BULLETIN

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Association of British Theological and Philosophical Libraries

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BULLETIN 1977

COMMITTEE 1977

CONTENTS

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING, Manchester College, Oxford, 3rd November, 1976.

Principal matters discussed

1. Officers and committee re-elected.

2. Accounts more satisfactory than any year since revival of ABTAPL — income £292.94, expenditure £272.74. But V.A.T. payable unless registered as charity — proposals for minor consequent changes in constitution to come before next committee meeting.

3. Vice-chairman to represent ABTAPL at forthcoming second meeting of Cathedral Librarians' group.

4. Proposal that ABTAPL be formed into a new subject group of the Library Association referred to next committee meeting for full consideration of all implications.

5. Future meetings: May, 1977, at Canterbury; November, 1977, at Dr. Williams's Library.

CONTRIBUTORS TO THIS ISSUE

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ABTAPL IN OXFORD

A group of twenty members gathered in the Senior Common Room of
Manchester College, Oxford, on 3rd November, for the Association's A.G.M.
Libraries in London, Birmingham, Canterbury, Bradford, Boston Spa, Edinburgh,
Aberdeen and of course Oxford were represented. Most members had previously
visited Pusey House and Blackwell's bookshop. The apparently venerable rooms
serving as libraries at Pusey House were, as so often happens, more attractive to
the antiquarian than practical for housing a proper working collection, in
contrast to the severe efficiency of the stackroom below. We were amused by the
disarming notice on the catalogue freely admitting inconsistencies in headings for
corporate authors, and by the cartoons of Pusey and other controversial clerics
fixed to the ends of the book presses in the Upper Library. We sympathized with
the librarian, the Rev. Peter Cobb, about his massive pamphlet collection, which
we visited via mock medieval stairs and passages full of icy draughts to enhance
the scholastic atmosphere.

Blackwell's, by contrast, was as modern as any lover of technology could
wish. We stood amazed as the computer flashed on to a TV screen details of
stock holdings or credit-worthiness of customers. We learnt from Mr. C.N. Francis,
long-time head of the theology department and now a director of the firm, that
theology had lost its former importance as a university subject, though philosophy
in its many branches held its own. From the vast cavern of the Norrington Room
Blackwell's books still found their way all over Britain and all over the world.

Following the A.G.M., members looked round the fine reading room of
Manchester College, guided by Mrs. Barbara Smith, the librarian, and saw examples
of the great manuscript resources that the College (originally founded 1757) has
for the history of English nonconformity.

Then to the final library of the tour, that of Lincoln College. A most beautiful
and sensitive alteration of a redundant church (All Saints) has provided a glorious
library with upper and lower levels, enquiry desk and workroom. Here, as at the
other libraries, we envied their many readers the opportunity for study (when
uninterrupted by itinerant librarians) surrounded by the best literature and
architecture of the past.

<div align="right">M.E./J.V.H.</div>

[It is planned to include detailed entries for the theological libraries of Oxford
in future *Bulletins.*]

NEW COLLEGE, LONDON

The impending closure of New College, London, has meant that its Library,
amounting to some thirty thousand volumes, has, apart from a working
collection retained for the time being, had to be dispersed. Founded in 1850,
New College was an amalgamation of three Congregational Colleges, Homerton,
Coward, and Highbury, all of which had roots in the eighteenth century. In
1924 it joined with a similar institution, Hackney College, on the latter's site
and additional buildings, including the library, were opened in 1938.

On amalgamation the various constituent colleges brought together their libraries into one collection. The seven thousand items from the Academies is the largest remaining collection from Dissenting Academies in the Independent, or Congregational, tradition. With great generosity the Trustees of New College have presented this in entirety to Dr. Williams's Library, with the exception of five incunubula presented to the University of London Library. Together with these books have come any others in New College in the STC category, a collection of over nineteen hundred funeral sermons, and several thousand other books printed before 1851. The total number is probably over thirteen thousand. The remainder of the Library has been sold partly by auction, partly to other institutions, and partly to a bookseller.

A collection of portraits and the extensive archives of New College will be transferred to Dr. Williams's Library before June 1977. The New College gift will be formally handed over at a ceremony in May when Dr. G.F. Nutall will give a lecture on New College Library. In the following month Dr. Nuttall will lecture on New College at its closing ceremony. The two lectures are to be published together.

