

THEOLOGICAL LIBRARIES - AN OVERVIEW ON HISTORY AND PRESENT ACTIVITIES OF THE INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL OF ASSOCIATIONS OF THEOLOGICAL LIBRARIES

By André J. Geuns and Barbara Wolf-Dahm

I. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The origin of libraries goes very far back in humanity's memory. The earliest testimonies to their existence can be traced to around 3000 BC. Libraries were often found in the proximity of kings or priests. They were the first to collect and preserve documents produced by their own activities. Religious libraries have existed in all eras of humanity's cultural history. In many cases they led to the conservation of other types of documents.

While both general and religious libraries have a long history, the more concerted effort to organize library-activities is far more recent. It was not until the end of nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth that common forms of library-organisations arose in Europe and the United States of America, either on a national as international level. Henri La Fontaine and Paul Otlet were the first to organize the international cooperation of libraries and librarians. In 1885 they founded the „Institut International de Bibliographie“ that in 1938 took the name by which it is still known, „Fédération Internationale de Documentation – FID“. Another, more typical, initiative to establish an internationally recognised association of libraries resulted in the „International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions“ (IFLA), founded in 1927 under the auspices of UNESCO at Edinburgh. It encompassed associations and institutes (such as libraries and library-formation institutions) as well as personal associates.

Theological libraries followed the same evolution - even if at a certain distance. Although ecclesiastical libraries had worked for centuries to collect and preserve theological documents often preserving precious ancient manuscripts, there was little concerted cooperation and no form of association had ever seen the light. These relatively small libraries jealously guarded their valuable collections, their independence and their limited access, until they were forced by the disastrous situation that followed the Second World War to go beyond their own enclosures

and seek the support of similar libraries and colleagues. Indeed, the first theological library associations were established some fifty years ago in the United States and in Europe.

The earliest effort to organize theological libraries in an association resulted in the American Library Association (ALA), which included theological libraries as early as 1884. In 1916, representatives from 21 libraries met to found the Round Table for Theological libraries. This became known as the ALA Religious Books Round Table. It took another thirty years of dreaming, anticipation, and effort to establish the first autonomous theological library association. In 1946, immediately following World War II, the American Association of Theological Schools (AATS) issued a call for a meeting of the librarians of its 110 member institutions. It appointed a committee to prepare a program and convene the conference that met on 23-24 June 1947 with 50 librarians attending. Over the last fifty years this effort has grown into the most important national association of theological libraries to date. The „American Theological Library Association (ATLA)“ is actively involved in serving the needs of theological libraries even beyond the boundaries of the United States.¹

One year later, in 1947, faced with the need to rebuild after the Second World War, private universities, seminaries for the formation of priests, Abbeys and other religious Orders in (then West) Germany founded an Association of Catholic Ecclesiastical Libraries: Arbeitsgemeinschaft Katholisch-Theologischer Bibliotheken (AKThB). The founding assembly took place on the 11th of August of 1947 in Frankfurt (St. Georgen Hochschule).² A few months later, on the second of October 1947, the directors of the libraries of seminaries and religious orders in The Netherlands established an association for seminary and monastic libraries, the „Vereniging voor Seminarie- en Kloosterbibliotheken“ (VSKB),

¹ See Elmer J. O'BRIEN and Betty A. O'BRIEN: From Volunteerism to Corporate Professionalism: a Historical Sketch of the American Theological Library Association, in: THE AMERICAN THEOLOGICAL LIBRARY ASSOCIATION: essays in celebration of the first fifty years, ed. by M. Patrick GRAHAM, Valerie R. HOTSCHKISS and Kenneth E. ROWE, Evanston, Ill.: American Theological Library Association, 1996, p. 4 -5; ISBN 0-524-10300-3.

² See Hermann-Josef SCHMALOR: Die Arbeitsgemeinschaft Katholisch-Theologischer Bibliotheken (AKThB), in: CONSEIL INTERNATIONAL des Associations de Bibliothèques de Théologie 1961 - 1996, éd. par Godelieve GINNEBERGE, Leuven: Bibliotheek van de Faculteit Godgeleerdheid van de K.U. Leuven, 1996, p. 9; ISBN 90-73683-17-3.

which in 1974 became the „Vereniging voor het Theologisch Bibliothecariaat“ (VTB).³

Several years later, in 1954, the World Council of Churches under the auspices of UNESCO convened a meeting in Geneva to establish the ambitious „International Association of Theological Libraries“ (IATL). This meeting witnessed to the need for the world-wide dissemination of information about theological libraries. It received UNESCO funding for one of its main aims, the publication of an international journal of religious bibliography. The IATL also expressed its desire to become a member of IFLA. The American libraries joined together in ATLA participated in this international effort as did their colleagues in the United Kingdom who in 1956 had founded the Association of British Theological and Philosophical Libraries (ABTAPL). Unfortunately, this international organisation was short-lived. Because it failed to obtain the endorsement of UNESCO, it stopped its activities in 1961. Nevertheless the time was ripe to promote internationalisation among theological libraries, particularly in Europe. Many of the IATL's aims and objectives were adopted by a new - this time private - initiative. While the existing national associations limited their action radius to their own particular purposes and needs, each one marked by its own language(s) and denominational characteristics, the need for operating on an international level grew steadily. The first international meeting of national associations took place in Frankfurt in September 1957, on the tenth anniversary of the foundation of the AKThB.⁴

