

Newsletter



Princeton Theological Seminary, Princeton, NJ

Want to be showcased in the next newsletter? Post a photo of your library with #ATLALibrary.

From the President	1
“In Good Faith” Survey.....	2
2014 Salary and Benefits Survey.....	2
Reciprocal Borrowing Initiative.....	3
ATLA Awards Diversity Scholarships	3
ATLA Welcomes 24 Titles to ATLAS®	4
NFAIS 2014 Humanities Roundtable	4
ATLA Member Renewals	4
Theological Libraries Month.....	5
ATLA Receptions at AAR & SBL.....	5
ATLA Annual Conference News.....	6
Theological Book Network Anniversary	7
ATLA Member of the Week	7
<i>Theology Cataloging Bulletin</i> Available.....	7
Staff News.....	8
Calendar	8
Job Openings.....	9
From the Executive Director	10



From the President Succession Planning and Interim Ministry

Among the ten provocative statements after the Taiga 4 meeting in 2009 was this statement: “Within the next 5 years 20% of the ARL library directors will have retired. University administrators

will see that librarians do not have the skills they need and will hire leaders from other parts of the academy, leading both to a realignment of the library within the university and to the decline of the library profession.”¹ The same provocative statement could be made about theological libraries. Remember, these statements are meant to inspire fruitful conversation, not to predict a dire future. Five years later, the first part of this statement has come to pass. Many ARL library directors, including the one who leads the library system in which I work, have announced their retirements. The second part of the provocative statement has not yet come to pass, but should give us pause. It reflects the urgency for succession planning among libraries, including theological libraries.

As the university librarians at institutions where I have worked have retired, I have been thinking a lot about succession planning. I have even started skimming some of the business and library science journal literature on the topic. Much of this literature stresses the importance of preparing internal candidates for leadership positions (consider, for example, the ARL Leadership Fellows program). As my thinking on the topic has developed, I have become more convinced that the model of interim ministry is helpful in thinking about succession planning within librarianship. The concept of interim ministry has been around for a while. Back in 1981, the Interim Ministry Network was formed. Many religious traditions, including my own, have embraced this model.

Consider the following statements. Could we substitute “leader(s)” for “minister(s)” and “organizations” for “congregations”? “Interim ministers [leaders] are recognized for their ability to assist congregations [organizations] in coming to terms with their past and claiming their new identity as they ready themselves for a stimulating relationship with a new settled minister [leader].”² This document from the UUA goes on to claim that an interim period can provide “breathing space” between the past and

Continued on page 2

"In Good Faith" Project Survey on Collection Care

The American Theological Library Association (ATLA), the Association of Jewish Libraries (AJL), and the Catholic Library Association (CLA) conducted a web-based survey (available from March 13th through April 12th) to assess current preservation activities and future needs for small theological and religious studies libraries and organizations. The results of the survey have been published and can be viewed [here](#).

Along with the publication of the survey, twenty-five survey participants were selected at random for a chance to win a \$100 Amazon gift certificate. [The list of winners can be found on our website.](#)

"In Good Faith: Collection Care, Preservation, and Access in Small Theological and Religious Studies Libraries" was funded by the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS). Project partners include the American Theological Library Association (ATLA), the Catholic Library Association (CLA) and the Association of Jewish Libraries (AJL). This IMLS National Leadership Grants for Libraries Planning Grant runs through September 30, 2014.

[Learn more about this project by visiting the ATLA website.](#)

National Leadership Grants for Libraries support projects that address challenges faced by the museum, library, and/or archive fields and that have the potential to advance practices in those fields. IMLS offers grants to help make it possible for communities and individuals to thrive.

Letter from the President Continued

the future, a time "during which a congregation [organization] can review its goals, assess its programs, consider the quality of its life in common, and tune up for a new era."

Interim ministers are specifically trained to reassure congregations that an experienced professional is on hand during an important transition, to help congregations work through the complexity of emotions involved when leadership changes, to help congregations review their operations and to clarify their goals, to model other types of leadership so that congregations are open to new possibilities, and to identify future challenges facing congregations and the resources needed to face those challenges (e.g., financial, human, technological). In short, interims can help claim the past, assess present strengths and challenges, and guide the future vision of an organization. Intentional interim periods promote thoughtful discernment. They allow the necessary time to discuss needed specific qualities and skills of a new leader within a particular context.

