with prisoners at the Polk Correctional Institute.

L. Harold DeWolf passed away in 1986.

Restrictions

These materials are available for research in the McKay Archives Center.

Permission to Publish

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Provenance Statement

The materials were donated by the subject in 1986.

Notes to Researchers

These materials have been arranged in as logical order as possible. There was no discernable order prior to processing as the materials had been housed and rehoused several times since they were donated. The series reflect the subject's involvement in academia, the Methodist Church, the American Civil Rights Movement, and criminal justice reform. Although there are materials in this collection from as early as 1931 and as late as 1981, the bulk of the materials cover a time period of the 1940s through the 1970s.

The Africa series contains notes, photographs, postcards, correspondence and other documents related to the subject's involvement in Methodist missionary work and education efforts in Africa, specifically Southern Rhodesia/Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe).

The Criminal Justice Reform series contains documents related to the subject's interest and work in criminal justice reform, specifically social restoration and rehabilitation.

The Lecture Notes series contains notes and lecture materials used in the subject's work as a university professor.

The Publications and Papers series contains book and article reviews published by the subject; academic papers and articles authored by the subject; and manuscript notes.

The Sermons and Speeches series contains religious and secular addresses made by the subject over the course of his career.

Box	F #	Series	Sub-Series	Title /Description
1				
	1	Africa		Nyasaland and Rhodesia, 1955-64
	2	Africa	Photographs	Rhodesia/Rhodesia Methodist Conference, 1955-68
	3	Africa	Photographs	Rhodesia/Rhodesia Methodist Conference, 1955-68
	4	Africa		Sermons and Speeches, 1955-63
	5	Africa		Honde, Zimbabwe, 1956-65
	6	Africa		University College of Rhodesia and Nyasaland, 1958-64
	7	Africa		Southern Rhodesia—Mt. Selinda, 1961-63
	8	Africa		Theological Education Fund, 1961-63
	9	Africa		University of Ghana, 1961-63
	10	Africa		Ibadan, University College of (Nigeria), 1962-64
	11	Africa		Meals for Millions, 1962-63
	12	Africa		Geren, Paul F. (U.S. State Department), 1964
	13	Africa		Central African Diploma in Theology, 1966-67
	14	Africa		Photographs and Postcards, Undated
	15	Correspondence		Miscellaneous, 1947-81
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	1	Criminal Justice Reform		NEH Proposal, 1954-81
	2	Criminal Justice Reform		The Netherlands, 1969-78
	3	Criminal Justice Reform		Miscellaneous, 1971-81
	4	Criminal Justice Reform	Conferences	Epworth Theological College, 1972-74
	5	Criminal Justice Reform	Conferences	North Carolina Council of Churches, 1972-75
	6	Criminal Justice Reform	Conferences	Boston University, 1974
	7	Criminal Justice Reform	Conferences	Concord (TN) United Methodist Church, 1974
	8	Criminal Justice Reform	Conferences	Miscellaneous, 1973-75
	9	Criminal Justice Reform	Conferences	Virginia Council of Churches, 1974-75
	10	Criminal Justice Reform	Conferences	Syracuse (NY) Area Pastors' School, 1975
	11	Criminal Justice Reform	OAR	Offender Aid and Restoration, 1978-81
	12	Criminal Justice Reform		America's Religious Leaders: National Council on Crime and Delinquency, 1979
	13	Criminal Justice Reform		UMC Florida Conference: Report on Alternatives to Capital Punishment, 1979
	14	Criminal Justice Reform		Presbyterian Church, 1979

	15	General		Marriage Records (MA), 1931-61
	16	General		King, Martin Luther, Jr., 1964-81
3				
	1	General		Dean, Wesley Theological Seminary, 1965
	2	General		Biographical
	3	Lecture Notes		"The University Lecture" Boston University, 1960
	4	Lecture Notes		Virginia Methodist Conference Pastors' School, Blackstone, October 2-5, 1967
	5	Lecture Notes		"The Catholic-Protestant Dialogue: Its Theological Perils and Values" Undated
	6	Lecture Notes		"The Victim: Forgotten Person of America's Criminal Justice" Undated
	7	Lecture Notes		Miscellaneous Undated
	8	Methodist Church		Editorial Committee, 1964-76
	9	Publications and Papers		Book and Article Reviews, 1942-48
	10	Publications and Papers		"The Religious Revolt Against Reason," 1949-51
	11	Publications and Papers		"A Theology of the Living Church I," 1952-61
	12	Publications and Papers		"A Theology of the Living Church II," 1957-64
	13	Publications and Papers		"A Hard Rain's a-Gonna Fall," 1964-65
	14	Publications and Papers		Article: "The Authority of Religious Experience," 1958
	15	Publications and Papers		"The Age of Evangelism: A Trilogy on the Nature and Work of Evangelism," 1965
	16	Publications and Papers		Article: "Theology and Ecology," 1970
	17	Publications and Papers		"Responsible Freedom," 1971
	18	Publications and Papers		"Two Americas: The Ethics of Sentencing," Commencement Address, University of Nevada—Reno, 1973
	19	Publications and Papers		Article: "Criminal Justice as a Social Defense and Restoration: A Theory Rooted in the Pluralistic American Religious Heritage," 1974
	20	Publications and Papers		Article: "Violence and Non-Violence in the American Tradition in Relation to Crime," 1976
	21	Publications and Papers		"Eternal Life: Why We Believe" 1980
	22	Publications and Papers		Manuscript: "Crime and Rehabilitation," 1981
	23	Publications and Papers		Article: 'Elements of Reform and Voluntary Action," Undated
	24	Publications and Papers		"Natural Beauty and Theism," Undated
	25	Publications and Papers		Article: "Toward a Conciliation of Personalism and Behaviorism," Undated
	26	Publications and Papers		Article: "Trends and Authors in Contemporary Theology," Undated

	27	Publications and Papers		Miscellaneous Articles, Undated
	28	Sermons and Speeches		General, 1948-59
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	1	Sermons and Speeches		General, 1961-69
	2	Sermons and Speeches		Methodist Theological Response to Ecumenicalism, 1966
	3	Sermons and Speeches		General, 1970-74
	4	Sermons and Speeches		General, Undated
	5	University Lecture		Boston University, 1960
	6	Student Paper		"From Where I Sit: A Concurrence and Dissent on L. Harold DeWolf's *Crime and Justice in America*" October 20, 1978 John M. Scheb
	7	Notebook		Spiral notebook with various writings