



ATLA NEWSLETTER

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From the President On the Importance of Knowing the Difference Between the Alt-Right and Control-Alt-Delete, Or: The Enduring Value of Our Profession

*Submitted by Timothy D. Lincoln,
 ATLA President*

This week, I have been thinking about the results of the presidential election in the United States and the post-mortems which attempt to shed light on why the successor in the White House to Barack Obama will be Donald Trump rather than Hillary Clinton. (I set aside arguments about the enduring value of America’s odd counting mechanism called the Electoral College.)

In the course of these post-mortems, mainstream journalism (or the liberal media, as some staff of the incoming administration prefer to call it) has discovered that the Internet has a humongous number of sites, creating an information fog, just as theological librarian William Badke notes in his helpful book *Research Strategies*.

These same journalist-coroners have discovered that within the fog there are lies, near-lies, assertions, and conspiracy theories. One fogbank over, in Social Media, there are echo chambers and trolls. (Yup. Your childhood storybooks were right all along.) The conclusion of many of these autopsies is that many American voters were misinformed during the presidential campaign. We wanted helpful information about the candidates but instead we looked into social media mirrors which reinforced our pre-existing notions. As a result of bad research habits, some of us may have pulled the lever for a candidate that we would not have voted for if we had known better.

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From the Executive Director Open Educational Resources: A Potential Path to Reduce Student Expenses and Improve Service

*Submitted by Brenda Bailey-
 Hainer, ATLA Executive
 Director*

A couple of years ago, the Lilly Endowment funded a national initiative to address economic challenges facing pastoral leaders. Two areas they worked on were: to develop strategies that help young pastors pay down or eliminate educational debt, and to create new scholarships so that seminarians borrow less while in school. But this appears to be addressing the symptoms, not the cause. Are there ways that libraries could directly help their institutions reduce the cost of education to all students?

At ITHAKA’s recent The Next Wave 2016 symposium, two speakers talked about how their higher education institutions had tried to reduce their students’ costs. One method was to look at reducing dependence on commercial textbooks for courses. As an experiment, these institutions created Open educational resources, or OERs, resulting in dramatic cost savings to students, and at the same time, providing better service to those enrolled in distance and online programs.

Open educational resources (OER) are documents and media that are freely accessible and openly licensed that are useful for teaching and learning as well as for research purposes. These resources span all media: text, videos, games, podcasts, etc. The University of Maryland LibGuide on Open Educational Resources (<http://lib.guides.umd.edu/c.php?g=327271&p=21957>) is a useful introduction to OERs.

Marie Cini, Provost and Senior Vice-President for the University of Maryland University College (UMUC), talked about their experience with OER. Offering online education since the 1990s, UMUC focuses on teaching around 85,000 adult students worldwide. The primary drivers of their OER initiative were rising textbook costs and the delay in deliveries of textbooks to remote students. They also discovered that up to 40% of students were not buying the textbooks required or recommended for courses.

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A Few Notes on New Titles Continued

UMUC didn't go into this project half-heartedly – they went in full bore ahead. Beginning with undergraduate programs, they converted all of their courses to OED across 30+ programs. From late 2013 to Fall 2015 e-resources were developed for 700+ courses. As a result, they estimate that more than \$17 million in textbook fees was saved by UMUC undergraduates as of Spring 2016. The graduate school will complete a similar project by 2017.

OED was used for both online and in-person courses. Initially some faculty voiced concerns that students would not receive the same quality of learning experience using OED, but they have conducted ongoing learning evaluations and essentially found that there is no difference in student performance based on grades. This project became not just a textbook replacement, but really began looking at learning outcomes across courses and integrating OER within the online learning experience. This resulted in eliminating the old model of online, which was just a replication of face to face in an electronic environment. Library professionals are deeply involved in the process and work in teams with instructors and education technologists to find resources, curate them and link them to the learning goals of the course.

Other institutions, such as Monroe Community College (MCC) in Rochester, New York, have also been experimenting with this model. In the case of MCC, the library took the leadership role in initiating a pilot using OER and taking responsibility for hosting the resources.

While the savings to students achieved by UMUC are certainly at a scale way beyond theological schools, this is still an intriguing model for potentially reducing the cost to students and at the same time improving service to distance and online students and offering librarians an opportunity to work closely with faculty.

Are any ATLA member libraries or their institutions using OER? Would the curriculum in use at your institution lend itself to these kinds of resources? Is there a potential role for ATLA as a host for a shared OER repository whose contents are available to all ATLA members (or beyond)? One way to identify some common resources across many institutions might be to data mine syllabi indexed in the Wabash Center's Syllabus Collection (http://www.wabashcenter.wabash.edu/resources/guide_syllabi.aspx) or the Open Syllabus Project (<http://opensyllabusproject.org/>). I'd love to hear your thoughts on this. You can email me at: bbailey-hainer@atla.com.

On the Importance of Knowing Continued

For all of its turmoil, this transitional time between Democratic and Republican administrations presents an opportunity for religious studies and theological librarians. We are in favor of values and facts and footnotes. Jesus did not say in the Gospels: "Neither a borrower nor a lender be." Millions of people were killed by the Nazi government of Germany in the name of racial purity. Ted Cruz was born in Alberta and Barack Obama was born in Hawaii. These are facts and facts matter.

There are also a variety of political philosophies and policy options (on immigration, for instance). These matter, too, but they have a different relationship to reality than the freezing point of water or where the capital of Saskatchewan is.

It is important to those whom we serve that we librarians help patrons notice ambiguity when it's there (it is difficult, for instance, to pin down precisely how many people died in World War I) and help them discern the difference between news sources that adhere to journalistic canons of professionalism (both the liberal *New York Times* and the conservative *Wall Street Journal*) and putative news sources that don't.

Because of our values and training, we librarians can help people see through the fog and discover credible sources for essays on the alt-right, the economics of international trade, and the Code of Hammurabi. We have opportunities to explain to students what peer review is and why it matters. We can demonstrate how much less foggy and troll-ridden our library discovery services are versus the Internet or Facebook. Fact-checking is the new information literacy.

In the words of the sci-fi television show *Firefly*: "Well, look at this! It appears we got here just in the nick of time. What does that make us? Big damn heroes!"

Board Meets in Chicago

Submitted by Tracy Powell Iwaskow, ATLA Secretary

The ATLA Board of Directors met from October 27-29, 2016, in Chicago, IL. During this meeting, the Board discussed several environmental scans pertaining to theological education and new religious communities with an eye toward how the findings in these reports relate to the strategic vision of ATLA.

The Board approved new Organizational Ends for ATLA in order to bring the Ends and Strategic Vision into alignment, and then discussed the timeline for evaluating ATLA's Executive Director according to these newly adopted ends. The Board discussed several issues related to the passage of new Bylaws in June, including the role and responsibilities of the newly created Board Officer position of Treasurer and the relation of this role to the work done by the chair of the Board's Finance Committee, as well as several changes to the *Board Policy Manual* designed to align the manual with the bylaws and to establish in writing regular commitments to review membership dues.

On Friday, October 28, the Board met with Paul Meyer, a consultant from Tecker International, to consider strategic linkage by the Board to the moral ownership of ATLA. Following this conversation, during the Board's business meeting on Saturday the Board voted to appoint a moral ownership task force in order to develop a systematic plan for regular moral ownership linkage. The Board also voted to develop a task force consisting of current board members, a lifetime member, and an ATLA staff member with the charge to suggest a model for recognizing the contributions of long-time ATLA members. Finally, the Board discussed meeting dates for February and June 2017 and items for inclusion on each agenda.

2017 ATLA Board of Directors Election

The 2017 ATLA Board of Directors Election will open on Thursday, January 5, 2017 and will close on Wednesday, February 1, 2017. The election will be performed via electronic ballot by Survey & Ballot Systems.

Ballots including candidates' biographical information and statements will be posted on a customized website hosted by Survey & Ballot Systems. Candidate information can also be found on the ATLA *Newsletter* site (<https://newsletter.atla.com/>).

Personalized access codes to the voting site will be sent via e-mail to eligible voting members (Institutional Member Representatives, Individual Members, and Lifetime Members) in good standing as of January 1, 2017. The e-mail will come from the ATLA Election Coordinator and the displayed e-mail address will be noreply@directvote.net. You may wish to add this address to your address book or alert your IT staff to allow it through your institution's firewall.