I think there is a need to train theological librarians in some of these interim skills so that we provide leadership at our institutions during transitional times. We should identify current staff members who can step into interim leadership roles and colleagues who can serve as qualified consultants during interim periods. We should invest in these people and nurture their potential as

Coming Soon: A 2014 Salary and Benefits Survey

In 2009, ATLA surveyed its North American Institutional and Affiliate member libraries to benchmark the range of salary levels and benefits offered that year. The survey resulted in a publication, [ATLA 2009 Salary and Benefits Survey](#), which many libraries have found useful for comparison purposes since other academic library surveys do not segment out theological libraries.

The information gathered for that publication is now five years old and it's time to refresh the data. In mid-September, ATLA will be sending out a new salary and benefits survey to directors at Institutional and Affiliate member libraries. The survey has been revised to make the questions more Canadian-friendly, to ask for additional details, and to reflect new positions in libraries that have evolved.

Please watch for the survey and take the time to complete it. The information gathered will be used to create a new document which will include an analysis of the 2014 data as well as a comparison with the 2009 data. The resulting publication will be valuable as an advocacy and budgeting tool for theological libraries throughout North America.

interim leaders. We need people who can document and review policies and procedures, assess staffing structures, and outline future challenges and how to address them. We need people who can think outside the box while exhibiting the pastoral qualities that many organizations need during times of transition. We need people who can listen carefully and thoughtfully while gathering feedback. During times of transition, we need people who will strengthen the lines of communication and build trust.

Interim ministry as a model for succession planning is another instance where our religious or theological backgrounds may inform our leadership. (See my April 2014 column for reflections on how theological education may inform one's leadership). How might the model of interim ministry inform succession planning within your library or organization? What could ATLA do to assist in succession planning among theological libraries? Together what can we do to ensure that the second part of the Taiga 4 statement quoted above does not come to pass? [I invite your feedback](#) .

Beth Bidlack
President

Serving Distance Students with Print Materials: Reciprocal Borrowing Initiative

Are you serving online or distance students based in another city or state? Does your faculty travel to other locations to conduct research? Do your users still need access to print materials because everything they need is not yet available in electronic form?

If you answered yes to any of these questions, you may be interested in a resource sharing initiative that ATLA is exploring. This idea was born out of a conversation group session, "Network for Religious Studies at a Distance," led by Thomas Phillips (Claremont School of Theology) at the 2014 ATLA annual conference.

"Reciprocal borrowing" refers to arrangements between one or more institutions to grant check-out privileges to each other's patrons. These types of arrangements between groups of academic, public, and special libraries have been successful in many parts of the country for decades. With the rise of distance and online programs in theological education, the issue of access to print library collections at a distance is becoming increasingly important.

Many reciprocal borrowing groups are geographically centered or share the same ILS. While ATLA members are geographically dispersed and do not have a common ILS, there are technological solutions that can solve the challenge of ensuring in real-time that a patron is an active student in good standing at another participating school. Many groups also have set up a self-insurance fund to reimburse replacement costs to participating institutions should a patron prove to be untrustworthy.

If you are interested in participating in a pilot project to create a reciprocal borrowing group, please contact Brenda Bailey-Hainer at: bbailey-hainer@atla.com. A group of interested parties will be convened via conference call in late September.

ATLA Awards Diversity in Theological Librarianship Scholarship

The [ATLA Diversity Committee](#) is pleased to announce the recipient of the [Scholarship for a Theological Librarianship Course](#)

Thelma Herrera Flores has an MA in Religion from Yale Divinity School and a BA in Religion from Drew University. She is an ordained deacon in the United Methodist Church.

Thelma is a Mexican-American woman who has experienced diversity throughout her life. "I grew up in South Texas, I am a daughter of migrant workers, and I was educated in a Japanese internment camp. My formative years included visiting Jewish Holocaust survivors at my mother's place of employment. I have also had the privilege of traveling to Africa, Hungary, Israel, Peru, The Dominican Republic, and the United Kingdom for mission work. Each of these experiences has given me a distinct appreciation, understanding, and compassion for all people."