J.C.

RECENT ARTICLES IN LIBRARY JOURNALS

Deménagement de la bibliothèque du Saulchoir. Michel Albaric.
    Ass. Bibliot. Fr. Bull. Inf. (89) 4th Quarter 75, 223-231.
    [Removal of the library of the Dominican Faculties of Philosophy
    and Theology from the convent of Le Saulchoir to Paris.]   76/963

Cataloging sacred books. Baha'uddin Khoramshahi.
    Iranian Library Association Bulletin, 8 (3) Autumn 75   76/1152

The libraries of the Carthusian order in medieval England. J.A. Large.
    Libr. Hist. 3 (6) Autumn 75, 191-203.   76/164

William Walker Rockwell and the development of the Union Theological
Seminary [New York] Library. Thomas P. Slavens.
    J. Libr. Hist. 11 (1) Jan 76, 26-43.   76/768

Die Seminarbibliothek in Ljubljana [Slovenia, Yugoslavia]. Marijan Smolik.
    Biblos [Austria], 24 (4) 1975, 293-299.   76/157

    [Abstracts of the above articles will be found in *Library and Information Science Abstracts*]

Philosophers, libraries and the BLLD. J.E. Vickery.
    BLL Review, 4 (3) 1976
    [How the literature is used, the major bibliographical tools, and
    the demand for philosophy journals on inter-library loan.]

Dewey Decimal Classification – an Indian view. P. Dhyani.
    International Library Review, 7 (July 1975) 361-367
    [Discusses inadequacy of Dewey for religions, languages and
    geographical areas of India.]

Society for the Study of Medical Ethics
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Director of Studies: The Revd. Edward Shotter, BA.
Assistant Director: Dr. Anthony Thorley, MA MB MRCPsych.
Scottish Director: Dr. Kenneth Boyd, MA BD PhD.
Administrative Secretary: Miss Penny Stewart SRN.

Aims: The Society for the Study of Medical Ethics is an independent non-partisan organisation for the multi-disciplinary study of issues raised by the practice of medicine. It aims to encourage a high academic standard of both professional and public discussion.

Method: Lectures and symposia are arranged by the London Medical Group and similar groups in Edinburgh, Newcastle, Glasgow, Sheffield, Bristol, Birmingham, Liverpool, Manchester and Cardiff. Although addressed primarily to students of medicine and allied professions attendance is free and open to others interested.

Conferences: Are arranged in conjunction with the Medical Groups in different parts of the country. Recent Annual Conferences have discussed "The Survival of the Weakest" 1973 "To Treat or not to Treat" 1974"; "Iatrogenic Disease" 1975 and "Death: the Conspiracy of Silence" 1976.

Research Projects: In conjunction with the University of Edinburgh the Edinburgh Medical Group has appointed Research Fellows and Associates in Medical Ethics.

Publications: The *Journal of Medical Ethics* (which is published quarterly) includes papers on all aspects of medical ethics, including comment on clinical practice, multidisciplinary case conferences, and the analysis of ethical concepts related to the provision of medical services. (Editor: Dr. A.V. Campbell, New College, University of Edinburgh.)
Occasional publications such as *Documentation in Medical Ethics* are advertised from time to time in the Journal.

Subscription: (which includes subscription to the Journal) £10.00 per annum for the U.K. and Irish Republic; £12.00 overseas (U.S.A. $25.00)

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INFORMATION RETRIEVAL IN THE FIELD OF BIOETHICS
LeRoy Walters

Bioethics can be defined as the study of value questions which arise in the biomedical fields.

It is possible, I think, to distinguish three facets of what has come to be called the field of bioethics. The venerable facet is "medical ethics" which since the time of Hippocrates has proposed moral norms for the proper conduct of physicians and patients. A second facet is the ethics of human experimentation. Beginning in the nineteenth century, but especially in the twentieth century, both the volume and the visible achievements of biomedical research have dramatically increased. A substantial portion of this research involves human subjects.

There are two distinct but related sub-topics which are usually discussed under the heading of human experimentation. The first is a series of codes, principles, and rules concerning the proper treatment of subjects in any type of human experimentation. The other aspect of human experimentation concentrates much less on the present and the individual research subject and much more on the possible long-term social impact of biomedical technologies. Here the emphasis is much more on the macro-level and on the attempt to assess in advance the possible human consequences of biomedical research and technology.