If you are an Individual member who also serves as an Institutional Member Representative, you will receive two distinct ballots with different access codes in order to fulfill your voting opportunities as articulated in the ATLA Bylaws.

If you have any questions about voting procedures or your membership status, please contact a member representative at memberrep@atla.com or Gillian Harrison Cain, Director of Member Programs, at gcain@atla.com.

2017 Board of Directors Candidate Statements

The Nominating Committee has named the following candidates for the four director positions to be filled on the Board for the term of 2017-2020.

The election will be conducted via electronic ballot from January 5 through February 1, 2017. For information about voting, read the 2017 ATLA Board of Directors Election (<https://newsletter.atla.com/2016/2017-atla-board-of-directors-election/>).

The candidates have been asked to make statements based on questions which have been identified by the ATLA Board as providing an important window into a candidates' perspective on Carver Policy Governance. These questions are taken from: Richard Stringham, "Does Your Electorate have the Information It Needs to Select the Best Candidates?", *REALBoard Advisor*, vol. 19, No. 1, January 2014, pp. 8-9 (<http://governancecoach.com/download/2925/>). The questions the candidates' statements are based on are:

1. The board, operating as a whole, recognizes its primary accountability to ATLA. Consequently, the board seeks to understand and bring the values of the broad ownership into the board's decisions.
 - a. What do you see as the challenges of understanding

the broad and diverse views of our organization's ownership?

- b. What are your thoughts and/or experiences with regard to understanding the perspectives of an audience such as our ownership?

2. The board's job is to govern. As such it has chosen to use a system of governance in which it clearly determines results the organization is to produce, for whom, and at what worth (Ends) and delegates their achievement to the CEO while authorizing him/her, within pre-stated limits, to choose the means of achievement. This frees the board to be proactive rather than reactive; primarily focused on the future, rather than the past or present; and emphasizing strategic leadership, rather than administrative detail.
 - a. What has been your experience in determining what future-based outcomes should be for an organization?
 - b. What are the strengths you would bring to that process?

3. As noted above, the board's governance system does not prescribe means to achieve the Ends. Consequently, assuring that the organization achieves what it should and avoids what is unacceptable, is neither about the board approving programs and activities nor about checking to see that such activities were done. Instead, the board applies a high level of rigor in monitoring achievement of Ends and ensuring that the CEO has complied with the board-stated limitations.
 - a. Have you had any comparable monitoring experience?
 - b. What would you bring to the process?

4. The board speaks with one voice. Translated this means that the board makes decisions *and has authority* as a whole group, *not as individuals*. In practice, this means that board members are expected to deliberate openly and candidly, seeking to understand diverse viewpoints. Yet when a decision is made by majority rule, all board members respect the decision when speaking externally.
 - a. What has been your experience in deliberating in a diverse group?
 - b. If others were to describe how you operate in groups, what would they say?

The candidates are (in randomized order by www.random.org):

- Paul Tippey, Asbury Theological Seminary, Wilmore, KY
- Suzanne Estelle-Holmer, Yale University Divinity School Library, Hamden, CT
- Jennifer Bartholomew, Sacred Heart Seminary and School of Theology, Hales Corners, WI
- Christopher Anderson, Drew University, Madison, NJ
- Shanee' Yvette Murrain, University of West Georgia, Carrollton, GA
- Michelle Spomer, Pittsburgh Theological Seminary, Pittsburgh, PA
- Matthew Ostercamp, North Park University, Chicago, IL
- Clifford Anderson, Vanderbilt University, Nashville, TN

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Paul Tippet

Biographical Information

Current Position

Executive Director of Library Instructional Services, Asbury Theological Seminary

Previous Positions

- Special Assistant to the Provost for Institutional Effectiveness and

Accreditation, Asbury Theological Seminary

- Professor, Asbury Theological Seminary
- Professor, United Theological Seminary
- Information Literacy Lecturer, Asbury Theological Seminary

Leadership Positions in ATLA

- Methodist Denominational Group – Past President
- Teaching and Learning Interest Group – Steering Committee
- Annual Conference Committee

Leadership Positions other than ATLA

- FOK.AL (Federation of Kentucky Academic Libraries) – Steering Committee
- Association of Theological Schools, TTEG Committee (Technology in Theological Education Group) – Steering Committee
- Free Methodist Historical Society – Vice President
- Asbury Theological Seminary – Chairperson of the Institutional Review Board, Academic Council, Technology Advisory Council, Curriculum Committee, Admissions Committee, Executive Committee: Wesleyan Studies Summer Seminar (WSSS), Center for the Study of World Christian Revitalization Movements, Institutional Effectiveness and Assessment Committee
- The American Academy of Religion
- ALA (American Library Association)
- ACL (Association of Christian Libraries)
- The Greenleaf Center for ServantLeadership
- Regent Leadership Society
- The Wesleyan Theological Society

Candidate Statement

Our organization has a unique opportunity to engage in theological and religious studies throughout the world. As such, enlisting all members to serve and contribute is the greatest "challenge of understanding the broad and diverse view of the organization's ownership." As a steering committee member of Technology in Theological Education (part of the Association of Theological Schools), as a committee member and Vice-President of the Free Methodist Historical Society, and more importantly as a member of the ATLA Conference Committee, I have shown that I can understand the broad and diverse perspectives reflected within this organization.

Without a reasonable plan for the future, our current organizational quality can slip away as the broad and diverse perspectives pull the membership in different directions. The spirit of ATLA will endure, despite changes in national and state politics, but our ability to deliver services and maintain our professional support, with rising costs and constricting resources, is our standing challenge. As a board member for many years and as the Vice-President for the last four years of a nonprofit, I have experience with "monitoring the achievements of ends and ensuring that the CEO has complied with the board-stated limitations." As an experienced board member of other organizations, being a responsible member by communicating "deliberate[ly,] openly and candidly, seeking to understand diverse viewpoints" is of vital importance. Also important, however, is to understand that all members must respect the decisions when speaking externally.



Suzanne Estelle-Holmer

Biographical Information

For close to fifteen years I have served as Reference and Instructional Services Librarian at the Yale Divinity Library, teaching classes and workshops, consulting with students, and supporting faculty with instructional technology. Two years ago, when the former library director

retired, I became Acting Director. I quickly had to get up-to-speed on library management and budgeting, in addition to learning about acquisitions, collection development, and digital projects. In 2015, I assumed my current position as Associate Director for Research, Collections, and Access. As my title suggests, I continue to teach and work with students and faculty, manage the library's public services, and oversee the selection and acquisition of the library's print and electronic collections. I am also active on various Yale University Library committees, Divinity School committees, and a pan-university group that sets policies for the university's learning management systems.

ATLA has been central to my professional development. Ever since I joined in 2005, I have been an active participant at annual conferences, learning from the experiences and knowledge of my colleagues, and sharing my ideas in papers and on panels. I have had the opportunity to serve on the Steering Committee of the Public Service Interest Group and on the Conference Planning Committee. I was fortunate to participate in the 2010 Wabash Colloquy for Theological School Librarians and to have been a part of the first cohort of the Building Leaders of the Future program. More recently, I joined the editorial board of *Theological Librarianship* as editor for bibliographic essays.

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Candidate Statement

ATLA is a unique organization dedicated to providing resources, expertise, education, and opportunities for professional development to theological libraries and librarians throughout the world. ATLA has a talented staff of experts that help the organization achieve its goals, but the primary responsibility for determining the future of the association resides with its membership and more precisely, the Board of Directors. In recent years, the ATLA membership has become increasingly diverse. Our member institutions have always varied in size, resources, and faith traditions, but now some of our members represent non-Christian religions. Individual membership has also become more diverse, representing different ethnic and racial groups, gender and sexual orientations, and age groups. Some younger members are joining with different expectations for their experiences within a professional organization. At the same time, some of our established members are concerned about changes to long-standing ATLA traditions. My biggest challenge as a Board member will be to listen to the diverse voices of ATLA members, to find ways to bridge differences, and to create a more inclusive association. My work at the Yale Divinity School has given me an appreciation of how diverse people and perspectives enrich the educational experience through discussion, curriculum and library collections. This is not to say that there isn't tension at times; diversity can be disruptive. However, when understanding and respectful dialogue is valued, it can strengthen an organization. I expect that the skills I have learned will make me open to the diverse viewpoints represented by the membership and enable me to be a discerning Board member.