She plans to use a variety of gifts from her life experience as a woman of color and supporter of social justice. "I expect to find some challenges that will require a fair amount of diplomacy and tact. But I am confident that my voice need not be strident to accomplish some good in the quest for increasing cultural competency among my peers."



Thelma is a Student Member of ATLA and will use her scholarship to support her enrollment in a Theological Librarianship course at any ALA-accredited master's program.

A special thank you to the members of the ATLA Diversity Committee for their work to promote this opportunity and to evaluate applicants. [Learn more about this committee by visiting their web page.](#)

ATLA Welcomes Twenty-Four Titles to ATLASerials® (ATLAS®)

The American Theological Library Association (ATLA) is pleased to welcome twenty-four titles newly available in *ATLASerials®* (ATLAS®), ATLA's online full-text collection of more than 290 major religion and theology journals.

- *Aramaic Studies*, by Brill
- *Church History and Religious Culture*, by Brill
- *Crux*, by Regent College
- *Cultural Encounters*, by The Institute for the Theology of Culture: New Wine, New Wineskins in association with Multnomah University
- *Dead Sea Discoveries*, by Brill
- *Hawwa*, by Brill
- *Horizons in Biblical Theology*, by Brill
- *International Journal of Public Theology*, by Brill
- *Jahrbuch für Liturgik und Hymnologie*, by Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht
- *Journal for the Study of Judaism in the Persian, Hellenistic and Roman Period*, by Brill
- *Journal of Ancient Near Eastern Religions*, by Brill
- *Journal of Pentecostal Theology*, by Brill
- *Journal of Reformed Theology*, by Brill
- *Luther*, by Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht
- *Lutherjahrbuch*, by Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht
- *Method & Theory in the Study of Religion*, by Brill
- *Neotestamentica*, by New Testament Society of South Africa
- *Religion and the Arts*, by Brill
- *Religion & Theology = Religie & teologie*, by Brill
- *The Review of Rabbinic Judaism*, by Brill and the preceding title
 - ◊ *The Annual of Rabbinic Judaism*, by Brill
- *Social Sciences and Missions*, by Brill
- *Svensk exegetisk årsbok*, by Uppsala Exegetiska Sällskap
- *Temenos*, by Finnish Society for the Study of Comparative Religion

Gregg Taylor, ATLA Licensing Manager, commented, "Building on the momentum of the many international titles we have added to ATLAS, this update brings our users sixteen additional titles from Brill and three additional titles from Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht. We also continue our commitment to smaller publishers, including five titles of scholarly importance from societies and academic institutions. This is one of the largest updates since ATLAS began, and provides a wealth of new content in all fields of religious studies and theology."

[Read the full press release here.](#)

NFAIS 2014 Humanities Roundtable

Brenda Bailey-Hainer, Margot Lyon, and Maria Stanton will join fellow scholars, librarians, content providers and database publishers for the NFAIS 2014 Humanities Roundtable, in New York City, September 29, 2014, at the Graduate Center of the City University of New York. This year's roundtable is entitled *Digital Humanities and Digital Publishing: Insights and Opportunities*. Leading experts in the field, including our ATLA Board President Beth Bidlack, Director, Burke Library at Union Theological Seminary, will present at this one-day onsite and virtual event exploring current and emerging best practices in digital humanities and digital publishing. [Click for more information.](#)

Registration for onsite attendance is closed, but registration for virtual attendance is [still available here.](#)

ATLA Member Renewals

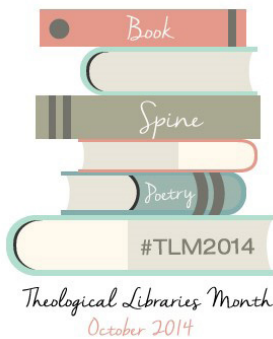
ATLA Membership renewal season is upon us! Renewal notices were sent to all current members — Institutional, Affiliate, International Institutional, Individual, and Student. The ATLA membership year runs from September 1 through August 31.