This first informal contact gradually led the directors of the three founding-associations to meet one another periodically. They agreed on common directives and delineated an action-plan. The first official meeting was also held in Frankfurt on the 18th of October 1961. Present were delegates from three national associations: AKThB (Germany), VSKB (The Netherlands) and ABSR (France). This last acronym stands for the „Association des Bibliothèques de Sciences Religieuses“, started when three theological teaching institutions in Lyon decided

³ „Les promoteurs de cette fondation considéraient comme une mission apostolique non seulement la prise en charge de la conservation des collections précieuses de livres de séminaires et de couvents, mais aussi leur mise à la disposition d'un plus large public.“ See Johan VAN WYNGAERDEN: La 'Vereniging voor het Theologisch Bibliothecariaat' (VTB), in: CONSEIL INTERNATIONAL, p. 29.

⁴ „A cette occasion elle (l'AKThB) avait invité à titre amical quelques bibliothécaires étrangers: le P. Luchsius Smits (VSKB, Hollande), le P. Francis Courtney (ABTAPL, Angleterre), le P. Paul Mech (France).“ See Paul MECH, Herman MORLION et André J. GEUNS: Le Conseil International des Associations de Bibliothèques de Théologie, in: CONSEIL INTERNATIONAL, p. 1.

to break with their rather isolated way of operating.⁵ This new organisation was officially named: „Comité International de Coordination des Associations de Bibliothèques de Théologie Catholique“ (CIC). It advocated many of the aims and objectives promoted by the defunct IATL. It co-ordinated the services offered by national associations, fostered their international application and ultimately promoted new and ambitious proposals. Among its earliest initiatives were:

1. SCRIPTA RECENTER EDITA: the publication of an international bibliographical bulletin covering mainly the field of theology.
2. BIBLIOGRAPHIA AD USUM SEMINARIORUM: a series of annotated thematic bibliographies of liturgical, ecumenical and religious music documents.
3. The establishment of an international book-shop, where all the associates could order books at advantageous rates: VSKB WORLD LIBRARY SERVICE.
4. TEOL: an exchange programme for out-of-print books, offered to all members of the various associations.
5. The reproduction of ancient documents on microfiches by the Benedictine Abbey of SLANGENBURG in the Netherlands.

Of these projects, only the last two continue.

By 1965 the annual meetings became rather irregular. The group lacked a solid structure and continuity.

By 1970 the many changes that had occurred in European theological libraries required a revision of the international committee's original form. One event that greatly influenced this revision was the second Vatican Council. In its footsteps, library cooperation began to move into the ecumenical sphere. Another major change in the theological libraries was the replacement of the clergy-librarians with qualified lay people. This opened membership to public libraries holding valuable collections of theological books. During that period many theological libraries had to operate in a situation inferior to that of other types of libraries, especially those run by public institutions. They felt unable to cope satisfactorily with the numerous challenges they faced. The members of the CIC proposed to establish regular and structured encounters, to improve cooperation and to call for

⁵ „L'initiative était venue de la présence de trois institutions: la Faculté de théologie des Facultés catholiques de Lyon, le Séminaire universitaire, et la Faculté de théologie jésuite de Lyon-Fourvière“. Paul MECH: L'Association des Bibliothèques Ecclésiastiques de France (ABEF), in: CONSEIL INTERNATIONAL, p. 43.

a general assembly at least once a year, inviting each member-association to send two delegates. Furthermore they decided to reform the committee into a more structured body and to draw up legally valid statutes. Its name was changed to the one it now bears: „Conseil International des Associations de Bibliothèques de Théologie“, with official titles in German, „Internationaler Rat der Vereinigungen theologischer Bibliotheken“, and in English, the „International Council of Theological Library Associations“.⁶ The social seat of the Council was established, mainly for then practical reasons, in The Netherlands.

From 1971 the annual General Assemblies have been held regularly, each time in a different country, to view the work of each member-association.⁷ The number of associates in the Council grew gradually, especially after 1990, when political changes in Central and Eastern Europe opened the doors for the theological libraries in those areas to establish associations and participate in international cooperation.

The Council's Statutes recognize two levels of membership: first is the ordinary membership, of the various national associations that are themselves comprised of individual libraries; second is a special membership granted to important libraries that house extensive theological collections.

At present, the International Council counts 10 ordinary members and 4 special members, representing over 2000 libraries, with a total stock of over 60 million volumes. Given the ancient origin of a great number of these libraries, the presence of the antique and precious books should cause little surprise.

II. FORM AND STRUCTURE

A. Objectives

The official statutes⁸ of the International Council delineate a three-fold objective:

- a. to promote the cooperation among its associated members;
- b. to serve their interests on an international level;
- c. to contribute to the progress of the theological libraries, associates or not, especially operating in a difficult situation.