Every organization needs to do some kind of long-range or strategic planning in order to develop and grow. In my position as Associate Director, I routinely work with the Divinity Library staff to set short and long-term goals, which correlate to larger Yale University Library initiatives. Several years ago I served on a library task force to bring uniform standards and performance expectations to a highly decentralized instruction program. I also participated in the Divinity School's self-study in anticipation of an accreditation visit. I have discovered that strategic planning takes a fair amount of imagination and creativity, but it also requires that the organization collect pertinent data and information on which to project future needs and expectations. Working in a large university library system, I bring knowledge of trends in public services, research, technology, and publishing that will impact ATLA's mission as an innovative association. I have not had experience monitoring or assessing the achievement of an organization on the scale of ATLA, but have done so at the departmental level. I have had a great deal of experience serving on library and Divinity School committees. In many instances I am the presider, responsible for ensuring that all voices are heard and that the discussion is respectful and productive. I encourage people who are introverted to speak in meetings or to send me their thoughts beforehand. They often offer interesting observations and unexpected solutions to problems. I think others who have worked with me would describe me as a good listener, someone who

enjoys exploring the many facets of an issue, and is willing to work toward consensus.



Jennifer K. Bartholomew

Biographical Information

Current Position

Director of Library & Academic Support Services, Sacred Heart Seminary & School of Theology (May 2016-present)

Previous Positions

- Digital Resources, Instruction & Outreach Librarian, Luther Seminary Library (2014-2016)
- Electronic Services Librarian, Luther Seminary Library (2005-2013)
- Librarian for adult & children's collections, Westminster Presbyterian Church (2003-2005)

Leadership Positions in ATLA

- Board of Directors (2014-2017)
 - Governance Committee Chair (2015-present)
- Creating Leaders of Tomorrow Mentoring Webinar (2014)
- Public Services Interest Group, Electronic Information Coordinator (2013-2014)
- Tellers Committee, Chair (2013)
- Education Committee (2009-2012)
- Teaching and Learning Interest Group Steering Committee (2008-2010)

Leadership Positions other than ATLA

- SWITCH (Southeastern Wisconsin Information Technology Exchange, shared catalog and library resources for 8-member consortium), Consortium Chair (July 2016-June 2018)
- Minnesota Theological Library Association, Public Services Group (2005-present), Web team (2014)
- Toastmasters, Whole Wheat Club
 - Club-level leadership positions held: President (2007, 2012), VP Education, VP Membership, VP Public Relations, Sergeant-at-Arms, Treasurer (2014-present), new member mentor and sponsor
 - District 6: Central Division Training Coordinator, Public Relations Assistant, Area 93 Governor (2012-2013)
- Bryn Mawr Neighborhood Association (1994-1999)

Candidate Statement

ATLA is a great organization! It has been a touchstone for my vocation as a theological librarian, nourishing and challenging me while offering me opportunities to learn and grow. I appreciate that the relationships I've built are with professionals from a variety of positions who come from widely divergent backgrounds, faith traditions, and institution

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types. These differences make our association strong. ATLA members are hardworking, committed advocates. Our shared work, our differing points of view, and the changing nature of theological education requires that we listen to each other, find common goals, and work together to provide services that support theological education even as it is undergoing great change. During my current term on the Board I have learned a great deal about governance. Our model allows the Board to focus on creating the vision for the future, while our Executive Director manages the day-to-day work of the association. Our monitoring process is lengthy (3 times per year) but effective. It requires Board members to ask questions and pay attention to every detail.

In addition to my leadership experience in theological libraries, I have also served as an officer in a Toastmasters club, and on a neighborhood association. Both provided opportunities to shape priorities for the group, one highlighting the personal development of members and the other advocating for neighborhood issues and projects. I have learned to listen to what is said (and unsaid), mediated in contentious debates, and persuaded people to work for common goals. I know the value of patience and humor as people get to know each other and find the best ways to work together. Healthy organizations require open communication and regular, intentional connections with the people they serve. Leaders must seek input and feedback. You cannot create a workable vision for the future without this. I believe that others would say that in a group I listen well, seek input from everyone, and work to find solutions that allow the group to say “yes.” I am grateful for the opportunity to serve you over the past three years. I would appreciate your support and the opportunity to continue working for you.



Christopher J. Anderson

Biographical Information

Current Position

Associate Dean of Libraries, Drew University

Previous Positions

- Head of Special Collections, Archives and Methodist Librarian, Drew University
- Adjunct Professor, Union Theological Seminary, Fairleigh Dickinson University, Nyack College
- Assistant Professor of History and Religion, Barclay College

Leadership Positions in ATLA

- Task Force on Scholarly Communication in Religion and Theology
- Advisory Board for *Theological Librarianship*
- International Collaboration Committee, Africa and Europe Liaison
- Special Collections Interest Group
- Methodist Librarians Fellowship

Leadership Positions other than ATLA

- Los Angeles United Methodist Museum of Social Justice, Board of Advisors
- Evangelical United Brethren Heritage Center, Board of Advisors

Candidate Statement

I've had the pleasure of holding membership in ATLA for the past ten years. ATLA is an organization comprised of a growing diversity of members and member institutions. As the organization continues to expand its membership, it is imperative that those serving on the ATLA Board not only remain aware of the organization's rich and valued history, they must also embrace and encourage the growth of diversity within its members and membership institutions. Recognizing and celebrating diversity enhances our daily work as librarians and provides contexts to educate and support a broad array of theological librarians attuned to providing library services to global patrons of diverse religious traditions. Librarians working with theological students in online education is one example.

My work at Drew involves developing and supporting a library that is focused on the future of information services while closely embracing and celebrating the legacy of those who have served this institution as librarians over the past one hundred and fifty years. I am acutely aware that future-based outcomes for an organization or entity do not ignore the past successes of those who have given librarianship their time, work and lives. Rather, these outcomes use past successes to chart a future course that provides members and library patrons with an organization intent on fulfilling the needs and requirements of a twenty-first century library and its patron base.

Monitoring and celebrating achievement is essential if an organization is to run well and prosper. My current experience as Associate Dean of Libraries requires me to not only monitor the achievements of personnel, but to make sure current library faculty and staff are properly trained and aligned with the work and direction of our strategic plan. This experience has provided me with opportunities to be goal-focused while working with the current structure and processes in place. A key element in this is the intention and ability to communicate. Communication and candid speaking at appropriate times are essential for progress and for the inclusion of multiple voices and perspectives. The ideas of one person, when brought to the collective, can enhance and empower the group to make proper and well-informed decisions. I work well in groups, having served as an administrator, department head, and chair of several university and ATLA committees. If selected to serve on the ATLA Board, I will be certain to use my experience to help the organization think broadly and support diversity, remain goal-focused in our administrative work, and encourage and support the inclusion of multiple voices for the growth and longevity of the organization.

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**Shanee' Yvette Murrain****Biographical Information**

Professional Experience: As University Archivist and Assistant Professor at the University of West Georgia, my role directs the development of a community-based archive project, "Preserving African American Church Records in Carroll County". As former Director of Library

Services and Archivist at Payne Theological Seminary, I curated the Payne Theological Seminary and African Methodist Episcopal Church Digital Collection. My experience working with the unique religious and theological resources in the Duke Divinity School Library as Project Coordinator of the Religion in North Carolina Digital Collection and Reference & Public Services Librarian deeply influenced my passion for equity in archival representation, digital collections, information literacy, and community outreach. When I'm not at the library, I'm coaching a character development program for 3rd-8th grade girls, called Girls on The Run or training for long distance races like the 2017 Publix Marathon.

Professional Service: American Theological Library Association, Diversity Committee 2014-2016, Special Collections and Archives Interest Group, Co-Chair 2017, Conference Planning Committee 2016-2019; Society of American Archivists Committee on Education, Intern 2016-2017; Society of Ohio Archivists, Advocacy Committee Co-Chair 2015; Academic Library Association of Ohio, Special Collections and Archives Interest Group Co-Chair 2015-2016.

Candidate Statement

The variety of ATLA's activities (such as the Annual Conference, vending theological products, bibliographic and committee work) provide many opportunities to reach today's wide range of theological library users in new ways. With three years of experience planning, implementing and coordinating digitized procedures and workflows for two grant-funded large scale digitization projects, I am skilled in walking the fine line between oversight and interference. The first step in that walk is providing planning leadership that motivates and equips project partners to independently meet benchmarks. The second step in that walk is ensuring stakeholders are getting the most out their investments of both time and financial resources. The third step in that walk is actually accomplishing the task of bringing unique, important, or institutionally relevant content to the academic community and to the larger world. I am confident that my quick wit, strong commitment to understanding all sides of the story, and appreciation for administrative minutiae will make a joy to work with on the Board of Directors.