A third and final facet of bioethics is the discussion of mechanisms for the social control of both clinical practice and biomedical research. Some of these control mechanisms are quite informal, for example, peer group pressure. Others become formal matters of public policymaking — through legislation, regulation, or judicial decision.

Since bioethics discusses the ethical aspects of various biomedical areas, it clearly involves the building of bridges from the Humanities — especially Religion and Philosophy — to the Natural Sciences. For the analysis of several bioethical issues, for example, Health Care and Population, data from the Social Sciences are also highly significant.

INFORMATION RETRIEVAL IN THE FIELD

The interdisciplinary character of bioethics poses formidable problems for anyone seeking to retrieve literature in the field. Most data bases, indexes, and journals belong to a specific academic discipline, for example, religion, or to a major cluster of disciplines, for example, the Social Sciences. During the past three years we at the Kennedy Institute have sought to discover ways to overcome these structural obstacles to the study of bioethics. What I would like to present now is a kind of progress report [written June, 1975] concerning the tools and

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methods we have found to be most helpful. I will first mention data bases, then indexes and catalogs, and finally journals and newspapers.

A. *Data Bases*

MEDLARS (Medical Literature Analysis and Retrieval System). The National Library of Medicine has pioneered in the area of automated information retrieval. It currently offers an on-line system called Medline, which covers the past three years of the world's medical literature. We have found that the single term "Ethics" retrieves more than 80% of the medical literature which is pertinent to the field of bioethics. Each bibliographical reference includes a list of keywords which summarize the content of the document. It is also planned [October 1976] that all Medline users will have access to the bioethics data base.

New York Times Information Bank. This data base, which became available on line approximately two years ago, includes comprehensive indexing of the *New York Times* and selective indexing of approximately thirty other newspapers and newsmagazines. In the vocabulary of the Information Bank "Ethics and Morals" is the basic phrase for ethical issues. This phrase can then be coordinated with specific issues in bioethics, for example, "Mercy Death (Euthanasia)." Retrieved items, including abstracts, are displayed on a cathode ray tube, and hard copy can be printed out on command.

ASCA (Automatic Subject Citation Alert). The Institute for Scientific Information in Philadelphia has compiled a massive data base in the sciences and more recently a rather large data base in the social sciences. These data bases are employed in turn, to produce the *Science Citation Index* and the *Social Sciences Citation Index.* We have developed a profile of keywords and authors pertinent to the field of bioethics and have found the weekly ASCA printouts to be moderately useful. The major disadvantage of ASCA is that it is based solely on keywords in the titles of documents and on citations of other documents, rather than on indexing or abstracting the documents' contents.

The Philosopher's Information Retrieval System (PIRS) This new automated system in the humanities will begin operation about July of this year [1975]. The data base will include information on journal articles in philosophy which have been published between 1967 and the present. We anticipate that PIRS will include a significant amount of material on bioethical topics.

Other Data Bases. We have explored the feasibility of retrieving information from several other data bases but have not found them to be cost-effective for our purposes. Among the systems which are less useful to bioethics are those associated with Chemical Abstracts, Biological Abstracts, Psychological Abstracts, ERIC and MARC.

B. *Indexes and Catalogs*

Indexes Associated with the Four Data Bases Noted Above. The data bases mentioned above are used to produce four indexes which are pertinent to the field of bioethics: *Index Medicus,* the *New York Times Index,* the *Social Sciences Citation Index,* and the *Philosopher's Index.*