⁶ See Statutes, 1, art. 1. The full text of the Statutes can be found in the official brochure of the Council: CONSEIL INTERNATIONAL, p. 145-151.

⁷ The 36 Annual General Assemblies have been held in 9 different countries: 15 times in Germany, 8 times in France, 6 times in Belgium, twice in the Netherlands and once in Great-Britain, Switzerland, Italy and Hungary.

⁸ See note 6.

B. Membership and Adhesion

The two levels of membership have already been mentioned. Ordinary membership is reserved for associations and special membership to libraries or librarians with an international impact in the field of theological libraries. Membership is decided upon by the annual General Assembly, after a written solicitation of the candidate(s), and is taken by a two third majority.

C. Structure

There are two operative bodies in the Council: the General Assembly and the Executive Board. Each ordinary member association is entitled to send two delegates to the Council meeting; special members send one. The delegates meet at least once a year and decide on every kind of concerted action, leaving full autonomy however to the national associations.

From among the official delegates the General Assembly elects a four-member Executive Board that serves for a period of 5 years. It consists of a president, vice-president, secretary and treasurer charged with the daily management of all matters cared for by the Council.⁹

In addition the General Assembly frequently appoints various working groups to guide special projects.

The Council's working languages are French and English, although other main European languages are used during meetings without interpreters. In this way the Council seeks to develop a unified cultural and linguistic approach that spans the vast diversity of the European nations.

D. Financial Management

Each member-association contributes an annual fee to the common budget to support the Council's projects and joint activities. These very modest contributions form its financial basis, and until recently was its only financial resource. In addition, the association gratefully accepts the delegates' voluntary donations of time and expertise, and is eligible to receive funds from the European

⁹ The Executive Board consists at present of: A.J. Geuns, President; E. d'Hondt, Vice-President; I. Dumke, secretary; J.A. Cervelló-Margalef, treasurer.

The Presidents have been: 1972-1977 Herwig Ooms.
 1977-1989 Herman Morlion.
 1989- André J. Geuns.

The address of thesecretariat:I. Dumke,Evangelische Bibliothek Köln,Postfach 250104, D-50517 Köln

Community, charitable foundations and other private sources. This last form of financial support has existed only since 1997.

III. BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL

A. THE ORDINARY MEMBER ASSOCIATIONS

For each associate, following items will be indicated:

- year of foundation
- the total number of associated members
- typology of the association
- a selection of publications by the association
- chairperson in function
- delegates to the Council
- official address of the association

1. AKThB: „Arbeitsgemeinschaft Katholisch-Theologischer Bibliotheken“ - Germany

(a) 11.8.1947

(b) 144 associated libraries

Total Book-stock: 13 millions volumes, with 10.000 incunabula, 11.400 manuscripts and 33.000 periodicals

(c) Exclusively Roman Catholic libraries

(d) Main Publications:

- Mitteilungsblatt der Arbeitsgemeinschaft Katholisch-Theologischer Bibliotheken. ISSN 0177-8358; 1(1952/53) ss.

- Arbeitsgemeinschaft katholisch-theologischer Bibliotheken: Handbuch der katholisch-theologischen Bibliotheken. (Veröffentlichungen der - Arbeitsgemeinschaft Katholisch-Theologischer Bibliotheken, 4). 3., völlig neu bearb. Ausg. Bearb. Von Franz WERNHARDT. Mit einem Beitrag über katholische öffentliche Büchereien von Erich HODICK. München (u.a.), 1991. - (Erg.Heft) Aktualisierung der Adressen mit den neuen Postleitzahlen. Juli 1993

(e) Jochen Bepler, Dombibliothek Hildesheim, Domhof 30, D-31134 Hildesheim

(f) P. Eisenkopf, Vallendar; Hermann-Josef Schmalor, Paderborn
(e-mail H.-J. Schmalor: eabpader@aol.com)

2. VTB: „Vereniging voor het Theologisch Bibliothecariaat“ - The Netherlands

(a) 2.10.1947

(b) 69 libraries and/or librarians

- (c) Open to all denominations
- (d) Main publications:
 - Mededelingen van de VTB, Nijmegen, 1 (1948) ss.
 - Gids van Theologische Bibliotheken in Nederland en Vlaanderen, 1983, Voorburg: Protestantse Stichting tot Bevordering van het Bibliotheekwezen en de Lectuurvoorzieing in Nederland; XXXIV, 142 p.
 - Bibliografie Doctorale Scripties Theologie (BDST): annual list of the 'doctoral' theses by the student of the theological faculties in the Netherlands from 1977 - , of the faculty K.U. Leuven from 1984, and of the protestant faculty Brussels from 1985-.
- (e) Drs. J.F.G. van Wyngaerden, Postbus 4406, NL-6401 CX Heerlen (e-mail: Wyngaerden@ubn.kun.nl)
- (f) J. Van Wijngaerden, Heerlen; A.J. Geuns, President of the Council.
- (g) Vereniging voor het Theologisch Bibliothecariaat, Postbus 289, NL-6500 AG Nijmegen