As a member of ATLA's Diversity Committee, much of the work we did involved deliberating together on the concrete ways our concerted effort could advance a culture within the association and the profession that affirms the intrinsic value of all. From my work teaching diverse groups, I've learned

that community is built by sharing our lived experiences recognizing that others have something we need, they know more than us, we have something they find useful, and our work is compatible. If selected for the Board, I will continue to advocate for programs that create space for diplomatic discussion and outreach to traditionally underrepresented and underserved groups. I'm excited by the opportunity to continue working with the membership to advance this important work.

**Michelle Spomer****Biographical Information***Current Position*

Donald G. Miller Librarian and Director of the Clifford E. Barbour Library, Pittsburgh Theological Seminary

Previous Positions

- Head of Stamps Library (2013-2016), Azusa Pacific University
- Associate Professor (2011-2013), Theological Bibliography & Research, Azusa Pacific University
- Head of Reference (2010-2011), Azusa Pacific University
- Reference & Instruction Librarian (2005-2009), Azusa Pacific University
- Reference & Electronic Resources Librarian (2004-2005), California Baptist University
- Circulation Supervisor, Reference & Public Services Librarian, Adjunct Professor (1996-2004), Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary

Leadership Positions in ATLA

- Co-Chair, Local Host Committee (2013-2016)
- Chair, Annual Conference Committee (2014-2015)
- Member, Annual Conference Committee (2013-2016)
- Member, Education Committee (2012 – 2013)
- Chair, Publications Committee (2010 – 2011)
- Member, Publications Committee (2008 – 2010)
- Chair, College & University Interest Group (2009 – 2010)
- Secretary, College & University Interest Group (2007 – 2009)
- [consultant, Annual Conference Committee, Education Committee, poster sessions]

Leadership Positions other than ATLA

- Brill Library Advisory Board (2009 – 2011)
- California Academic & Research Libraries (CARL) – Member, Elections & Nominating Committee (September 2007 – 2009)
- SAGE Library Advisory Board (2012 – 2014)
- Southern California Theological Library Association (SCATLA) – President (2007 – 2008), Vice President (2006 – 2007), Secretary (2005 – 2006)
- Statewide California Electronic Library Consortium (SCELC) – Member, Product Review Committee

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(2007 – 2016), Chair, Product Review Committee
 (2009 – 2010), Vice Chair, Product Review Committee
 (2008 – 2009)

Candidate Statement

I am thankful for the opportunity to be considered for the ATLA Board of Directors, and I believe I have much experience and several strengths to offer. I have been a theological librarian for sixteen years, and have worked in both university and seminary settings. I have had the good fortune to be involved with various planning processes and committees, including strategic planning, curriculum review, revamping a general education program, and many more minor opportunities. I have also been committed to and involved with ATLA by serving on several committees and presenting at conferences.

I believe I have a good sense of what ATLA has been and what it might do to be successful in the future. It is my opinion that the biggest strength of ATLA is the membership. While pursuing diversity in all its forms is a worthy goal, I am constantly amazed by the diversity of institutions, traditions, and opinions that are represented in ATLA, all brought together by the pursuit of theological librarianship. As a Board member, I would certainly continue to listen and speak to ATLA members in order to inform Board decisions.



Matt Ostercamp

Biographical Information

Current Position

Library Director, Brandel Library,
 North Park University & North Park
 Theological Seminary

Previous Positions

- Access Services Librarian (2010-2014), North Park University & North Park Theological Seminary
- Head of Technical Services (2003-2010), Trinity International University
- Acquisitions, Sr. Technician (2000-2002), Trinity International University

Leadership Positions in ATLA

- Board of Directors (2014-2017) -- Vice-President (2016/17), Treasurer (2016/17)
- Annual Conference Committee (2008-2011)
- Local Host Committee, Co-chair (2008-2011)

Leadership Positions other than ATLA

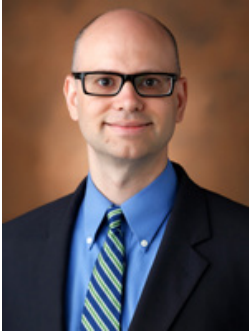
- Chicago Area Theological Library Association (CATLA) Executive Board (2011-2014) -- President (2012/13)
- I-Share Resource Sharing Team (2011-2014)
- CATLA Executive Board (2006-2009) -- President (2007/08)
- Wabash Colloquy on the Role of the Theological Librarian in Teaching, Learning, and Research (2007)

Candidate Statement

ATLA is an association of passionate members who regularly wrestle with some of the deepest questions in the human experience. Representing all ATLA members is a challenge because our intellectual commitments and vocational communities are so formative and can be profoundly at odds. This is also the great joy in being part of ATLA. In a polarized world where differences seem so insurmountable, I believe it is essential that we have communities like ATLA where we can discuss serious topics in a serious manner, but still cooperate with one another. I bring to the Board a commitment to this ecumenical vision of ATLA and a conviction, shared with ATLA members, that religion is important and that together we contribute to the common good. For ATLA to be at its best, the Board must actively engage all members in conversation and listens carefully to member concerns. It is also important that the Board is prepared to lead us into the future with courage and boldness. I find the challenges facing librarianship and the questions about the future of our association energizing and hope to continue helping the Board think carefully but creatively about our future. Having led strategic planning at a departmental and library level, as well as serving on a forward looking Deans Council at North Park, I believe that I'm well equipped to participate in the future-oriented work of the ATLA Board.

Before becoming a library director, I spent a significant part of my career managing student workers and was very impressed with the sacrifices they made to pay for an education. With that in mind, I've always taken staff evaluations very seriously and initiated change when appropriate. Those individuals and institutions that pay for ATLA memberships also deserve to get real value for their investment. I bring to the monitoring work of the ATLA Board a commitment to fairness and a respect for the process of evaluation, but also an expectation that we will see results. I expect ATLA to deliver value to our members and our customers. As a member of the ATLA Board, I try to listen carefully and when appropriate raise alternative and at times dissenting perspectives. I also enjoy consolidating group opinion into successful resolutions. It is my pleasure to report that your Board can disagree (sometimes vigorously) in deliberation, but maintain respect for each other and our focus on our common task. I have served on a variety of church and academic committees, at times as the leader, and believe I bring a thoughtful, constructive voice to those deliberations. I am goal- and opportunity-oriented. I also believe group morale and a healthy culture is important to long term success. It has been a privilege to serve one term on the ATLA Board and I would be honored to serve a second term.

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Clifford Anderson

Biographical Information

Current Position

Associate University Librarian for Research and Learning, Vanderbilt University

Previous Positions

• Director, Scholarly Communications, Vanderbilt University

- Curator of Special Collections, Princeton Theological Seminary
- Curator of Reformed Research Collections, Princeton Theological Seminary

Leadership Positions in ATLA

- Task Force on Scholarly Communication in Religion and Theology

Leadership Positions other than ATLA

- Consulting Member, Advisory Board, Center for Barth Studies, Princeton Theological Seminary
- Chair, Advisory Board, Abraham Kuyper Center for Public Theology, Princeton Theological Seminary

Candidate Statement

I present myself as a candidate for the ATLA Board because I'd like to take part in shaping the future direction of theological librarianship. We are living through a time of significant change in theological education, which affects every dimension of theological librarianship. Major shifts are taking place in our students' demographics, the ways our faculty members disseminate scholarship, and our models for providing library outreach and instruction. The gap between smaller and larger institutions is growing, threatening our unity as a community. The Board of the ATLA has recently adopted new Organizational Ends to meet these challenges. I strongly support the Board's new direction and hope to help the ATLA envision and achieve its promise.

I come with a perspective formed by my experience in theological and academic librarianship. As Curator of Special Collections at Princeton Theological Seminary, I led the development of one of the largest open access digital libraries in theology and religious studies, the Theological Commons. As Director for Scholarly Communications at Vanderbilt University, I helped scholars across the university to retain their copyrights and broaden access to their research. In my current role as Associate University Librarian for Research and Learning, I am collaborating with other senior leaders to re-envision the role of research libraries in the 21st century. As a member of the ATLA Board, I would hope to bring these diverse experiences to bear as we imagine together new opportunities for increasing connectivity, broadening diversity, fostering innovation, and facilitating scholarly communication in theology and religious

studies. At a time of great transformation in librarianship, the ATLA truly must become an inclusive, hospitable, and innovative hub for its members to explore new ideas and create new services in theology and religious studies.