Indexes and Catalogs: Other Useful Bibliographical Tools. Of the remaining indexes, the *Index to Legal Periodicals* contains the largest concentration of materials on bioethical topics. This concentration reflects the lively interest which lawyers and law students have recently begun to take in the field of bioethics. Other helpful indexes are: the *Hospital Literature Index,* the *Reader's Guide to Periodical Literature,* the *Catholic Periodical and Literature Index,* the *British Humanities Index,* the *Index to Religious Periodical Literature, Religious and Theological Abstracts, P.A.I.S.,* the *Social Sciences Index,* and the *Humanities Index.* For locating books on bioethics the *Subject Guide to Books in Print,* the *Current Catalog* of the National Library of Medicine, and the *Weekly Record* (formerly part of *Publisher's Weekly*) have proved to be quite useful. No adequate tool exists for monitoring legislative developments in the field of bioethics: some assistance is provided by *State Health Legislation Reports* (published by the American Medical Association), the *Reporter on Human Reproduction and the Law,* and the *Family Planning/Population Reporter.* Coverage in the judicial arena is somewhat more complete: one can check *The Citation* (another AMA publication) for medicine-related cases, the *General Digest* for state court decisions, and the *Modern Federal Practice Digest* for federal court decisions.

C. *Journals and Newspapers.*

The journals which most frequently contain material on bioethical questions can be divided into several catagories:

(1) Journals Which Concentrate on Bioethics: *Hastings Center Report, Journal of Medical Ethics* [new] , *Journal of Medicine and Philosophy* [new] , *Linacre Quarterly;*

(2) Scholarly General Medical Journals: *British Medical Journal, Journal of the American Medical Association, Lancet, New England Journal of Medicine;*

(3) General Journals on Science or Medicine: *New Scientist, Perspectives in Biology and Medicine, Science, Science Medicine and Man, Social Science and Medicine;*

(4) Popular Journals on Medicine: *Medical World News, Prism;*

(5) Journals on Philosophical or Religious Ethics: *Ethics, Journal of Religious Ethics, Philosophy and Public Affairs;*

(6)   Journal on Medicine and Law: *Journal of Legal Medicine.* Among
      newspapers, the *New York Times* and the *Washington Post* devote major
      attention to bioethical issues.

THE BIBLIOGRAPHY OF BIOETHICS.

   The National Library of Medicine agreed to fund a three-year project to
develop a bibliography and information-retrieval system for the field of bioethics.
The three-year budget, including indirect costs, was projected at $280,00.
   The staff recruited includes two bibliographers, a half-time librarian, a full-
time research assistant, a half-time secretary, and a one-fourth-time project
director. During the first year of its activity, between March of 1974 and
February of 1975, the staff has sought to achieve six major goals.
   1. *Define the Scope of the Bibliography..*The scope of bioethics has been
outlined above. A few of the topics, such as the environment and sexuality, are
excluded because they are less directly related to the biomedical fields than the
other topics. The scope of the bibliography has also been limited to English-
language materials during this initial phase. However, all types of documents,
including non-print media, are included.
   2. *Devise a Monitoring Plan.* At the beginning of the project the staff
selected 38 bibliographical tools and 50 journals which seemed most likely to
include materials on bioethical topics. These publications are systematically
monitored for pertinent citations and articles.
   3. *Review Citations and Documents for Scope.* The first end-product of the
monitoring process is a series of 3 x 5 cards, each of which contains a
bibliogrpahical citation.
   During the first year of the project the staff examined citation-cards for
approximately 2,700 English-language documents published during calendar
year 1973. Approximately 2,200 citations were judges to be sufficiently
promising to justify an examination of the document cited. Eleven hundred of
the 2,200 documents examined were determined to be in scope for the
bibliography.
   4. *Create an Index Language.* Because no standardized categories or terms
existed in the field of bioethics, the staff had decided even before the
inception of the project that the creation of a new, cross-disciplinary index
language would be required. The language was developed by the two
bibliographers who began this creative task by "free indexing" a sample set of
250 in-scope documents. The major concepts of these documents were noted in
the author's own terminology. This exercise resulted in a list of approximately
1,000 terms. By eliminating synonyms and seldom-used terms the bibliographers
were able to reduce the list to approximately 500 terms. The 500 terms were
then grouped into clusters of broader, narrower, and related terms, and each

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term was carefully examined to insure that it was both comprehensible and unambiguous. The Bioethics Thesaurus, which will be printed at the beginning of each annual *Bibliography of Bioethics,* currently contains just over 500 terms.

5. *Index Documents.* After the vocabulary had been developed, tested, and revised, it was applied to the documents which had been judged to be in scope. The bibliographers re-indexed the original set of 250 documents and indexed additional documents for the first time using terms from the Bioethics Thesaurus. In indexing they assign approximately 8—12 terms, or descriptors, to each journal article of average length. Terms which represent the major concepts of each document are designated by asterisks.