3. ABEF: „L'Association des Bibliothèques Ecclésiastiques de France“ - France

- (a) September 1957
- (b) Over 200 members - 136 libraries
- (c) Mainly Roman Catholic libraries, but open to all denominations
- (d) Bulletin de liaison de l'ABEF - ISSN 0066-8958 - Rédacteur: B: Stelly, Bibliothèque diocésaine de Nancy, 11, rue de Laxou, F-54600 Villers-les Nancy (e-mail: b.stelly@infonie.fr)
- (e) Paul de Crombrughe, Bibliothèque diocésaine, 9, Boulevard Voltaire, F-21000, Dijon
- (f) M. Behr, Lyon (e-mail: behr@cpe.ipl.fr)

4. VRB: „Vereniging van Religieus-Wetenschappelijke Bibliotheken“ - Flemish-speaking part of Belgium

- (a) March 1965
- (b) 78 libraries and librarians
- (c) Mainly Roman Catholic libraries but open to all denominations
- (d) Main Publications:
 - VRB-Mededelingen: 1967-1970
 - VRB-Informatie; ISSN 0777-6306 / 1(1970) ss.

- K. VAN DE CASTEELE (Ed.), Lijst van werken betreffende theologie en godsdienst, verschenen in het Nederlands, Antwerpen, Bibliotheek van het seminarie, 1 (1973) ss. A current bibliography of all the books on theology published in the Dutch language.
 - (e) E. D'hondt, Bibliotheek theologische Faculteit, Sint-Michielsstraat 6, B-3000 Leuven (e-mail: etienne.dhondt@theo.kuleuven.ac.be)
 - (f) E. D'hondt, Leuven; K. Van de Castele, Antwerpen
 - (g) V.R.B., Minderbroederstraat 5, B-3800 Sint-Truiden
5. VkwB: „Verband kirchlich-wissenschaftlicher Bibliotheken in der Arbeitsgemeinschaft der Archive und Bibliotheken in der evangelischen Kirche“ (AABevK) - Germany
- (a) Since 1936 incorporated in the association of protestant archivists, from 1.1.1980 within an autonomous section
 - (b) 108 libraries
 - (c) Libraries of the Protestant Churches in Germany.
 - (d) Informationen für kirchliche Bibliotheken (since 1975, annual)
 - (e) A. Stephan, Neuendettelsau (e-mail: A.Stephan@t-online.de)
 - (f) I. Dumke, Köln; Wolfgang-Friedrich Krämer, Neuendettelsau.
6. ABTAPL: „Association of British Theological and Philosophical Libraries“ - United Kingdom
- (a) 1956
 - (b) 121 libraries and librarians
 - (c) Open to all types of theological and philosophical libraries
 - (d) Main publications:
 - Bulletin of the ABTAPL, 1 (1956) ss.
 - Guide to religious bibliographies in serial literature, Mansell, 1981
 - Guide to Theological Collections in the United Kingdom and Ireland, 1986 (an update is planned for 1998)
 - ABTAPL Union List of Periodicals. Annual
 - (e) Mrs. Judith Powles, Spurgeon's College, 189 South Norwood Hill, London SE25 6dj.
 - (f) Penelope Hall, Edinburgh (e-mail: prhall@mail.public.net / hallp@srvQ.div.ed.ac.uk)
7. ABEI: „Associazione dei Bibliotecari Ecclesiastici Italiani“ - Italy

- (a) 28.6.1978
- (b) 148 bibliotecari
- (c) Only libraries belonging to the Roman Catholic Church
- (d) Main publications:
 - Annuario delle biblioteche ecclesiastiche italiane 1995, ed. By Luciano TEMPESTINI, Editrice Bibliografica, Milano, 1995; ISBN 88-7075-365-4
 - Bollettino di Informazione, nuova serie. 1(1991) ss.
- (e) Mons. Ciriaco Scanzillo, Largo Donnaregina 22, 80138 Napoli
- (f) L. Tempestini, Pistoia (e-mail: luctemp@mai.promonet.it)
- (g) Associazione dei bibliotecari ecclesiastici italiani, Piazza S. Maria Maggiore, 5, I-00185 Roma

8. ABTIR: „Association des Bibliothèques de Théologie et d’Information Religieuse“ - French speaking part of Belgium

- (a) 29.9.1983
- (b) 50 libraries
- (c) Mainly Roman Catholic libraries but open to all denominations
- (d) Marie-Christine CLAES, Suzanne LEROY: Répertoire des bibliothèques et centres de documentation en sciences religieuses de Wallonie, de Bruxelles et du Grand-Duché de Luxembourg, 2me tirage, Namur, ABTIR, 1986
- (e) Vacant

9. FIDES: „Federation of the Polish Ecclesiastical Libraries“ - Poland

- (a) 1991 (existed already in 1979, but without the official status of legal association)
- (b) 79 libraries
- (c) Libraries belonging to the Roman Catholic church
- (d) Main publications:
 - FIDES - Biuletyn Bibliotek Koscielnych, Federacja Bibliotek Koscielnych FIDES, 1 (1995) ss.
- (e) Jan Bednarczyk
- (f) Biblioteka Papieskiej Akademii Teologicznej, ul. Podzamce 8, PL-31-003 Kraków (e-mail: atbednar@kinga.cyfkr.edu.pl).