The second renewal e-mail was sent Tuesday, September 2. All individual and student members and member representatives of Institutional, International Institutional, and Affiliate members should have received this e-mail notice regarding membership renewals. If you did not receive a renewal notice, please contact memberrep@atla.com.

As Beth Bidlack stated in her message, ATLA membership provides numerous benefits, including discounted conference registration, publications (*ATLA Newsletter*, *Theological Librarianship*, *Theology Cataloging Bulletin*, and the annual *ATLA Summary of Proceedings*), access to networking, professional development opportunities, discounts on products, and more.

Thanks to those members who have already renewed their memberships online. If you have questions or concerns regarding your 2014-2015 ATLA membership renewal, please e-mail memberrep@atla.com.

October is Theological Libraries Month



Theological Libraries Month is around the corner and we have several ways to help you celebrate!

New! ATLA Advocacy Innovation Grants

This year ATLA is offering a new competitive grant program designed to help achieve Organizational End 1.2.1: Librarians are effective advocates for their libraries and the profession.

ATLA Advocacy Innovation Grants of \$1,000 are available for ATLA Institutional Members for an advocacy project. The purpose of this grant program is to support the development and implementation of innovative activities for advocating for the role of libraries and librarians in theological and religious studies education.

Grants may be given to projects related to Theological Libraries Month or other projects conducted throughout the year. Up to six Advocacy Innovation Grants will be awarded between September 2014 and March 2015. In order to be eligible, applicant institutions must be ATLA Institutional Members that have paid their FY15 membership dues in full.

Please note that the ATLA Advocacy Innovation Grants program replaces the TLM Mini-grant program that was offered in the past.

For information on how to apply, [please see the application instructions at the Advocacy Innovation Grants page](#).

Book Spine Poetry

Join us for the second annual Book Spine Poetry contest. This is a great way to celebrate Theological Libraries Month with your students at your library.

The Contest

Encourage students and/or patrons to create poetry using the titles of books from the library and snap a photo. Post the photo to Twitter or Facebook using #TLM2014. Be sure to tag @yourATLA on [Twitter](#) or our [Facebook](#) so you can be entered into the contest.

We will be reposting our favorite photos throughout the month of October. Three winners will be chosen and showcased in the ATLA Newsletter and receive a \$25 gift card.

All photos must be posted by midnight on October 31. Winners will be announced in the November Newsletter.

The Goodies

TLM posters, social media logos and icons, and bookmarks are [available for download](#). Please use them liberally and let's celebrate TLM together!

Theological Libraries Month was established to advance the importance and value of theological libraries and library services to targeted faculty, administrators, staff, and students.

ATLA Receptions at AAR & SBL Annual Meetings in San Diego



ATLA will host two receptions during the Concurrent Annual Meetings 2014 of the American Academy of Religion (AAR) and Society of Biblical Literature (SBL) in San Diego. You are invited to join us and bring a colleague or two. Please RSVP to rybak@atla.com by November 13 with your name, the name of your guest(s), and the event(s) you will attend.

Both venues are a short walk from the Convention Center. More information and a map are [available here](#).

Evening Reception

Saturday, November 22, 2014

6:00 - 8:00 p.m.

Hard Rock Hotel

207 5th Avenue, San Diego

Revolution Rm. 1

Morning Reception

Monday, November 24, 2014

7:00 - 9:00 a.m.

Buster's Beach House and Longboard Bar

807 W. Harbor Drive, San Diego

Also, please stop by the ATLA exhibit booth #945. Exhibit hall hours are November 22-24 (Saturday-Monday), 8:30 a.m. - 5:30 p.m.; November 25 (Tuesday), 8:00 a.m. - 12:00 noon. We look forward to seeing you there.



ATLA Annual Conference News

Submit for 2014 Proceedings

You are invited to submit your presentation and/or committee and group reports, for the 2014 *Summary of Proceedings*. The annual *ATLA Summary of Proceedings* is a historical record of the ATLA Annual Conference.