6. *Create Subject Headings and Cross References.* The asterisked terms which are used to index each document are also employed in the subject headings of the bibliography. If there are several asterisked terms, they are frequently combined in composite subject headings which indicate several of the major topics discussed in a document. For example, a document which discusses *euthanasia* involving *infants* in the state of *Louisiana* would be assigned the following subject heading: EUTHANASIA/INFANTS/LOUISIANA. In cases when there are multiple terms in a subject heading, the terms are arranged in a definite sequence according to a general formula. The complete list of facets in the general formula is as follows: Topic/Issue/Agent/Target/Context/Generalities/ Space/Time. This sequence was chosen because most users of the *Bibliography of Bioethics* will be primarily interested in a particular topic (e.g., organ transplantation) or a specific issue (e.g., informed consent). In the example listed above the three facets are: EUTHANASIA (Topic)/INFANTS (Target)/LOUISIANA (Space).

Cross references are also created to lead the user from later facets to the first facet. In the example cited there would be two cross references: Infants See EUTHANASIA/INFANTS/LOUISIANA and Louisiana See EUTHANASIA/ INFANTS/LOUISIANA. Thus, it will always be possible for the user to search the bibliography on any term and to be referred directly to all subject headings which contain that term.

The first volume of the *Bibliography of Bioethics* has already been compiled and will be published by the Gale Research Company of Detroit in mid-August of 1975. The staff is now working on Volume II and is also making the transition to producing the bibliography by automated methods. Within the next year we hope to install an automated information retrieval system which in the future will be able to perform demand-searches and to provide SDI (selective dissemination of information) profiles to users on a regular basis.

[The library classification of the Kennedy Institute and a basic bibliography of bioethics, comprising some 40 monographs and other references, have been omitted here.]

INFORMATION RETRIEVAL IN NEW TESTAMENT STUDIES

G.E. Gorman

In 1972 a group of South African librarians and biblical scholars based at the University of South Africa in Pretoria decided to undertake the development of an information retrieval system for New Testament studies. A preliminary report on the project and its progress to date has appeared in *South African Libraries*[1] ; since this project appears to warrant a wider audience but is little known in Britain, what follows is an attempt to summarize very briefly this undertaking by our South African colleagues. Beyond that we wish to offer some critical comments on information retrieval in theology, as well as to propose a wider project involving international cooperation.

The report by Killian and her associates begins by arguing the need for information retrieval in view of the 'literature explosion' and the importance of keeping abreast of the growing corpus of biblical writings. Few of us will argue with this view or with the opinion that

> ......any discussion of new ways of coping with the problem of a literature explosion is met with suspicion and a certain air of intolerance. This lack of interest in new indexing techniques is also often due to a resignation on the part of scholars and a passive acceptance of their inability to cope with the flood of literature.[2]

This difficult situation is compounded by the fact that when Killian and her team began their work there was literally no current indexing or abstracting service in biblical studies comparable to *Index Medicus* or *Chemical Abstracts,* two excellent guides in their respective fields. Faced with the paucity of resource material which constantly frustrated their search for information, the South Africans set out to develop their own information retrieval system.

Having studied the major indexing tools for biblical studies (i.e. *Index to Religious Periodical Literature, Elenchus Bibliographicus Biblicus, Internationale Zeitschriftenschau für Bibelwissenschaft und Grenzgebeite* and *New Testament Abstracts*), the group decided that their resources and expertise were best suited to the development of a post-coordinate subject index for, in the first instance, the Pauline material in *New Testament Abstracts.*[3] This subject index ultimately will become the basis for their information retrieval system, which because of limited facilities at the University of South Africa will not be computer-based for the present. However, the post-coordinate system will allow for a degree of flexibility normally limited to computerized systems; post-coordination means quite briefly that coordination is done at the time of search rather than at the time of indexing, the latter being the method used in more traditional pre-coordinate systems. Thus post-coordinate indexing attempts to relate terms according to the needs of the enquirer rather than trying to mould his needs to a rigid system.