10. ABIE: „Asociación de Bibliotecarios de la Iglesia en España“ - Spain

- (a) 200 libraries
- (b) Starting point in 1968; official approval: 9.4.1994
- (c) Libraries belonging to the Roman Catholic church
- (d) Main publications:
 - José Maria FERNANDEZ CATON: Guia de los Archivos y las Bibliotecas de la Iglesia en España, Leon, Asociación española de archiveros eclesíasticos, 1985, 2 v., 547 p. / 376 p.
 - Ricardo BLASCO GENOVA: Catálogo colectivo de las bibliotecas de centros de estudios eclesíasticos de España. Sección de revistas, Madrid, Dirección general de bibliotecas, Instituto bibliográfico hispánico 1982, 2 v. XXXI-1490 p.
- (e) Alfonso de la Fuente, San Buenaventura, 9, E-28005 Madrid
- (f) Delegates: F. Rodríguez Barbero, Valladolid

B. EXTRAORDINARY MEMBERS

1. CIB - MAREDSOUS: „Centre Informatique et Bible“ Maredsous - Belgique

This institute of the Benedictine Abbey of Maredsous applies the computer tools to the field of biblical sciences. Since 1983 CIB has put its experience in the field of automatization at the service of the theological libraries. Member of the Council since 12.9.1986.

Director: R.-Ferdinand Poswick, O.S.B.

Publication: DEBORA-Doc- Information, 1 (1985) ss. Now called Interface

Address: C.I.B., Maredsous, B-5337 Denée (e-mail: cibmare@fundp.ac.be)

2. THE WORLD COUNCIL OF CHURCHES' LIBRARY - Geneva

Founded in 1946, the WCC Library aims to render optimal bibliographical, documentary and information service on the history of the ecumenical movement and the programmes and activities of the World Council of Churches. The library stocks about 105.000 volumes, 1350 titles of periodicals. Houses also an archive.

Director: Pierre Beffa

Address: WCC Library, P.O. Box 2100, 150, Route de Ferney, CH-1211 Geneva
(e-mail: pb@wcc-coe.org)

3. B.N.U.S.: BIBLIOTHEQUE NATIONALE ET UNIVERSITAIRE DE STRASBOURG

A section of the National Library of Strasbourg, founded in 1871. Since the reorganization in 1992, religious sciences are part of the technical department on humanities. It functions as „un pôle d'excellence“ (special collection field). Since

1980 the section of religious sciences is a Cadist-seat within the national library service, as are the libraries of the Catholic and Protestant faculties of Strasbourg. This library holds over 200.000 volumes, with a stock of 100.000 ancient documents.

Director of the theological section: Jacques Dedeyan
Address: 6, place de la République, BP1029
F-67070 Strasbourg Cédex
(e-mail: Jacques.Dedeyan@bnus.u-strasbg.fr)

4. The Special Collection Field Theology and Religious Studies of the UNIVERSITÄTSBIBLIOTHEK TÜBINGEN

The Tübingen collection, comprising over 500.000 titles on theology, has been selected as special collection centre for theology and religious sciences by the „Notgemeinschaft der Deutschen Wissenschaft“ to insure that for this scientific discipline, relevant scholarly literature from around the world is systematically collected by at least one major German library.

Main Publications:

- Neuerwerbungsliste Theologie: Recent Acquisitions Lists
- Zeitschriftenverzeichnis Theologie
- Zeitschrifteninhaltsdienst Theologie (ZID)

Also available the ZID-Database with over 60.000 article-descriptions. Every month some 1200 new document descriptions with full indexing are added to the database.

The Tübingen Institute was admitted to the Council in 1998.

Director: Dr. B. von Egidy
Delegate to the Council: H. Weisweiler
Address: Universitätsbibliothek, Postfach 2620, D-72016 Tübingen
(e-mail: hilger.weisweiler@ub.uni-tuebingen.de)

C. OTHER EUROPEAN LIBRARY ORGANIZATIONS

1. The Ecclesiastical Libraries in HUNGARY

The librarians of the Hungarian theological libraries meet regularly but have not yet formed an official association. This body has an ecumenical approach. The group is named „Egehazy Könyvtarak Egyesülése“ (Union of ecclesiastical libraries). A delegate regularly attends the Council's General Assembly of the Council as observer.

The 22 most important theological libraries in Hungary hold a total stock of over 1,5 million books, with 3000 medieval manuscripts.

Chairperson: P. Miksa Béla BANHEGYI O.S.B., of the Benedictine Abbey Pannonhalma

2. The theological librarians of SWITZERLAND

Since 1990 representatives of the 54 Swiss theological libraries meet annually, in a spirit of cooperation. At present they have no plans to form an association.

