

## NORTH CAROLINA LIBRARIES

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### PRESIDENT'S CORNER

When Ts'ai Lun in A.D. 105 reported the invention of a process of making paper, his wildest dreams could not have revealed the significance of that commodity in a twentieth century civilization. Of all of the thousands of uses made of paper the most important is that of the manufacturing of books.

When John Gutenberg in or about the year 1440 set the type and printed the first pages from movable type, it is doubted that even he, a most imaginative man, could visualize the extent to which printing would shape the world.

In 1956 a total of 12,538 new books or new editions of books were published in the United States. Quantitatively, other countries have done as well or better with Russia being the leading publisher in the world today. A recent United Nations survey shows that the world-wide output of books amounts to more than 150,000 titles annually. In other words, a new book is published every three and one-half minutes. The U.N. definition of a book is "a literary publication containing 49 or more pages" which excludes countless thousands of printed items and tons and tons of brochures, pamphlets, journals, newspapers, and the like.

Here, librarians and teachers, are our tools; the tools to be used in the continuous reshaping of the world. The tremendous responsibility of acquiring, processing, housing, and making available to users the great bodies of materials rests upon our shoulders and the shoulders of those who provide the material means for accomplishing our objectives. Let us not take this responsibility lightly.

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O. V. Cook