Constructing a thesaurus

A post-coordinate index depends for its accuracy not on a list of ordinary subject heading but on a thesaurus of terminology which is used by the searcher or indexer in making the appropriate selections. The purpose of a thesaurus in any system is to allow for the effective processing of information by listing terms, exhibiting relationships and defining vocabulary. As Virginia Rogers defines it,

> the thesaurus, an authority list or controlled vocabulary of terminology, is an enumeration of approved index terms from which the indexer and searcher make their selections. Entries also appear for nonapproved terms and the user is referred to appropriate approved terms. In both pre-coordinate and post-coordinate indexing systems, there should be guides to show proper usage. In post-coordinate systems, this authority list is usually referred to as a thesaurus. [4]

It is at this stage of thesaurus construction that the team has begun its project. This has involved the collection of correct descriptors primarily from existing indexes, particularly the *Internationale Zeitschriftenschau für Bibelwissenschaft und Grenzgebeite* and the *Index to Religious Periodical Literature;* descriptors gleaned from these sources are then supplemented with additional entries from other indexes, biblical dictionaries and Greek grammars. Eventually this process will yield a complete and relatively stable thesaurus of terms requiring amendment only as new terms arise in the literature;

> we expect that when we have indexed ten years of abstract material we shall have obtained as complete a set of descriptors as is possible [5].

The work of thesaurus construction is thus a long and arduous task, particularly when one considers the parallel and hierarchical relationships, synonyms and cross references, as well as the Greek terminology which must be accounted for when adopting terms for inclusion. On this point the South Africans cannot be faulted, for the tone of their report suggests that all of these considerations are being incorporated into the system.

Cumulative subject index to N.T. Abstracts

But the thesaurus itself is only half of the project, for it is being developed to serve as a tool in compiling the index of New Testament literature. Indeed, as early as 1973 the thesaurus was already in a skeletal but usuable form; it was then that it began to be used for indexing the Pauline material in *New Testament Abstracts* as already mentioned. Eventually the scope will broaden to include the *Internationale Zeitschriftenschau für Bibelwissenschaft und Grenzgebeite* and all New Testament literature in these two publications, thereby generating an estimated 15,000 bibliographical entries. Each of these entries is given a code number and then transferred to an index card in much the same form as an ordinary catalogue entry but with a series of descriptors denoting the subject content on the back of each card. Each descriptor likewise has its own card, in this case a

computer field punch card on which are punched the numbers of those documents
to which that descriptor applies. One is thus left with two series of cards, one a
numbered bibliographical sequence, the other a series of punched descriptor cards.
To retrieve information from this system the searcher first selects the descriptors
appropriate to his enquiry;

> the searcher removes the cards for these descriptors from the system.
> The cards are then held up to the light or superimposed over a source of
> light, and the numbers of the coincident holes read off. These numbers
> refer to documents in which the sought descriptors appear.[6]

Here the flexibility of post-cordinate indexing becomes obvious, for the system
can be manipulated to retrieve either very general or highly specific material
simply by combining descriptors as required.

Obviously this index in its tabular format and the attendant thesaurus in loose
leaf arrangement have limited use outside the University of South Africa unless
they can be transformed into a more convertible and thus more widely available
form, and the group has not given up the possible use of a computer to achieve
this end. With the assistance of computer technology there could be two public-
ations of great value and wide availability: a printed index to *New Testament
Abstracts* (both on an annual and a cumulative basis) and a printed thesaurus of
New Testament terminology. In theory these could be extremely useful tools,
but we shall have to reserve judgment pending the production of such items.
In the meanwhile there are some reservations about the system which must be
borne in mind by interested librarians.

First, however, one must assert the theoretical value of the projected output
of this South African undertaking. On the one hand the subject index to *New
Testament Abstracts* will help both to keep scholars and researchers aware of
current activity in general and to provide them with an index of information
relevant to their own research interests in particular. Certainly anyone who has
used Metzger's guides to New Testament literature[7] will know how indispensable
a current guide of this type can be. If the index does appear and manages to
remain fairly up-to-date, perhaps we will begin to see a reduction in the
duplication and repetition which characterizes the output in New Testament
studies at present, althout this does assume a connection between this state of
affairs and the fact that scholars have no readily accessible guide to current
work by researchers in other parts of the world. And on the other hand one
can expect the thesaurus, which is the other half of this project, to do for
theological librarians what thesauri have done for colleagues in other disciplines,
namely to provide an accurate, relatively complete and standardized index of
terminology for the classification of literature in the subject field concerned.
This in turn may result in the production of in-depth subject catalogues far
superior to those now based on the Library of Congress (LC) or Universal
Decimal Classification (UDC) schemes. Founded on the same principles which