P. Beffa, librarian of the WCC in Geneva, and extraordinary member of the Council, assures the link with European colleagues.

3. The Theological Libraries of AUSTRIA

Most of the theological libraries in Austria are associates of the German AKThB. In 1966 the VOB (Vereinigung Österreichischer Bibliothekarinnen) instituted within its structure a „Committee for special libraries in theological field“. This initiative will probably be the first step towards the creation of an own association, involving about 20 theological libraries. The chairperson of this group attends the meetings of the Council as observer.

Chairperson: J. Lackinger, Bethlehemstrasse 20, A-4020 Linz

4. EASTERN EUROPE

In Eastern Europe only Poland and Hungary have so far established firm relations with the activities of the Council. Links with Russia and Slovenia are still in the preparatory stage. In 1996 a delegation of the Orthodox Patriarchate of Russia attended the General Assembly in Pannonhalma. But, in general, the dialogue between East and West is still very precarious and coincidental.

Contact-person: Rev. Boris Danilenko, Andreevkaja Nab.2, 117334 Moscow

5. FURTHER STATES

Within the European territory, some nations are still „blank spots“ for the Council: e.g. Portugal, the Scandinavian region, Greece, and most states from Eastern and Southeastern Europe. One of the main reasons for this absence is probably the apparent lack of a national corporation of theological libraries.

D. LINKS WITH ASSOCIATIONS OF THEOLOGICAL LIBRARIES OUTSIDE EUROPE

The Council tends to cultivate the connections that have been already or will be strengthened with theological libraries of other continents to reinforce globally the position of these libraries. It seeks to keep alive a vision of progress and offer efficient tools for research and study in theology, in harmony with other disciplines. For this reason some space is reserved for a brief description of these overseas associations.

1. ATLA: „American Theological Library Association“

Founded in 1946, as a scholarly, ecumenical, non-profit organization dedicated to advancing and supporting librarian science in theology and religion. It holds an annual conference and publishes its proceedings, as well as a quarterly newsletter, produces electronic and print indexes to support research in religion and enables preservation of printed materials in religion. The Association is certainly the greatest and best organized one, with numerous associates, mainly in the U.S.A. and Canada, but also outside the own continent. Membership is available to individuals, students and institutions.

For the past fifty years there had been little or no contact between ATLA and Council. But in 1969 there was a renewed effort to promote more intense and efficient cooperation. This led to an agreement on a mutual partnership: delegates from both bodies attend the General Assembly of each partner; they exchange their own publications on free basis (News-bulletins, guides, catalogues, etc.); they plan to set up common projects.

Present chairperson: M. Patrick Graham, Pitts Theology Library, Emory University

Executive Director: Dennis A. Norlin

Address: 820 Church Street, Suite 300, Evanston, Ill., 60201-5613
(e-mail: dnorlin@atla.com).

2. ANZTLA: „Australian and New Zealand Theological Library Association“

Founded in 1985, ANZTLA is an association of librarians and individuals, involved and interested in theological library science. It has about 150 members and holds an Annual Conference with the conference of the Australian and New Zealand Association of Theological Schools. Its membership is open to all denominations. Given the enormous distances in the country, the Association is divided into local chapters situated in the major cities. These provide a forum for local interaction.

Publications: Newsletter: three issues a year

- JENKIN, Coralie: Collections of religion and theology in Australia and New Zealand, Blackwood SA: Auslib Press, 1992; ISBN 1875145117

- 'So great a cloud of witnesses': libraries and theologies: Festschrift in honour of Lawrence D. McIntosh. Ed. By Philip HARVEY and Lynn PRIOR. Melbourne: uniting Church Theological Hall and the ANZTLA, 1995; ISBN 0-95877313-0
- Australasian Union List of Theological Serials (AULOTS). Ed. By A:W: McCUMSTIE. 3d ed. Melbourne: ANZTLA, 1997; ISBN 0-646-32051-3

The cooperation between ANZTLA and the Council has been going on since 1990. At present it consists mainly in the free exchange of the publications of both bodies.

Present chairperson: Kim Robinson, Moore Theological College, 1 King Street, Newtown NSW 2042

3. RLIT: „Red Latinoamericana de Informacion Teologica“

RLIT, founded in 1994, unites the theological librarians of the Central Latin American region, and is open to all denominations, even though the Protestant Christian presence is prevalent.

Publishes the Boletin del Bibliotecario Teologico Latinoamericano.

Chairperson: Alvaro Perez, Biblioteca Seminario Biblico Latinoamericano, Apartado 901, 1000 San José, Costa Rica

The Council has established a first written contact with RLIT in 1996.