Karl Frantz Leaves ATLA After 28 Years

Database Administrator Karl Frantz has accepted a position with a nonprofit health care agency that was created to address the lack of affordable, high-quality healthcare in the North Lawndale and Little Village neighborhoods of Chicago. He has had various connections with the organization for many years, and he will be sharing his talents as a database developer in support of their mission to help the individuals in those communities.

Karl has been with ATLA for 28 years. During that time, his contributions have been central to ATLA's mission of supporting scholars and students in the study of theology and religion. His unique combination of technical skills and knowledge of our data enabled us to effectively use the Cuadra STAR database as ATLA's data repository for many years. When we transitioned from Cuadra STAR to Nova, Karl was also a critical member of the team and handled all of the data transformations necessary to move records to the new system. The current full-text process for *ATLASerials®* (*ATLAS®*) is another one of Karl's many contributions to ATLA.

In addition to his technical expertise, Karl is also the consummate team player. He is unfailingly friendly and supportive of others; always willing to help in any way he can.

Karl's last day with ATLA was November 23. Please join us in wishing him well in his new endeavor.

Professional Development Committee Fall Meeting

Submitted by Megan E. Welsh, University of Colorado Boulder, Chair of the Professional Development Committee

The Professional Development Committee (PDC) (<https://www.atla.com/Members/divisions/committees/Pages/Professional-Development-Committee.aspx>) held its annual Fall Meeting from October 13-14, 2016, at the ATLA office in Chicago. In attendance were Michael Bradford, Wesley Custer (Secretary), James Estes, Yasmine Abou-El-Kheir, Megan Welsh (Chair), and Gillian Harrison Cain (Director of Member Programs and ATLA staff liaison to the PDC).

Over the course of our day and a half meeting, members of the PDC reviewed the committee's charge and responsibilities, and reflected on successes over the past year and the future direction of our activities. As stated in our charge, the PDC remains committed to the "development of librarians and related information professionals who serve theological and

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religious studies scholarship and study.” The PDC focuses on “determining member needs, identifying expert resources, and utilizing a variety of methods and delivery mechanisms” to support the professional development of ATLA members. Members reviewed the charge, including these key functions, and unanimously agreed to retain the current charge and build on the work we accomplished since our last annual meeting in Fall 2015.

After affirming our charge, we reviewed and celebrated our past successes. Within the last year, the PDC conducted a needs assessment survey which helped us identify professional development opportunities of interest to ATLA members. We also launched a series of webinars which drew a live audience and are currently accessible through the On Demand Learning page (<https://www.atla.com/Members/development/OnDemandLearning/Pages/default.aspx>). Webinars for the fall have been scheduled (<https://newsletter.atla.com/2016/atla-fall-2016-webinar-series/>) and more webinars will be occurring throughout Spring 2017. The PDC continues to support ATLA Regional Grants Program (<https://www.atla.com/Members/development/awards/Pages/Regional-Grants-Program.aspx>) and we are working toward supporting the next cohort of the Creating Leaders of Tomorrow program (<https://www.atla.com/Members/programs/creatingleaders/Pages/default.aspx>).

The review of these successes gave way to a brainstorming session about how our current activities align with our charge and what future activities we may want to host as a committee. We identified some member needs which we feel we can address more effectively, such as transition planning for incoming library management, and offboarding, especially for those who are retiring. Additionally, drawing from the needs assessment survey, we acknowledge that members are also interested in learning more about diversity, BibFrame, and serving distance learners. The PDC acknowledged the diverse and rich skillsets held by ATLA members and discussed a way to leverage the expertise of members through the creation of a database from which the PDC can solicit webinar presenters and programming ideas. We also discussed how best to promote our programming and plan to investigate continuing education units.

The annual meeting of the PDC concluded with a discussion about the ever-evolving nature of academia, the changing information environment, and the transforming landscape of academic libraries. Committee members engaged with questions about how to empower ATLA members to advocate for their libraries and library resources in the face of lack of funding, institutional ambivalence, and the trend of faculty not requiring students to conduct library research.

At our Fall meeting and beyond, the PDC remains committed to supporting the professional development needs of ATLA members while exploring innovative strategies to enhance this support.

Update on Fall Webinar Series

The ATLA Fall Webinar Series is underway! This free webinar series was developed by the Professional Development Committee as a way to foster the exchange ideas within the theological librarianship profession. If you haven't already, please register to attend the upcoming webinars in the series to join in the conversation. Links to the recordings for past sessions are available on ATLA's On Demand Learning page (<https://www.atla.com/Members/development/OnDemandLearning/Pages/default.aspx>).

Librarian/Faculty Collaboration: Using LibGuides to Facilitate Greater Student Learning

- Thursday, December 1, 1:00pm CST
- Terri L. Bogan, Associate Professor, Reference & Instruction Librarian, Hope University
- James W. Yuile, Adjunct Assistant Professor of Ministry and Biblical Studies, Hope University

Librarian collaboration with faculty is a well-known concept among academic librarians and, in some cases, is part of the day-to-day working relationship that many of us already have with other faculty. It is a partnership that facilitates student learning, improves services to students, and increases collegiality. What does this partnership look like when implemented though? This session will present a practical example of collaboration between a librarian and a member of the Bible faculty at Hope International University, using LibGuides to generate renewed library-classroom synergy and to facilitate greater student learning.

Register here (<https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/2540249370777827841>).

Onboarding New Librarians: Building Culture and Connections through an Experienced-Based Training Manual

Tuesday, December 6, 1:00pm CST

- Megan Welsh, Assistant Professor and Interdisciplinary Art & Humanities Librarian, University of Colorado Boulder
- Adam Lisbon, Assistant Professor and Japanese Studies Librarian, University of Colorado Boulder

Library training manuals provide invaluable guidance for new employees. However, they may be limited in content, hard to keep current, and may inadequately communicate information to new employees. Collaborative technology provides great potential for current employees to contribute their knowledge and experiences. Librarians at CU Boulder crowdsourced these experiences and incorporated them into a step-by-step training manual hosted on an accessible, easy to edit platform in the cloud. This manual removes barriers to communication and connects new employees to the larger organization. This webinar is ideal for library directors, those transitioning to leadership positions within their library, and those who hope to become administrators in the future.

Register here (<https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/1565952326466349827>).

The Role of the Theological Librarian in Formational Theological Education

Thursday, November 17, 2:00pm CST

- Wesley Custer, Information Services Librarian, Florida Dunnam Campus, Asbury Theological Seminary
- Susan Ebertz, Associate Professor & Director of the Reu Memorial Library, Wartburg Theological Seminary

Wes and Susan will explore how the library and the librarian can, and perhaps should, play a serious, formative role in the life of the theological student. Theological higher education is changing rapidly and students continue to need the “formation of spiritual awareness” (ATS, Standard 3). How might we reimagine our classic library tasks from a formational standpoint? What is the intersection of the library and spiritual formation? How can we love God with our mind (Matthew 23:37) and guide our students to do the same and discover the depths of divine intimacy through study, research, writing, and other information skills? How can we respond to online and distance educational settings with formational sensitivity?

View the recording here (<https://vimeo.com/192489771>)

ATLA Calendar

ATLA is around the globe this season. Check out the ATLA Calendar (<https://newsletter.atla.com/events/>) for a list of events, deadlines, and meetings.

As a reminder, routine maintenance will be performed on ATLA systems on Monday, January 9. You may encounter a brief interruption of service between 5:00 p.m. and 6:00 p.m. Services that will be affected include ASE, listservs, the ATLA website, and member community sections. We apologize for any inconvenience and thank you for your patience.

Chicago Area Religious Archivists meeting at ATLA

Submitted by Andy Carter, Digital Projects Manager

ATLA was pleased to host a meeting of the Chicago Area Religious Archivists (CARA) on October 27, 2016. About twenty CARA members came to ATLA's downtown Chicago office to hear presentations by ATLA staff about the work done to digitize, describe, and make accessible scholarly religious resources.

I was joined at this meeting by Metadata Analyst and Indexer Adam Paradis and Production Supervisor Megan McCarthy. Collectively, we wanted to cover a range of ATLA activities to provide CARA members with both a broader view of the work undertaken at ATLA as well as more specific information about the workflow required to produce our scholarly databases.

