

ForATL News

Newsletter of the Forum of Asian Theological Librarians

Volume 2: Issue 1

June 2004

ForATL News

is published twice a year (June and December) by the Forum of Asian Theological Librarians as a channel for updates on ForATL activities, as well as a forum for discussion and exchange in the field of Asian theological librarianship.

Subscription : Free

Editor : Christabel Wong

Address :
STM Library
P.O. Box 175
70720 Seremban
Negeri Sembilan
Malaysia.

Fax : +60-6-6329766

Email : christabel@stm.edu.my

ForATL Website : <http://www.geocities.com/foratl>

ForATL mailing list : foratl-subscribe@yahoogroups.com

ForATL News welcomes contributions related to theological librarianship and the development of theological resources in Asia. All manuscripts or correspondence should be sent to the Editor, who reserves the right to determine suitability for publication.

SPECIAL THANKS...

for this issue goes to **Ms Debbie Siew** (library volunteer, Seminari Theoloji Malaysia) for her editorial help, **Mr P. Sakhivel** (Library Assistant, Seminari Theoloji Malaysia) for his input, and **Mrs Li-Chun Chen Huang** (Librarian, Chiong Jung Christian University, Taiwan) for permission to use her photos.

ASIA-PACIFIC FORUM FOR LIBRARY AND ARCHIVES MANAGEMENT TRAINING: A REPORT



Forty-two participants and several facilitators from 20 countries, representing various church and faith traditions, gathered from June 1-30, 2004 at the Ecumenical Resource Centre of the United Theological College, Bangalore, India, for the "Asia-Pacific Forum for Library and Archives Management Training." The training programme was jointly organised by WCC-ETE, CCA, SATHRI and ForATL, and coordinated by Dr. Wati Longchar (WCC-ETE Consultant), Dr. Samson Prabhakar (Director of SATHRI), Mr. Karmito (ForATL Convenor) and Mrs. Elizabeth T. Pulanco (ForATL Secretary).

This training arose from the third ForATL consultation and regional meeting held in Bangkok 2003 and is a follow-up programme of the Conference on Archives and Documentation. One of the first in the Asia-Pacific, the purpose of this training programme was to equip and train Librarians/Archivists with the necessary skills to develop archival centres, namely to:

- Support and to encourage the preservation of theological, missionary, and church archives and documentation for the needs of the region.
- Understand the theory and practice of theological, missionary, and church archival work in such areas as: archival management, collection development policy, acquisition, arrangement and description, research and users' services, oral history interviews and processing, and physical facilities.
- Gain practical experience in the methods used by theological archivists for archival management and conservation.

The training cleared some of the participants' doubts and answered their questions; creating awareness and enthusiasm among the participants to:

- Collect, preserve and make available valuable materials, in various forms.
- Strive continuously for the improvement of cooperation and fellowship between the institutions and the individuals.
- Establish and implement joint ventures – resource sharing, joint publications, etc.
- See the real value of some of the materials people never cared for.
- Learn what and how to collect, to organise and preserve, etc.

(Continued on page 2)

(Continued from page 1)

The month-long programme began with an introduction by Dr. Wati Longchar and Dr. Sathynathan Clarke of United Theological College extended a warm welcome to all participants. An ecumenical worship service followed. In his keynote address, Bishop J.W. Gladstone challenged the participants to do their best. Four major aspects were covered during the course of the training:

1. Sharing of Hope and Visions: Representatives from various countries gave reports on the current situation of archives in their respective countries. As each shared their experiences, others made comparisons with their own experiences and this helped participants to discover new ways of archives management and conservation. All recognised that their respective histories had affected the nature of their collections and, particularly, where archival collections were held. Awareness was also created among the participants as to the importance of preserving and conserving the oral tradition and history of tribal and original peoples. The security and use of archives, as well as the need for training in archival work, were also discussed.