4. For ATL: „Forum of Asian Theological Libraries“

This group represents librarians from India, Korea, Indonesia, the Philippines, Malaysia and Taiwan, the colleagues from Australia and New Zealand are also invited. The first meeting of the Forum was held in 1991, the second on 8-13 October 1997.¹⁰

The Forum includes Protestant libraries only. There are no Catholic or non-Christian members. For further information contact: Karmito (Mr.), Librarian Duta Wacana Christian University, Jl. Dr. Wahidin S. 5-19, Yogyakarta 55224, Indonesia

Publication: Directory Asian Theological Libraries 1992-1993, published by ForATLin 1993

5. There still remain many blank spots on the map of theological libraries: numerous theological libraries are functioning in Africa and South America. At irregular intervals some of these libraries have appealed to the Council to support them in their difficult and often precarious situation. These contacts however have not yet taken a solid form of collaboration and support. In most cases they remained limited to individual exchanges between libraries.

¹⁰ See ANZTLA Newsletter, no. 33, p. 3.

IV. COOPERATION BETWEEN THE COUNCIL AND NATIONAL LIBRARIES

A. Germany

In Germany most of the academic universal libraries cooperate between each other and with Die Deutsche Bibliothek (DDB)¹¹, in order to rationalize their services. Special libraries also profit by this cooperation, for example by using the bibliographic data provided by DDB for local cataloguing.¹² As part of its function as national bibliographic information centre DDB in 1995 established at its branch institute Deutsche Bibliothek Frankfurt am Main (DBF) a central clearing-point for the application of subject cataloguing for theological libraries. Meanwhile a close cooperation has developed between the theological section of the DBF and German theological libraries.

By arrangement of its German members VkwB and AKThB the International Council came into contact with representatives of DDB. With special interest DDB observes the Council's project of elaborating a multilingual thesaurus for religious libraries, called ETHERELI.¹³ This project would fit fine as part of the project MUSE (Multilingual Subject Entry), initiated by some European national

¹¹ DDB as German national library and national bibliographic information centre was founded in 1990 in the course of German reunification. It is a combination of three previous institutions and therefore present at three locations: Deutsche Bücherei (established in 1912) in Leipzig, Deutsche Bibliothek (founded in 1947) in Frankfurt am Main and Deutsches Musikarchiv (a part of the Deutsche Bibliothek since 1970) in Berlin. Cf. HAUS DER BÜCHER - elektronisches Archiv. Die Deutsche Bibliothek, Texte und Red. v. Renate GÖMPEL, Michaela MICHEL und Kathrin STEINKE, Leipzig / Frankfurt am Main / Berlin: Die Deutsche Bibliothek, 1997, p. 4-9; ISBN 3-922051-81-2. Engl. version: HOUSE OF BOOKS - digital archives. Die Deutsche Bibliothek, texts and ed. by Renate GÖMPEL, Michaela MICHEL and Kathrin STEINKE, transl. by John SOUTHARD, Leipzig / Frankfurt am Main / Berlin: Die Deutsche Bibliothek, 1997, p. 4-9; ISBN 3-922051-87-1.

¹² Primarily DDB publishes the „Deutsche Nationalbibliographie“ on a variety of different data media and systems. The bibliographic entries prepared for the „Deutsche Nationalbibliographie“ form the basis for a wide range of centralized services provided for outside users. Services are used for acquisition, processing and information purposes. DDB also is engaged in the development and expansion of the authority files that are used in bibliographic indexing. For example most of the libraries in Germany as well as in Austria and Switzerland use for subject indexing the „Schlagwortnormdatei“ (SWD) and the uniform rules for subject cataloguing „Regeln für den Schlagwortkatalog“ (RSWK). Cf. HAUS DER BÜCHER resp. HOUSE OF BOOKS, p. 14-16.

¹³ See V.4 below.

libraries, including DDB.¹⁴ Therefore DDB supports the project ETHERELI by providing an extract of the theological terms of the „Schlagwortnormdatei“ (SWD). A representative of DDB is also member of the working group ETHERELI of the Council.¹⁵

Contact-person: Barbara Wolf-Dahm, Deutsche Bibliothek Frankfurt am Main, Adickesallee 1, D-60322 Frankfurt (e-mail: wolfdahm@dbf.ddb.de)

B. France

At present the French member of the International Council, ABEF, is investigating the possibilities of cooperation between theological libraries and the Bibliothèque Nationale de France. Negotiations are developing well. There is also still existing a close cooperation between the Bibliothèque Nationale de France and the section of theology and religion sciences of the B.N.U.S.

Contact person: Jacques Dedeyan, Bibliothèque Nationale et Universitaire de Strasbourg, 6, place de la République, BP1029, F-67070 Strasbourg Cédex (e-mail: Jacques.Dedeyan@bnus.u-strasbg.fr)

Barbara Wolf-Dahm

V. THE COUNCIL'S PROJECTS AND ACTIVITIES

The ordinary and extraordinary members of the International Council retain of course the autonomy of their own activities, to meet the needs of their own members. The Council on the contrary only proposes activities that serve more than one association and that could be realized within an international context.