After CARA conducted the business portion of their meeting (and after a bite of birthday cake to celebrate one of their members!) I led off the meeting with an overview of ATLA's work on controlled vocabularies for describing religious materials. It is not widely known, but ATLA has collaborated on several initiatives to improve existing authorities and to create new ones where needed.

I covered two recent efforts: Genre Forms for Religious Terms (<https://www.atla.com/Members/programs/Pages/Genre-Forms.aspx>) and the Thesaurus of Occupations in the Field of Religion (TROT) (<https://www.atla.com/Members/programs/libtools/Documents/Thesaurus%20of%20Occupations%20in%20the%20Field%20of%20Religion%20TROT.pdf>). The first project was done in conjunction with the Library of Congress, the Catholic Library Association (CLA), the Association of Jewish Libraries, and the Council on East Asian Libraries. TROT was created in a collaborative effort with the CLA and the Association of Christian Librarians.

Adam followed up with an insightful presentation about the system ATLA uses to catalog journals, his indexing workflow, and a history of how ATLA's cataloging procedures have changed along with technological advancements. Adam has written in more detail about his presentation, which you can read here (<https://newsletter.atla.com/2016/the-indexing-lif%E2%80%A6atla-cara-meeting/>).

Finally, Megan gave the group an overview of the work required to take an analog journal and convert it to a digital format. She led a tour through the office to discuss the different tasks and tools required to receive, prepare, and scan a physical copy of a journal.

Everyone (myself included) came away with a better understanding of just how many steps are involved in scanning, cataloging, and making accessible scholarly resources. If you would like to learn more about CARA, and read about the ATLA meeting from their point of view, you can do so at their blog (<http://cara-news.blogspot.com/>).

It was wonderful to host our colleagues from a variety of religious archives. The event facilitated discussions around the complexities of creating and using controlled vocabularies for the description of religious materials. And the birthday cake was good too.

CARA Meeting: The Indexing Lifecycle at ATLA

Submitted by Adam Paradis, ATLA Metadata Analyst and Indexer

CARA (Chicago Area Religious Archivists) met at the ATLA Offices for their Fall Meeting on October 27, 2016. ATLA Staff were invited to present on our work in religious archives, cataloging, and digitization. Learn more about CARA.

In my portion of the CARA meeting held at ATLA, I focused on two things: providing the archivist audience with an overview of the indexing lifecycle and demonstrate ATLA's in-house Drupal cataloging interface, NOVA.

To begin, I introduced the group to the original *Religion Index* from the 1940s, a paper volume arranged in two sections: alphabetically by subject and alphabetically by author and

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name. I used this 'relic' to demonstrate the extent of the changing landscape and also to bring up some important vestigial elements and idiosyncrasies found in our current practices. The paper volume of the *Index* required brevity and a certain economy that we are now able to move away from in our current iteration in NOVA. Yet, we are indebted to this early systems in terms of subjects scope and coverage, and more importantly, in terms of our implementation of a modified Library of Congress Subject Heading (LCSH) system.

With this crucial portion of ATLA history established, we moved on to an overview of the indexing lifecycle at present. I began with my work with the OCR'd PDF and showed the audience how I input bibliographic metadata (authors/creators, titles, pagination) in NOVA, and then moved to the subject analysis, ATLA's real strength. I showed in some detail the modifications we've made to the LCSH scheme to build our ever-growing thesaurus. And I showed how we attach subjects, names, genres, and uniform titles to create a complete record. We spent some time on establishing name authorities, another ATLA strength.

We then looked at what is produced, packaged, and shipped to EBSCO: the xml file. It's here that the audience saw the full value of NOVA; because of this interface we are able to create complex structured data files to transmit to EBSCO, which is where *RDB*®, *ATLAS*®, and *CPL*® are actually used by researchers. NOVA has helped keep ATLA up to date with new and emerging metadata standards, and facilitates the input of subject analysis to create truly rich article records. We closed this portion of the meeting with a look at the final full text record, which contained the PDF of the article, bibliographic metadata, and subject analysis.

There was much interest in our modification of LCSH, but we focused on the contentious nature of some religious terminology. For example: comments focused on the proper application of terms for Catholic religious orders, monasticism, etc. And it was here that we were able to delve into ATLA's rich history: we're not only reckoning with vestiges from previous material constraints (as in the physical space in a volume, or card catalog), but we're also reckoning with our commitments to diversity and inclusion vis-à-vis the study of religion in North America. So there are certain moments where we must decide: Protestant vs. Catholic, or is Monasticism (as it has been used) applicable to Buddhist Monasticism in Tibet, or must we start anew. And so, my technical demonstration was punctuated with the social concerns of classification and subject analysis, which was welcomed by all.

Ancient Manuscript Returns

Submitted by John Meeks, Indexer Analyst

The Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago hosted a ceremony that partially brought to an end a century of heartache and loss for the Orthodox Community served by the Monastery of Panagia Eikosifoinissa (Kosinitza

Monastery). Codex 1424, a rare Greek manuscript of the entire New Testament, was one of a number of manuscripts taken in 1917 and eventually found its way into the rare books collection of LSTC through the bequest of the family of Levi Franklin Gruber, a president of the Chicago Lutheran Theological Seminary. The codex was written by a 9th century monk, Sabas, and contains liminal commentaries on the text for all New Testament books except Revelation. Earlier in the year, Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew and other representatives of the Greek Orthodox Church had made a formal request to LSTC for the return of the codex, and the seminary agreed without equivocation.

Representatives of both the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and the Greek Orthodox Church participated at a ceremony at the Lutheran School of Theology to return the manuscript. Present were Bishop Elizabeth Eaton, Presiding Bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America; James Eaton, President of the Lutheran School of Theology; Ralph Klein, curator of LSTC's rare book collection; and receiving the manuscript was Archbishop Demetrios, Exarch of the Ecumenical Patriarchate in the United States.

The return of the manuscript is important for several reasons. The antiquity of the manuscript and the relative completeness of the manuscript, with only one lacuna (Matthew 1:23-2:16), make it valuable to biblical scholars as they work through the task of creating authoritative and scholarly editions of the Bible. In addition, this manuscript is one of the many manuscripts that formed the *Textus Receptus*, a series of Greek texts that form the basis for the Luther Bible.

In the contemporary world, the repatriation of important items of cultural heritage is a politically sensitive issue; however, the returning of such an important item between divisions within Christianity takes on a more significant meaning. For a little more than a century the Christian ecumenical movement has been seeking a greater unity within Christianity. This was reflected by Dr. Nieman's remarks at the ceremony: "It's a symbol of our mutual faithfulness. We're returning the book to show others a new course for living with others. We are delighted, sad, and thankful. May its homecoming be joyful."

Further Resources

- Digital Images of 1424 at The Center for the Study of New Testament Manuscripts (http://www.csntm.org/manuscript/View/GA_1424?filter=1)
- Presentation on Manuscript 1424 and a discussion of its return by President James Nieman and Professor Ralph Klein (<https://vimeo.com/191186882>)
- Article from the Greek Orthodox Metropolis of Chicago which includes photos of the return ceremony (<http://chicago.goarch.org/news/2016/11/17/ancient-manuscript-returned>)

A Historical Letter from the Patriarch of the Church of East Mar Yahb Alahā III (1281-1317) to Pope Boniface VIII (1294-1303) in the Vatican Secret Archives

Submitted by Dr. Iskandar Bcheiry, ATLA Metadata Analyst

During my last trip to Rome and thanks to the kindness of Dr. Luca Carboni, I had the opportunity to examine a few historical documents found in the Vatican Secret Archives. Among these documents was a letter to Pope Boniface VIII (1294-1303) from Mar Yahb Alahā III (1281-1317), the Patriarch of the Church of the East.

The Church of the East, commonly known as the Nestorian Church, is the Christian church that flourished in the Persian territory during the early period of Christianity and quickly spread through Asia. The establishment of the Christian church in the Persian Empire occurred when Christian missionaries, who came directly from Palestine, took advantage of the already existing Jewish communities in Mesopotamia, and evangelized several places in and around Erbil. The Jewish community became the channel through which the first seed of the Christian faith was transplanted from Palestine to the Persian territory. However, the effective development of the Christian Church in the Persian Empire took place under the Sassanid dynasty who overthrew the Parthian dynasty in 224.