Send submissions, forms, presentation slides, and questions to the editor at proceedings@atla.com. Please use the *Proceedings format to submit your materials*.

The deadline for submissions has been extended to Friday, October 10.

Those encouraged to make submissions to the *Proceedings* include:

- Committee chairs
- Conversation Group facilitators
- Denominational Group secretaries
- Interest Group speakers and secretaries
- Memorial tribute speakers
- Plenary speakers
- Paper/presentation speakers
- Panel discussion presenters
- Pre-conference workshop presenters
- Regional Group secretaries
- Worship leaders

[Please check out our website for more information.](#)

Call for the 2015 ATLA Annual Conference Proposals

The Conference Committee cordially invites members and friends of the American Theological Library Association [to submit proposals for:](#)

- Pre-conference Workshops
- In-conference Workshops
- Papers
- Panel Presentations
- Listen & Learn Sessions
- Interest Group Presentations
- Conversation Groups
- Posters or Other Special Sessions



June 17-20, 2015 • ATLA Annual Conference
Theological Librarians and Libraries of Denver
/ Rocky Mountain Region

The conference will be held in Denver, Colorado, June 17-20, 2015.

The Committee will consider proposals addressing theological librarianship, the academic disciplines of theology, and/or general librarianship. [All submissions are due by Tuesday, September 30.](#)

We look forward to seeing you in Denver, June 17 - 20, where you will be “Mining the Information Landscape,” hosted by the Theological Librarians and Libraries of Denver/Rocky Mountain Region.

The Theological Book Network is Celebrating 10 Years!

The Theological Book Network (the Network) is excited to be celebrating our 10th anniversary this year, and we are celebrating ATLA Members too! A hearty thank you to the many ATLA Members who have donated books to us over the past ten years! We could not have achieved this milestone without your generous support!

Founded by Dr. Kurt Berends in 2004, the Network links Majority World theological institutions with the western academy, facilitating access to theological resources for the formation of church leaders in the Global South. The Network also supports the publication of indigenous scholarship so that the voices of Majority World scholars are heard throughout the church.

One of our longest serving employees, Wayne Bornholdt, Director of Acquisitions, says, "I think the first milestone was the first book shipped out. It was the culmination of a vision, approach, and hard work. It was a concrete expression of what the Theological Book Network intended to do and has done for the past ten years. Those early shipments were difficult to assemble and get out the door, but we learned that what we did mattered and that continues to be the case."

Since that time, the Network's programs and services have grown tremendously. The Network has sent more than 1.8 million high-quality academic theological books to over 1200 schools in 77 countries! We have come a long way from sending that first book!

Wayne goes on to say, "the second milestone was every other book that has left our hands and has found a 'new home.' Due to the generosity of our donors, a committed staff and fine facilities, we have been able to continue our mission. We know that the books we provide to schools, libraries, faculty, and students make an impact in the quality of their studies, teaching, and pastoral ministry. Each book we send is an important step. It is heartening to hear the stories and reports on how our work has made such a difference."

The Theological Book Network is planning a 10th Anniversary celebration for October 28, 2014, at the Cascade Country Club, located in Grand Rapids, MI. Please save the date, so you and your friends can join us! We will have a chance to celebrate the accomplishments of the past decade, and look forward to our plans for the future. The landscape of global theological education continues to advance and change, and we are excited to celebrate ten years of partnership with Majority World schools in service to the global church.

We like to thank current and past ATLA Members and other theological libraries who have made a donation to the Theological Book Network over the last 10 years. [Please see the list of donors on our website.](#)

We are so grateful for your support!

Submitted by Heather Feltman, TBN Vice President of Advancement and Communications

ATLA Member of the Week

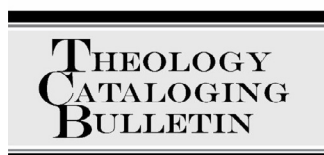


Let's give a face and personality to what makes ATLA unique -- you!

If you are an Individual, Student, or the member rep of your library or organization, we want to honor the work that you are doing by showcasing you as the ATLA Member of the Week.

