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.

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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.

Contents

NOTICE!

Please note that articles for the next issue of ForATL News (5:1, June 2007) will be contributed by the **Philippines region.**

Deadline: 31 May 2007

Articles in this issue focus on the
India/Myanmar/Pakistan/Sri Lanka region
of the Forum of Asian Theological Librarians
Next issue : **Philippines region**

LIBRARY NETWORKING AND COOPERATION
Some theological library associations in the region

1) Joint Library Committee (JLC), Bangalore

The Joint Library Committee (JLC), an association of librarians from Bangalore Theological Institutions, was established in the year 1984. Membership has grown over the years and we now have seventeen active members from within and around Bangalore city. The formation of JLC has proved that we are one in Christ with one mission to accomplish, that is, to serve God by serving others. Once in four months, members meet in a different institution to have fellowship, discuss various issues related to the association, and plan for projects that would enhance cooperation in the association. Various scholars and experts are invited to guide us in our progress through presenting papers and other forms of training. People from the various institutions enjoy the fellowship and working towards a common goal. As per the Constitution, a regular member institution can borrow five books from a fellow institution without having to pay any fee. The JLC is led by a Convenor/Secretary and Treasurer.

The JLC has published, among others, directories and handbooks containing information on member institutions, a list of periodical holdings, and a list of dissertations held by member institutions. A four-day workshop on WINISIS was conducted from 20-23 September 2006 to assist future cooperative projects, such as, creating a union catalogue and producing an index to Indian theological Journals in English. Eighty Indian journals have already been selected for this purpose and the task assigned to various institutions.

Report submitted by :
JLC Convenor/Secretary
Stephenson Manuel
Librarian, Southern Asia Bible College, Bangalore

Editor's note:

If you're interested, a study on networking among Bangalore theological college libraries by Gordon Harris was published in *Ministerial Formation* (76, Jan 1997) and later cited by Glenroy Taitt in *Libri* (55, 2005). See references below.

Harris, Gordon. "Cooperation between Bangalore theological college libraries and the potential of electronic networking". *Ministerial Formation* 76 (January 1997): 49–53.

Taitt, Glenroy. "Co-Operation among Caribbean Theological Libraries: A Case Study". *Libri* 55 (2005): 148-153.
(Available at www.librijournal.org/pdf/2005-2-3pp148-153.pdf)

Theological Library Associations (cont.)

2) ITLA : Indian Theological Library Association
(A professional association of theological libraries and librarians in India)

URL : http://www.geocities.com/itla_in/home.html
Email : itla_in@yahoo.com

Formed in 1980, initial membership consisted of thirty-six libraries associated with the Senate of Serampore College. A decision was made recently to open ITLA's membership to other theological libraries that are accredited by ATA, and seminaries managed by Catholic churches in India.

Executive Committee (2005-2008)
Current Executive Committee members elected at the National Triennial Conference in October 2005 are :

President	Mr. Chacko Chacko Union Biblical Seminary, Pune	
Vice-President	Mrs. Elizabeth Kamalavadhanan Gurukul Lutheran Theological College, Chennai	
Executive Secretary/Treasurer	Mr. Yesan Sellan South Asia Institute of Advanced Christian Studies Bangalore	

Committee Members	1. Mr. Stephenson Manuel
	   Southern Asia Bible College, Bangalore
	2. Mrs. Mary Victor
	   United Theological Seminary of Maharashtra, Pune
	3. Fr. John Baptist Saldanha
	   St. Joseph's Seminary, Mangalore
	4. Mrs. Laltlani PC
	   Aizawl Theological College, Aizawl	

Objectives
1. To foster the professional growth of its members, and to enhance their ability to serve their constituencies as administrators and librarians
2. To strengthen the profession of theological librarianship, and assist theological librarians in defining and interpreting the proper role and function of libraries in theological education
3. To publish bulletins or periodicals which will promote the realization of the objectives of ITLA
4. To promote quality library and information services in support of teaching, learning, and research in theology
5. To provide training to enhance the knowledge and professional skills of librarians
6. To stimulate purposeful collaboration among theological librarians
7. To affiliate and co-operate with international organizations

Main projects planned by ITLA are a directory of Theological Librarians in India, a Union List of Serials in Indian Theological Libraries, and a Union List of Catalogues. The Association's first newsletter on ITLA activities and news from member colleges has recently been released (Jan-Apr 2007); the next issue has been scheduled for May 2007.

(*Information adapted by the Editor from the ITLA website and ForATL mailing list*)

DIGITALIZATION AND MICROFILMING OF ARCHIVES MATERIALS
The United Theological College, Bangalore (URL: http://www.utcbangalore.org)

Front view of the Library of the United Theological College, Bangalore

We are happy and proud to say that The United Theological College, Bangalore, was awarded the U.S. Ambassador's Cultural Preservation Fund for 2006 on September 27th, 2006 at Chennai. This is the first time that an institution in South India has been awarded this fund. With the help of this fund, we will be digitalizing and microfilming palm leaves, some manuscripts and rare books. We are also very grateful to The United Board for Christian Higher Education in Asia, which has also come forward to sponsor our digitalization and microfilming project. Through the financial help of these two sponsors we will be able to digitalize and microfilm a portion of the Archives material. The project started on 30th October 2006 and will go on for about 8 months.