2. Theological, Philosophical and Historical Foundations: Six resource persons spoke on various perspectives of archives management. Mrs. Rita England underlined the significance and role of archives/resource management in the Asia-Pacific and stressed the importance of archives for self-

discovery and identity. She also focused on the archival task within Asian/Pacific resources and provided practical steps for setting up archival centres. Dr. John England urged all to be aware of the wealth of materials still to be uncovered in their own regions. Dr. Gerald Anderson spoke on the Western missionary movement as well as the importance of resource management to understand history and to enable future generations to recount stories of institutions and individuals. Dr. Hope Antone emphasised the importance of librarians/archivists in promoting the ecumenical movement and ecumenical ministerial formation. New ways of looking at history were encouraged by Dr. George Oommen, who spoke on the Asian perspective, whilst Dr. Mrinalini Sebastian challenged participants to see beyond the existing male-dominated history to recognize the importance of women's stories and experiences in understanding our church.

3. Management and Conservation: Dr. Paul Jenkins' lectures provided skills on management and conservation of photos, and showed how photos could bring new light in reconstructing history and identity. Dr. Joseph Patmury helped participants understand how community heritages in Asia and the Pacific are preserved by dances, songs, oral stories and other artistic forms, and provided some practical methods to conserve those heritages. Ms. Aileen Khoo demonstrated practical steps and methods for collection, conservation and management of oral stories. A week was spent with Mrs. Martha Smalley, who covered various aspects of technical and scientific management of archives. Dr. M. K. Bhandi lectured on the subject of artifacts management.

(Continued on page 3)

TRAINING PROGRAMME AND RESOURCE PERSONS :

1. The Role and Significance of Archives/Resource Management in Asia and Pacific – *Mrs. Rita England*
2. The Archival Task Within Asian/Pacific Resources – *Mrs. Rita England*
3. Scope, Diversity, Adventure of Asian-Pacific Resources – *Dr. John England*
4. Interpretation and Preservation of Mission History – *Dr. Gerald Anderson*
5. Interpretation and Preservation of Asian Resources – *Dr. George Oommen*
6. Ecumenical Ministerial Formation and Librarians – *Dr. Hope S. Antone*
7. Recovery and Preservation of Women's Stories – *Dr. Mrinalini Sebastian*
8. Preservation and Interpretation of Dance, Song, Play, and Other Artistic Forms and Expressions – *Dr. Joseph Patmury*
9. Preservation of Oral Tradition: A Practical Experience – *Ms. Aileen Hooi-Ai Khoo*
10. Conservation and Management of Photography – *Dr. Paul Jenkins*
11. Technical and Scientific Management of Archives – *Mrs. Martha Smalley*
12. Scope, Technique and Preservation of History/Tradition Through Information Technology – *Mrs. Martha Smalley*
13. Management and Interpretation of Artifacts – *Dr. M. K. Bhandi*
14. Rome 2002 Conference and Challenges for Theological Librarians In Asia – *Mr. Karmito*
15. Ecumenical Theological Education in Asia/Pacific: Visions, Hopes and Future Directions – *Dr. Wati Longchar*

PARTICIPANTS' COMMENTS

The following comments were compiled from evaluation forms distributed at the end of the programme:

Weaknesses

- 30 days' duration is too long
- 7 hours of classes a day is too much
- Insufficient practical work
- Inadequate facilities, e.g., Internet, printer, projector, LCD, etc.
- One and a half hour lectures are too long – one hour is enough
- One facilitator was not organised and prepared

Strengths

- The input from the facilitators was very good and substantial
- The practical exercises given by Martha Smalley and Paul Jenkins were very helpful and excellent
- Study tours to libraries, cultural and historical places were excellent and well-organised
- Location of training programme was good and provided good atmosphere
- Delegates were well-represented from all countries
- Gender balance of the participants is commendable
- Wide range of archives-related topics
- Variety of interesting topics
- Interaction among participants was very enriching

Recommendations

- Sharing of resources
- Networking with librarians and archivists for sharing of information, problem-solving and encouragement
- Similar training events in regions/countries
- Training of seminarians/theological students in records management
- Exchange of duplicate journals/serials, union listings of bibliographies
- Digitisation of Asia-Pacific Theological Archives and online sharing of resources

(Continued from page 2)

4. Study Exposure Trips: Apart from lectures and practical sessions, participants visited the following centres to enable them to see and experience archives and library management in various settings:

- United Theological College Library, Bangalore
- Indian Institute of Management, Bangalore
- Indian Institute of Science, Bangalore
- St. Peter's Pontifical Seminary Library, Bangalore
- Visvesvaraya Museum, Bangalore

The following cultural and historical places were visited:

- Vadegall Basadi in Sharavanabelagola – a 1,000 year old Sri Gomateshwara Jain Temple
- Halebedu Temple in Hassan, built in 1121 AD
- Keshava Temple, Belur, built in 1117 AD
- Tipu Sultan Summer Palace, Mysore, built in 1784 AD
- St. Joseph and St. Philomena Cathedral, Mysore
- Maharaja Palace, Mysore



Apart from the formal study programme and exposure tours, learning also took place in other forms. Participants were taken to different churches on Sundays for worship, which enabled them to appreciate and experience various church traditions. During the free time after the normal lecture sessions, participants also helped each other in teaching PowerPoint programme presentation, web creation, etc. In addition, two evenings were allocated for participants to share on the current situation of Christianity in their respective countries with the United Theological College community.



Conclusion

The training programme was able to fulfil its goal of equipping participants with the necessary skills to develop and manage archives. A participant summarised the whole training in one sentence, saying, "it created a new super-highway toward new heights." Requests were voiced to conduct similar programmes in areas like Myanmar, Cambodia and the Pacific, where the need for such training is greater. The participants also recommended that the organisers explore available resources and set in action a plan for the digitisation of Asia-Pacific archival resources, which could then be made available online to researchers.

Lastly, the organisers would like to express deep appreciation to all sponsors for their kind and generous support in helping to make this programme possible.

Condensed from reports prepared by:

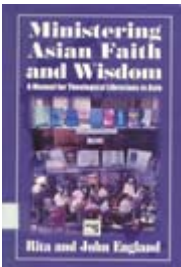
Dr. Wati Longchar
 Dr. Samson Prabhakar
 Mrs. Elizabeth T. Pulanco
 Ms. Nurdiana Sari Wijaya.

BOOK NEWS



Asian Christian Theologies: A Resource Guide to Authors, Movements, Sources, edited by John C. England, Jose Kuttianimattathil, John Mansford Prior, Lily A. Quintos, David Suh Kwang-sun, Janice Wickeri. In 3 volumes. Delhi: ISPCK; Manila: Claretian Publishers; Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2002-2004. Cloth, ISBN 1570754810 (v.1), 1570754829 (v.2), 1570754837 (v.3).

These three volumes present a guide to study and research in the contextual theologies of Asian countries from the 7th to the 20th centuries, providing entries with bibliographies and bibliographic tools on key persons, movements and publications, set within their historical and religious context. Volume I covers Asian Christian theologies from the 7th to the 18th centuries, the Indian sub-continent (India, Sri Lanka, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Nepal) and Australasia (Australia and New Zealand). Volume II covers Southeast Asia - Burma/Myanmar, Cambodia and Laos, Indonesia, Malaysia and Singapore, Philippines, Thailand and Vietnam. Volume III, launched in June 2004 at the recent Asia-Pacific Forum for Library and Archives Management Training, Bangalore, covers the northern part of the region - China, Hong Kong, Macau, Taiwan, Inner Asia, Japan and Korea (North and South).



Ministering Asian faith and wisdom: a manual for theological librarians in Asia, by Rita and John England. Quezon City: New Day Publishers; Delhi: ISPCK, 2001. Paper, 214 pages, ISBN 9711010577 (New Day), 8172146302 (ISPCK).

This book addresses a wide spectrum of issues for the doing of theology and theological education in Asia, with appropriate application for theological librarianship. The treatment and level of detail are such that the book is useful to a variety of audiences, ranging from those whose exposure to theological librarianship is relatively new, to those who could benefit from a review of the task of ministering Asian faith and wisdom, and all those whose involvement is essential to the development of Asian theological resources. The book covers three aspects:

- I. Where we now stand, what we have from past tradition, what is Asian theology and where do we find it.
- II. Practical steps in reorientation
- III. Bibliographies, resources, address listings, and tools

ERRATA

In ForATL News 1:1 (June 2003), it was reported that “the Executive Committee is scheduled to meet in Taiwan in 2006 to evaluate the progress of various plans and assigned tasks, as well as to prepare for the fourth Consultation to be held in Seremban, Malaysia, in 2007.” The Executive Committee meeting is, in fact, scheduled for 2005 and the fourth Consultation will be held in 2006. The error is regretted.