At the beginning of the fourth century the bishop of the capital city of the Persian Empire, Seleucia-Ctesiphon, organized the bishops and their local centers in the Persian empire according to the ecclesiastic model developed in the Roman empire. After the excommunication of Nestorius, the Patriarch of Constantinople in 431, many of his followers escaped to the nearby Persian territory. The teaching of Nestorius was welcomed by most of the Christian church hierarchy in Persia and as a result of that, the Church of the East came to be known as the Nestorian Church. The Church of the East is well known for its missionary efforts and Nestorian missionaries arrived in China and Central Asia during the 7th and 8th centuries. When the Mongols rose as an empire and invaded a large part of Asia and east Europe, some of the tribes who joined them were Christian Nestorians. Thus, the Mongols were kind to Christians and there were many influential Nestorian Christians in the Mongol court. The Nestorian church played an important part in the plan of the Mongol rulers in forming an alliance with Christian Europe against the Muslims Mamelukes to capture Jerusalem, however such efforts did not bear fruits.

The author of the letter, Patriarch Mar Yahb Alahā, an ethnic Uighur and a monk of the Church of the East, was born in the vicinity of Beijing. As a young monk, he took the name of Markus and became devoted to his spiritual master, Şawmā. Sometime around 1275 Mar Yahb Alahā (Markus) and Şawmā set out on a pilgrimage with the intention of visiting Jerusalem. In spite of travel permits from the Kublai Khan, the kings of the Mongols, who was ruling at that time most of the Near East, Markus and Şawmā encountered numerous difficulties before reaching Baghdad and meeting with the Catholicos of the

Church of East, Mar Danka. When the Catholicos Mar Danka died (1281), Markus was chosen as his successor and took the name Mar Yahb Alahā III. His election as a patriarch was on the account of his Uighur origins and his familiarity with the language and customs of the Mongol leaders. Following his election as patriarch he sent Şawmā on a diplomatic mission to seek alliance between Christian Europe and Mongols.

The record of the journey of Şawmā provides a rich, eye-witness account of places, people, and events in the last half of the 13th century. Mar Yahb Alahā III is remembered for his efforts to establish diplomatic contacts with the Mongols and for his defense of the Church of East against harassment and massacres by local Muslim rulers. Events of his life were recorded by Şawmā who also kept a record of his diplomatic mission to Christian Europe. The story of Mar Yahb Alahā III first became known in the English-speaking world in 1928. In that year the British Orientalist E. A. Wallis Budge published his monks of Kiplai khan, Emperor of China.¹

Returning back to the letter of Mar Yahb Alahā III to Pope Boniface VIII, we notice that apart from the short introduction and the final greetings which are in Syriac, the letter is written in Arabic. It is basically a letter of courtesy to the Pope, who is respectfully addressed as “keeper of the keys of the kingdom [of heaven], sun of the Christian nation, fifth evangelist.” The author presents himself as “Catholicos, patriarch of the East” and he does not discuss theological subjects or submit a profession of faith.² The letter reflects the efforts of the Nestorians in the East to build good relations with the Christians of the West in the context of a hope of a Christian-Mongolian alliance against the Muslims Mamelukes and others. The following is an English translation of the Syriac and Arabic texts of the letter:

“In the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. The stranger Yahb Alahā, through the mercies of Christ, the Catholicos Patriarch of the East asks your prayers and glory to Christ. He regularly prays to the Holy Father, the knowledgeable and active man, chosen by divine wisdom, who is seated on the throne of Simon Peter, entrusted to the Divine Secrets, keeper of the keys of the kingdom [of heaven], sun of the Christian nation, fifth evangelist, father of the fathers, the head of the bishops Mar Papa, may God bestow upon all of creation the shadow of his sanctity and He includes all the baptized people by his graces (... ..) the stranger Yahb Alahā the keeper of the Church of the Lord Christ in the East and the Seat of saint Thomas, Saint Adai and Saint Mari he presents to You his greetings through our Lord (... ..) we inform Your holiness that the man who arrived to Your holy presence named Sa’d al-Dīn will inform You all our news and condition. Our greetings to all the fathers, monks who are vowed to the service

(of God) and all who are by You (... ..) It was written in July 1613 for the Greeks (=1302 A.D). May our Lord be with all of Us, Amen.”

Endnotes

- ¹ Joseph P. Ammar, “Mar Yahballaha,” “Rabban Sawma” in George Kiraz ed., *Gorgias Encyclopedic Dictionary of Syriac Heritage*; Hackensack, New Jersey: Hugoye Press, 2011.
- ² H. Teule, “Saint Lois and East Syrians: the dream of a terrestrial Empire”, in *East and West in the crusader states: context – contacts – confrontations / 3 Acta of the congress held at Hernen Castle in September 2000*, ed. K. Ciggaar and H. Teule, Leuven: Peeters, 2003, pp. 113-117.

Retiree Spotlight: Betty O’Brien

The ATLA Endowment Committee presented an update on the ATLA Retirees and Lifetime Members at the 2016 ATLA Annual Conference. This Newsletter series will recap what they shared.

Betty O’Brien may have retired in May 1996, but that has not stopped her from working in librarianship. She is currently the Librarian of the Frasier Meadows Retirement Community in Boulder, CO. She states: “My collection is only about 2,000 but they keep it current by frequent weeding. It is a well-used library – the catalog is computerized.”

A recent project has her collecting and organizing a display of the diverse artistic talents of the Frasier Meadows Community, from residents to staff. She says, “While we have many paintings, we also have photographs; stitchery, including clothing, quilts, and other handwork; and woodworking projects, including two tables, pottery, and sculpture. Last year, I did a publications display that included anything from a one page poem to the extremely technical books and articles from our retired faculty and professional — especially scientific — residents. In addition, I chair our Spiritual Life Committee and work closely with our Chaplain. So the days go by far too quickly.”

Betty started her career at the United Theological Seminary (UTS) in Dayton, OH in 1984. She first served on the *Methodist Reviews Index* and then as Leonard Sweet’s research assistant. A short while later, Betty also served as Reference Coordinator for the UTS library and divided her time between her various endeavors. In 2011, the library at UTS was named the Elmer J. and Betty A. O’Brien Library and an endowment fund to support the library was established in their honor.

In 2014, Betty’s husband Elmer passed away. She expressed that “2014 was a year of major adjustments” and adds that her family, four sons and a daughter, have been “wonderfully supportive” through this process.

Thank you to the Endowment Committee for their work in curating this information. If you would like to submit your story for publication and for the 2017 ATLA Annual Conference, please e-mail memberrep@atla.com.

In Memoriam: Neil Gerdes

Submitted by Christine Wenderoth, Director of the JKM Library

Neil Wayne Gerdes, librarian and professor at Meadville Lombard Theological School from 1973 to 2013, and at Chicago Theological School from 1980 to 2013, passed away after a brief illness at the age of 73 on November 6, 2016. Neil was a graduate of the University of Illinois, Harvard Divinity School, and Columbia University. In addition, he received his library degree from the University of Chicago and a DMin degree from the University of St. Mary of the Lake. He was an ordained Unitarian Universalist minister, an active member of the First Unitarian Church of Chicago for 30 years, and in more recent years, a member of St. Thomas the Apostle Catholic parish as well. To honor his stewardship of UU rare books, Meadville Lombard’s named the collection the Neil Wayne Gerdes Rare Book Collection upon his retirement in 2013.

Neil was active in ATLA, CATLA, and was one of the founders of the Association of Chicago Theological Schools [ACTS] Library Council.

As Lee Barker, President of Meadville put it, “Neil was Unitarian Universalism’s librarian extraordinaire. He was a wonderful mentor to students, a lover of books and information, a passionate spokesperson for tradition and academic protocol, an erudite conversationalist, a man of very goofy humor, and a champion for liberal theological education. His is a profound loss.”

In Memoriam: Lorraine Olley Eustis

Submitted by Melody Layton McMahon, Director of the Library, Catholic Theological Union

Dr. Lorraine Olley Eustis, the director of the Feehan Memorial Library and McEssy Theological Resource Center at the University of Saint Mary of the Lake/Mundelein Seminary, died November 19 after battling pancreatic cancer. Lorraine had been in good health until spring of 2015 when she, on a whim, signed up for a study pertaining to women’s health. After the battery of tests associated with entry to the study, it was found that she had cancer.

Lorraine had a BA Philosophy from Rosary College; MA Divinity and MA Library Science from the University of Chicago; and an Advanced Certificate in Preservation Administration from the School of Library Service, Columbia University. In 2015 she was awarded an honorary DLitt by

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the University of Saint Mary of the Lake for her commitment to students' scholarship at USML.