Become a ATLA Member of the Week by [filling out this form](#) and sending your photo to newsletter@atla.com. Your profile will be [featured on our website](#) and linked on our [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#).

New Issue of *Theology Cataloging Bulletin (TCB)* Published



The August 2014 issue of *Theology Cataloging Bulletin*, 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 section two lists new and changed classification. Both of these sections are selected and compiled by Ann Heinrichs (Catholic Theological Union, Chicago, Illinois). Section three includes the general information and is edited by Leslie Engelson (Murray State University, Murray, Kentucky).

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

Staff News



ATLA Staff Summer Outing

This year's ATLA Staff Summer Outing featured a visit to the Museum of Contemporary Art Chicago on Friday, August 15, 2014. The day began with a guided tour of the museum, some of which included recent exhibitions on Frida Kahlo and Simon Starling. After spending some time in the museum on our own, we headed to the Water Tower Place on the prestigious Magnificent Mile to enjoy a delicious lunch from Mity Nice Bar. We recommend you check it out sometime when you're in town.

[See photos from the Summer Outing.](#)

Dr. Katherine Tsiang and the Cave Temples of Xiangtangshan, China



ATLA staff welcomed Dr. Katherine Tsiang, Associate Director, Center for the Art of East Asia, Department of Art History, University of Chicago, as a presenter for our August Knowledge Exchange. Dr. Tsiang spoke about

aspects of their digital imaging work and discussed themes of time and space in the creation, the religious meaning, and the history of a major cave temple site in Xiangtangshan, China. Carved from the rock during the Northern Qi dynasty (550-577), these temples and the sculptures within have suffered from earthquakes and looting over the centuries. Using photographs and digital scans, Dr. Tsiang's team has matched displaced art pieces and partial sculptures from within the caves, as well as from art museums and universities around the world, with their points of origin within the temples. Digital imaging is used to reconstruct the temples to be virtually intact. For more information, including an amazing and beautiful [video tour](#) of temple interiors and sculptures, visit x-ts.uchicago.edu.

ATLA Calendar

September

- 29 - National Federation of Advanced Information Services (NFAIS) Humanities Roundtable, New York City - Brenda Bailey-Hainer, Margot Lyon, and Maria Stanton attending
- 30 - Deadline for the 2015 Annual Conference Session Proposals

October

- 6 - Routine Maintenance performed on ATLA systems
- 9-10 - Professional Development Committee Meeting, Denver, CO - Denise McFarlin and Brenda Bailey-Hainer attending
- 17-18 - ATLA Board of Directors Meeting, Chicago, IL
- 28-29 - Theological Librarianship Meeting, Chicago, IL

November

- 3 - Routine Maintenance performed on ATLA systems
- 4-8 - Charleston Conference, Charleston, SC - Brenda Bailey-Hainer, Margot Lyon, and Maria Stanton attending
- 13-15 - Conference Committee Meeting, Denver, CO - Denise McFarlin and Brenda Bailey-Hainer attending
- 22-25 - AAR & SBL Annual Meetings 2014, San Diego, CA, ATLA staff attending
- 27-28 - ATLA offices closed in observance of Thanksgiving Holiday



Judy Shroeter Promoted to Research Associate

We are excited to announce that Judy Shroeter has been promoted to full time Research Associate.

Judy joined ATLA as the Research Assistant for the Business Development department in April 2014. In her new position, Judy will also work with the Member Programs department, specifically on the 2014 Salary and Benefits Survey.



Tawny Promoted to Communications Coordinator

Tawny Burgess has been promoted to Communications Coordinator.

Tawny joined ATLA as the Communications Specialist in November 2012. In her new position, Tawny will continue her previous responsibilities, and will further work with the committees and interest groups, social media, and other publication projects.



Denise McFarlin Received Certification

Meeting Specialist Denise McFarlin is now a Certified Meeting Professional (CMP), a designation that recognizes those who have demonstrated their proficiency through a combination of education, experience, and passing a rigorous exam. She is one of 229 other individuals that passed the third quarter CMP examination.

This certification will impact her position at ATLA. "It will provide me a more broad base skill set and access to other professionals within the industry as a resource and additional educational/networking opportunities."