give the UDC its admirable flexibility, the thesaurus will have the further advantage of being based on a thorough, in-depth analysis of the literature and therefore should be capable of coping with future developments in the subject and changes in facet combinations. Such a breakthrough will be a boon to all who have attempted to classify according to UDC or LC and any of their permutations (e.g., Lynn or Kapsner[8]). Since it is this thesaurus which is the unique part of the project and the element with the greatest potential impact on librarianship, it is this item on which.the.bulk of one's attention must focus.

The ambiguous vocabulary of theology

The most effective information systems invariably rely on a thesaurus containing unambiguous descriptors which are combined according to their meanings and linked in a clearly defined pattern of relationships. Killian's group is well aware of this and appears to be following all the established criteria for achieving this goal. According to Aitchison and Gilchrist, thesaurus construction involves some 15 or 16 distinct steps from definition of the field to production of the finished document[9], and the South African project cannot be faulted for ignoring any of these steps. However, the project participants do seem rather oblivious to a set of obstacles appearing in every attempt to construct an indexing language, and these obstacles Nina Walls characterizes as the imprecision of vocabularly and ideological/cultural contrasts in basic approaches.[10] These difficulties in turn raise the spectre of those problematic issues which are endemic to theological literature as a whole and which permeate the very essence of the discipline and the vocabulary on which it is based, namely subjectivity and bias. As part of the subjectivity of theological scholarship and denominational bias of much that is written, there has over the centuries developed a complex linguistic system in which each philosophico-religious tradition defines the commonly used terminology according to its own particular needs.and usage, a process which inevitably creates chaos in any attempt to introduce an element of standardization into the language of the discipline.

> A mere opinion may often be invested with importance in this field, when in another it would be of only a passing interest. This variety of points of view appears not only in the writing of single books; it may determine the content of libraries and other book collections, and be reflected in their arrangement and classification.[11]

Thus for the librarian engaged in creating a thesaurus the selection of precise New Testament terminology becomes a major problem; indeed the lack of standardization in theological language may prove to be an insurmountable obstacle to the production of an internationally acceptable thesaurus.

The team has recognised at least three major factors in the analysis of language for the thesaurus (semantics, syntax and the hierarchy of relationships) and in fact explains at length how these factors are dealt with in the system. Yet the

factor of association or viewpoint receives no treatment in the resume, and this is an indispensible element both in the construction stage and ultimate use by classifiers. As Miss Rogers sees it,

> associative relationships may occur between any two or more terms
> depending upon how these terms are used in relation to each other
> to connote the concepts of the item indexed. Many of these relation-
> ships result from the indexer's individual viewpoint.[12]

To avoid this very inconsistent usage at the output or indexing stage, there must be extensive analysis of the subjective bias in each term at the time of input. To some degree the South Africans have tried to cover themselves by including terms from a variety of indexes, dictionaries and grammars representing several traditions. Yet all this is very theoretical and lacks the added empirical dimension of user analysis. In order to cover adequately the varying definitions applicable to a single term, the team members surely must recognise the almost unavoidable necessity of consulting experts outside the narrow confines of South Africa. Were they to rely on the knowledge and insights of researchers and librarians in Western Europe and North America,[13] the results would be less open to bias and almost certainly would incorporate definitions and scope notes making the project more generally acceptable to a wider range of libraries and general users. This, then, is the major criticism of this project: it does not appear to be aware of the difficulties inherent in theological language and as a result has not sought the assistance outside South Africa that might help to mitigate the latent provincialism of such a project.