A. Exchange of information

¹⁴ The project MUSE (Multilingual Subject Entry) is - in its present stage - a cooperation project between the Schweizerische Landesbibliothek Bern, the Bibliothèque Nationale de France, the British Library and the Deutsche Bibliothek Frankfurt am Main. The idea is to promote a multilingual thesaurus by establishing links between already existing national subject authority files which have been used for national bibliographies and other bibliographic services since many years: the Library of Congress Subject Headings (LCSH) - which also are used by the British Library - and the French and the German authority files RAMEAU and SWD. First steps are the developing of a prototype for this linkage system in two rather small and limited fields of knowledge, theatre and sports, the analysis of the linguistic and systematic problems of this linkage system and the establishment of a multilingual authority file with access open to all partners in the project. In a later stage the project will be extended to other fields of knowledge as well as to additional partners and their national subject authority files.

¹⁵ Cf. Barbara WOLF-DAHM: Die Deutsche Bibliothek und theologische Bibliotheken, in: Dialog mit Bibliotheken 9 (1997) no. 3, p. 38-41; ISSN: 0936-1138.

One of the major obstacles to the international coordination of efforts in Europe is the diversity of languages and culture, in addition to the variety of ecclesiastical structures and the variety of library activities and methods that are in use across the continent. To work together, one should first of all know one another. The Annual Assemblies are an important instrument for exchanging information about the various problems, realisations, and projects. Another tool offered to the members is the tradition of exchanging publications amongst the associates. Each national association sends three copies of its bulletins and other publications to the other associations and in return receives the same from the sister-organizations.

B. TEOL (Teologici Exquisiti Oblatique Libri)

TEOL is an exchange programme for out of print books, created by the ABEF in 1961, and still functioning. Every member who decides to use this service, can ask request for or offer from his/her collection titles of out of print books,. TEOL distributes a list of offered and requested books about 6 times a year. It does not itself buy or sell. It limits its service to putting interested the libraries spread all over the world in contact with one another. The main purpose of TEOL is not to have financial benefit, but to find a good destination for books before they end up on the antiquarian market

Address: Soeur Jacques, Couvent des Tourelles, 158, Rue Pioch de Boutonnet, F-34090 Montpellier

C. CLAVIS FOLIORUM PERIODICORUM THEOLOGICORUM

Clavis stands for a fully annotated bio-bibliographic review of theological periodicals. Abbé Raymond Etaix (ABEF) started the review in 1959-1960 and elaborated its basic structure. The desire slowly grew to encompass the global production of theological periodicals published in Western Europe. But the project became too extended; as a result only partial realisations were published:

1. The ABEF's efforts produced more than a hundred titles. So far, its distribution has been limited to internal use in loose-leaf presentation.
2. The German AKThB adopted a more systematic approach thanks to the indefatigable energy of Alfons Kloos (Speyer). Over a period of nine years he gathered information on about 800 periodicals published in Germany between 1700 and 1980. Due to the enormous amount of data, AKThB realized as yet

only a limited number of descriptions, distributed for internal use in loose leaf presentation.

3. Only the Flemish association VRB and the Dutch VTB realized an official repertory describing 222 periodicals published in the Benelux from 1880 onwards, and of which 79 were still current in 1987.¹⁶

D. ETHERELI

When various associations, coming from different backgrounds, try to work together they inevitably meet serious obstacles. Even cataloguing rules still vary from country to country. These obstacles, however, challenge the Council to develop bridges that span the separating gaps. As the political structures of Europe move towards unity the Council promotes mutual cooperation, seeking for developing the necessary technical tools for coordinated efforts. The advance of automation spurs it to make the resources available to all member-associations. Over the period of the last three years the Council has developed a project to elaborate an instrument for indexing religious, theological and Biblical documents in various European languages. The acronym of this project ETHERELI stands for „European Thesaurus for Indexing in Religious Libraries“. The object is to compile a thesaurus in most of the languages used throughout Europe and make it available for online-consultation. Terminology and structure of this thesaurus are based on the still existing national authority files for subject cataloguing, as there are Library of Congress Subject Headings, RAMEAU, SWD and ATLA Religion Database. The thesaurus will also be provided in Internet. The International Council has recently petitioned the European Community and a private foundation for financial support and has been granted a measure of backing to pursue this work. At present work is progressing on a sample study on the subject descriptors of theological ethics in five European languages (English, French, German, Spanish and Italian).

VI. CONCLUSION.

Facing the numerous obstacles on the way to working together, the members of the Council try to keep alive the conviction that working together is fundamental to the quality of theological librarian science. Therefore they try to cultivate the connections made with colleagues in the rest of Europe and on other continents

¹⁶ W. AUDENAERT: *Clavis Periodicorum Theologicorum - Benelux (CFPT)*, met medewerking van G. GINNEBERGE en H. MORLION, Leuven: Bibliotheek van de Godgeleerdheid, 1994, XXIX, 439 p.; ISBN 90-73683-13-0.

overseas. The opportunities recently offered by the introduction of electronic communication should be fully exploited to promote unity and cooperation across national borders, and to share resources and expertise to the benefit of all theological libraries. Once theological research-centres were at the very heart of human scholarship, they now seem to be pushed back to the margins of general attention. The Council keeps alive the conviction that the high quality of its libraries will always play an important role in harmonious human development.

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