CMPs are considered the leading experts in the global meetings, conventions, and exhibitions industry.

Job Openings

Are you in the market for a new position? Be sure to check the [ATLA web listings](#) to see who is hiring now.

Positions posted this month:

- American Theological Library Association, Chicago, IL, is looking for a [Production Coordinator](#).
- American Theological Library Association, Chicago, IL, is looking for a [Director of Member Programs](#).
- Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary, Austin, TX, is looking for a [Learning Technologies Librarian](#).
- Columbia International University, Columbia, SC, is looking for a [Public Services Librarian](#).
- Iliff School of Theology, Denver, CO, is looking for a [Library Director](#).
- Moravian Theological Seminary Library, Bethlehem, PA, is looking for a [Research Instruction Librarian and Seminary Liaison](#).
- The Office of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), Philadelphia, PA, is looking for an [Executive Director](#).
- Payne Theological Seminary, Wilberforce, OH, is looking for an [Archivist](#).
- Robert E. Webber Institute for Worship Studies, Orange Park, FL, is looking for a [Library Director](#).
- Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Fort Worth, TX, is looking for an [Acquisitions Librarian](#).
- Union Presbyterian Seminary, Richmond, VA, is looking for a [Library and OFINE Director](#).



From the Executive Director The Future of Theological Libraries: Results of the First Conversation

On June 24, 35 key administrators from 12 seminaries and divinity schools gathered to reflect on the future of libraries in theological education. Jointly sponsored by the American Theological Library Association (ATLA) and The Association of Theological Schools (ATS), this “conversation” allowed participants to discuss their common concerns related to

theological education and the role of libraries and librarians. Each institution was required to bring to the event a team that included the library director, chief academic officer, and chief technology officer.

For background information, the participants read several documents in advance which were focused on trends from three core areas: theological education, academic libraries, and technology in higher education.

- Theological Education: Daniel O. Aleshire, “The Future has Arrived: Changing Theological Education in a Changed World,” *Theological Education*, 2011, 46:2, pp. 69-80.
- Academic Libraries: [ACRL Environmental Scan 2013](#)
- Technology in Higher Education: [NMC Horizon Report 2014: Higher Education Edition](#)

Drawing on these articles and from their experiences on their own campuses, the group identified six major challenges facing libraries and their schools:

- 1) support for online and distance education,
- 2) information literacy,
- 3) the need for collaboration between schools,
- 4) scholarly communications, including open access,
- 5) financial concerns, and
- 6) the digital divide among both students and faculty.

The day closed with a discussion of what theological libraries and library directors in 2030 will look like. All agreed that libraries will exist in both physical and virtual forms and that there will continue to be print as well as electronic materials in various formats. Collaboration space (also both physical and virtual) and space for

solitary work will be important, and librarians will offer assistance 24x7 and be embedded in courses delivered in any way (face-to-face, online, blended, etc.). There was also a sense that libraries will emphasize their uniqueness, perhaps through their archives and special collections, and may even merge with museums or other cultural heritage entities. Libraries may take on new roles in publishing and information creation. Technology will continue to play an important part in library service, perhaps even supporting new methods of connecting people with the resources they need through means such as drone delivery.

Interestingly, there was less agreement on the attributes of the library director of 2030. Some argued that a PhD in religion or theology will be essential. Others were adamant that the library director, in addition to an MLIS, will need an organizational management, computer science, or even business administration degree; strong leadership skills will trump the need for a strong subject background. A few saw the library director taking on new roles, such as public relations, becoming a revenue generator for the institution (alongside the development and recruitment offices), generalist researcher, entrepreneur, and becoming a central node in the social network.

Did the group come to any major conclusions or “ah-hah” moments? No, but this conversation was just the first in a series. Other voices from the theological education community will have the opportunity to bring their ideas to the table in various venues throughout the coming year.

Contact Information

We welcome your submission of news, photos, and other items of interest for the ATLA *Newsletter*. All submissions are due on the first business day of the month preceding publication.

Contact newsletter@atla.com with any questions or concerns or if you are interested in sponsoring an issue of the newsletter.

Stay Connected