Prior to coming to USML as director in 2007, Lorraine worked in preservation at the libraries of Northwestern University, Indiana University, and New York University. With master's degrees in both divinity and library science from the University of Chicago, she was able to offer specialized research assistance to students and faculty and to continue the excellence of the collection through her bibliographic knowledge.

As a long-time member of ATLA, Lorraine served on the Membership Advisory Committee from 2009-2012 and chaired the Roman Catholic Denominational Group from 2009-2011. She was a member of Special Collections, Teaching and Learning, Collection Evaluation and Development, Cooperative Preservation for Archives and Libraries Interest Groups, and she was a participant in the 2010 Wabash Colloquy.

Lorraine was an active participant in the Catholic Research Resource Alliance (CRAA) from the beginning of Mundelein's membership in the organization. She led the Five-Year Strategic Planning Task Force the year they joined, 2011/12. She was a member of the CRAA Board of Directors from 2013-16. She was a member of the Catholic Newspapers Committee Digitizing Partners Group, which over two years developed the digitization plan, and more recently, she co-chaired the Development Committee which advised CRRA on seeking grants for newspaper digitization and ongoing funding.

There is a wonderful interview with Lorraine on the Mundelein website from spring of 2015 (<https://usml.edu/finding-god-in-the-library-an-interview-with-librarian-lorraine-olley-eustice/>). Most of the questions are about the great treasures that are held in the collection there which Lorraine especially held dear as a preservationist. She was always telling me of some old box they had just opened and what exciting thing they had found. She was great for sharing too. Recently, after the death of Cardinal George, she sent us a few boxes of material that was about the religious order he belonged to because she knew we have a special collection in religion life and religious orders.

In the interview, she also very eloquently described what most of us hope for our libraries and our students. "Over the library is the inscription, 'Wisdom has built herself a home' (*Sapientia Aedificavit Sibi Domum*), which I think expresses the essence of the library. It is not a storehouse, but it is a source of collected wisdom of the Scriptures and the Church. It is supposed to cultivate a living memory where connections can be made. When I talk to seminarians about the importance of using the library I will sometimes ask them to think of it as a place where you can take a book and have St. Teresa of Avila speak to you. You can have a conversation with her as you read and contemplate what she has said. You can converse with Ignatius of Antioch, Origen, Aquinas, if you

try really hard." (Read the full interview here) (<https://usml.edu/finding-god-in-the-library-an-interview-with-librarian-lorraine-olley-eustice/>).

Lorraine was the wife of Paul, stepmother of Dan Eustice, daughter of Raymond Joseph and Mary Jane Olley, sister of Catherine Stevens, Joanna Roat, Regina Schildhouse, Raymond, Timothy, Kevin.

Visitation was held at the University of Saint Mary of the Lake's Chapel of the Immaculate Conception on Saturday, Nov. 26, at 9 a.m. before the funeral Mass at 11 a.m. Afterwards, the congregation processed to the campus cemetery where Lorraine was laid to rest.

Eternal rest grant to her, Oh Lord, and let perpetual light shine upon her. May she rest in peace, Amen. May her soul and the souls of all the faithful departed, through the mercy of God, rest in peace. Amen.

ATLA Job Board

- ATLA, Chicago, IL, is looking for a Editorial Board (3 open positions) and Editor in Chief for Theological Librarianship, and Editorial Board (2 open positions) for the Open Access Monographs
- The Association of Theological Schools, The Commission on Accrediting, Pittsburgh, PA, is looking for a Director, Commission Information Services
- Bridwell Library, Perkins School of Theology, Southern Methodist University, Dallas, TX, is looking for a Library Specialist 3 - Technical Services Assistant
- Glass Memorial Library, Johnson University, Knoxville, TN, is looking for an Assistant Librarian Position
- The Klau Library, Cincinnati, OH, is looking for a Head of Technical Services
- Memphis Theological Seminary, is looking for a Director of Library Services, Memphis, TN
- Payne Theological Seminary, Reverdy C. Ransom Library, Wilberforce, OH, is looking for a Library Director and Archivist
- P.H. Welshimer Memorial Library & The Emmanuel Christian Seminary Library, Milligan College, TN, is looking for a Theological Librarian and Assistant Director of Library Services
- Wheaton College, Wheaton, IL, is looking for a Librarian for Resource Description and Digital Initiatives; Librarian for Outreach and Promotion; Librarian for Instruction and Information Literacy
- Zondervan Library, Taylor University, Upland, IN, is looking for an University Librarian

Find the job listings here: <https://www.atla.com/Members/development/jobs/Pages/default.aspx>

ATLA Offers New Grant Program, Library Impact Grants

Have a great idea for how your library can engage with a certain segment of your community in a new way? Want to try out an idea for improving service at your library? Been thinking about a creative way to market your library and its services? Focused on advancing [ATLA's Organizational Ends](#), Library Impact Grants are designed to help professionals engaged in librarianship and scholarly communication in advocating and collaborating to advance scholarship in theological and religious disciplines.

ATLA member libraries are encouraged to create or expand their programming and services in innovative ways that directly impact the communities they serve, be it faculty, administrators, staff, students, or other constituents. The grant provides funding to create new or improve existing library programs or services.

Projects should focus on one or more of the following areas:

- Promoting the profession
- Marketing the library and its services
- Connecting members for networking and idea sharing related to marketing, promotion and advocacy

Applicants must submit an application which includes a program overview and a detailed project plan including objectives, intended outcomes, evaluation measures, timeline, and budget.

[Read more and apply today.](#)

Summary of the ATLA Reciprocal Borrowing Virtual Meeting

On November 16, 2016, ATLA held a virtual meeting for current ATLA Reciprocal Borrowing participants and those interested in the program.

During the call, ATLA presented the proposed process for submitting reimbursement requests for lost items, discussed the marketing materials available for participants to use to promote the program to their patrons, and gave participants an opportunity to provide feedback and make suggestions for future improvements. The reimbursement form, marketing materials, and revised participating libraries map (<https://www.google.com/maps/d/viewer?mid=16jRdgPFHc1DyFgFUjfeAdpBQYtE&ll=41.48549243186139%2c-93.07788800000003&z=4>) can be found on the Reciprocal Borrowing Program site (<https://www.atla.com/Members/programs/Pages/Reciprocal-Borrowing-Initiative.aspx>).

Current participants of the program shared their experiences and provided feedback from patrons as well as examples of how they have created awareness of the program at their libraries.

ATLA has created a members-only group in the Community section of the ATLA website for all participants, which includes a link to the recorded virtual meeting, notes from the meeting, and other information. To access, simply sign in using your ATLA login information (<http://www.atla.com/rosters/RECIPBORROW/default.aspx>)

The ATLA Reciprocal Borrowing Program creates an arrangement between participating North American ATLA Institutional Members to grant check-out privileges to each other's patrons/students. Learn more (<https://www.atla.com/Members/programs/Pages/Reciprocal-Borrowing-Initiative.aspx>).

Theology Cataloging Bulletin Available

The November 2016 issue of *Theology Cataloging Bulletin (TCB)*, a benefit of membership, is now available. [Please click here](#) to access this issue in the member restricted section of the ATLA website.

Section one of each issue lists new and changed subject headings and genre/form terms and section two lists new and changed classifications. Both are selected and compiled by Ann Heinrichs (Catholic Theological Union, Chicago, Illinois). Section three includes general information, including professional development opportunities, and is edited by Leslie Engelson (Murray State University, Murray, Kentucky). Denise Pakala, Associate Librarian for Technical Services, Buswell Library, Covenant Theological Seminary, submitted a testimony, *Our Experience with Joining a Large Consortium*.

Thank you to the [Technical Services Interest Group \(TSIG\)](#) for their work on this publication.

[Click here to access the Member's Only publication.](#)

ATLA RDB® and ATLA CPLI® Merges Vocabularies

ATLA is in the process of merging the vocabularies used in indexing the *ATLA Religion Database®* and the *ATLA Catholic Periodical and Literature Index®*. Where possible, *ATLA RDB®* subject heading conventions will be applied to the *ATLA CPLI®* data. During this process, however, some *ATLA RDB®* subject headings will be modified as well.

In order to keep our users up to date on the vocabulary changes, we have added an Excel spreadsheet that documents the changes that were made. The current list of significant changes can be [downloaded from our website](#).

If you have any questions, please email support@atla.com.