The United Theological College Archives, which began over 50 years ago, was initiated with the donation of records from the American Madura Mission and the London Missionary Society in Mysore State. It was followed by other missions and churches requesting that their material also be housed here as the Archives is air-conditioned and the material could be well-preserved.

The Archive collection comprises of four types of materials, viz

1) Unpublished materials; these are beautifully handwritten records which are vital primary sources.

2) Microfilms and microfiches of records, correspondence, petitions etc. of the various mission organizations, including the Census of India from 1872-1951, etc.

3) Periodicals, viz Danish-Halle Mission Reports from 1708, Harvest Field from 1861, and others.

4) Rare and Old Books, the oldest being Martin Luther's Commentary on Galatians, dated 1523 and some priceless books like Ziegenbalg's First Tamil Bible, Grammatica Damulica (Tamil Grammar) 1716 and many more.

We also have a collection of palm leaves in Kannada, Malayalam, Sanskrit, Tamil and Telugu that are about 200 years old, which contain literature, religious writings, astrological texts etc.

The various private collections of different people, including Vedanayagam Shastriar (Christian poet, Tanjore), Sadhu Sundar Singh (Christian mystic), M.M. Thomas (lay theologian), S.J. Samartha (Inter-religious Dialogue, WCC) etc. are also housed in the archives.

Some of the above materials mentioned are very brittle and in the form of loose sheets, which need our immediate attention in terms of preservation.

The Archives is being used by a host of students, research scholars and teaching faculty from various backgrounds. They include university scholars from various disciplines from India and abroad.

We are hopeful that many more sponsors will come forward to assist us in this noble task, to enable us to complete the digitalizing of the whole archives, so that the material could be made available for wider usage and for the glory of God.

Reported by :

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10th November 2006

(*Rita Wesley is the ForATL Area Representative for India, Myanmar, Pakistan and Sri Lanka.*)

EDITOR'S NOTE:

Read the press release of the US Embassy in New Delhi regarding the **U.S. Ambassador's Cultural Preservation Fund 2006** award-giving online at :

http://newdelhi.usembassy.gov/ambsept282006b.html

CATALOGUE COMPUTERIZATION : A SIMPLE LIBRARY DATABASE
Theological College of Lanka (URL: http://www.tclsl.org)

The Librarian's perspective …
by Mrs. Maggie Mudalige

At the beginning of November we began to input book records into our new Library Database, designed by our Development Officer and based on Microsoft Access. According to our Accessions Registers we have over 23,000 books to enter! We are first inputting the English-language books, as most of our books are in that language, but also to familiarize ourselves with the new system. We have started with the Christianity/comparative religion section (Dewey classes 220-290), and after that we will input sections according to their priority in relation to the subjects that are studied here. When it comes to the Sinhala and Tamil books, we will have to transliterate titles; we have the capability to also input an English title, if given in the book. This will help us to link translated works together.

Inside Theological College of Lanka library

At the moment, as the Librarian, I am creating the records, again to see if there are any adjustments to be made, but so far I am very happy with the process, and glad that a dream is coming true! We have only two staff in the Library, so at some point we have to make a decision as to whether we hire somebody to input data, being conscious that accuracy of data entry is very important.

If anyone has recent experience of computerizing their catalogue, and has any tips to pass on, we'd be glad to hear from you!
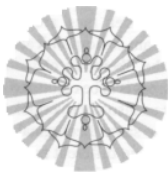
Thoughts from the Development Officer …
by Mr. James Rowley

The Theological College of Lanka (TCL) has recently started to load data into a new computer database. This database uses the widely available Microsoft Access tool. The guiding principle behind its development for TCL was the KISS principle, Keep It Simple Stupid, a fundamental design principle in all areas of engineering including software engineering. Version 1 of the database will be used only for searches and does not record borrowing. Given the frequency and length of power cuts and the small number of students, it was felt that making the borrowing function dependent on an electronic database would not be friendly to borrowers and staff. Even so, the database is designed "for but not with" so that borrowings can be easily added in the future. Maintenance of the database by people other than the developer has also been considered. The number of tables has been kept to a minimum while forms, reports and the underlying queries are as uniform as possible. A few macros are used but no Visual Basic (VB) code has been written. The database has been tested with 20,000 test items and will certainly be quick enough for users. Speed and constancy of data entry are helped by the use of publisher, author and corporate body tables which prevent an author, for example, from being entered twice with slightly different spelling. Contributions to a book of collected essays are also entered. A maintenance manual has been produced with long term maintenance in mind.

Submitted by:
Sarah J Niles, Assistant Librarian
Theological College of Lanka,
Pilimatalawa, Sri Lanka

THE FORUM OF ASIAN THEOLOGICAL LIBRARIANS
WISHES ALL COLLEAGUES AND FRIENDS

A BLESSED CHRISTMAS

AND A GRACE-FILLED NEW YEAR 2007!

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