An international and ecumenical project

That the project has not been an ecumenical, international and co-operative effort from the outset cannot be blamed entirely on Killian and the others, for Lonergan's dictum that the Church always arrives five minutes late and slightly out of breath applies to theological librarianship perhaps to an embarrassingly high degree. A number of years ago Miss Lynn expressed the opinion that

> co-operation, or concerted action of any sort, bibliographical or
> otherwise, is in itself a special religious activity, involving so much
> effort and adjustment that any further result is accomplished with
> difficulty.[14]

To remedy both this unfortunate situation and to improve the eventual results of the South African project there should be formed an international working group devoted to the development of a thesaurus of New Testament terminology. To keep this proposal within the realm of feasibility it ought to base the goal of a thesaurus on the work already done and should not attempt (at least initially) a wider project for theology as a whole. Working perhaps through the International Federation of Library Associations or the Conseil International des Associations de Bibliothèques de Théologie, or at the very least through such

national bodies as ABTAPL or ATLA, the working group should be selected from those interested in this information retrieval project and qualified to contribute significantly to the final product.

Furthermore, the group should be so constituted as to include representatives of the Roman Catholic, Anglican and major protestant churches, which is precisely where the South African project appears to be at fault. This working group of approximately 10 — 12 members acting under the aegis of one of the library associations noted above would then proceed to devise a system for constructing the thesaurus.

In *stage one* the group of information specialists would attend a joint meeting to lay down procedural guidelines based as much as possible on the existing project but introducing modifications as required. This initial gathering would include plans for a survey of all similar documentation systems in the field to enhance the choice of appropriate descriptors and allow for difficulties encountered by other projects. As well as a survey of work being conducted by other institutions, it would have to include revisions of existing classification systems, particularly the work by Vanda Broughton on the religion schedule in the UDC. Once the survey had been conducted with the assistance of librarians in various countries and the results collated, *stage two* might begin with the listing of all potential descriptors on cards; copies of these would then be sent to the participating institutions for their comments on whether they (a) used them for their own purposes and (b) considered them of enough value to be included in the thesaurus. In *stage three* the descriptors would be examined and reduced after the establishment of synonymic relationships, and the descriptors would then be classified into facets or areas of varying extent defined by sets of descriptors grouped according to affinity. The resulting convergence and distribution of descriptors would show up gaps in the vocabulary, meanings requiring further clarification and problems of arrangement in the sequence of fields. Following this, *stage four* would be the most arduous aspect of the project, involving the identification field by field of descriptor relationships for the entire working vocabulary, as well as the drafting of scope notes for various descriptors. In *stage five* a computer would be required for the first time to process all the data after the preparation of input sheets; the print-out would then be sent to each participant for final comments. Finally, in *stage six* the working group would meet to consider comments for the final draft and perhaps to develop a system for the future management of the vocabulary.

This proposal is essentially an empirical, pragmatic suggestion for producing a thesaurus of New Testament terminology as efficiently and as quickly as possible.[14] Relying on a number of librarians in various parts of the world, one could achieve both a catholicity and speed (a maximum of four years) unlikely to occur in a similar project involving less expertise and manpower. Surely even in theological

librarianship the time has come for genuinely international co-operation. For the sake of both the profession and its usefulness to those it serves, one hopes this may be the case.

Postscript   Mention of subsequent progress may be found in W.S. Vorster 'The Institute for Theological Research — a new era in theological research in South Africa' *Theologia Evangelica*, 9, 2-3 (July & Sep., 1976): 109-114. This resumé of the Institute's foundation and activities makes three points about the information retrieval project: 1. It became part of the Institute's programme in 1975 but appears to retain many of the original personnel; 2. the University's newly purchased Jonkers Termatrex system will be used to store the indexed information hopefully by the end of 1976; 3. many requests for bibliographical information on topics in Pauline studies already have been satisfied.

[1]J. Killian, J. Roberts, W. Foster and S. Williams, 'An Information Retrieval System for New Testament Research,' *South African Libraries* 42, 1 (July, 1974) :7—14.

[2]Killian *et al, op cit.*, p.7.

[3]*New Testament Abstracts* is compiled by the Roman Catholic theology faculty at Weston College of the Holy Spirit in Massachusetts and abstracts articles from a very wide range of Roman Catholic, Anglican, Protestant and Jewish periodicals published in many languages.

[4]Virginia G. Rogers, 'Thesaurus Construction: An Introduction,' *Drexel Library Quarterly* 8(1972): 117.

[5]Killian *et al, op cit.*, p.10.   [6]*Ibid.*, p.13

[7]Bruce M. Metzger, *Annotated Bibliography of the Textual Criticism of the New Testament, 1914-1939* (Copenhagen: Ejnar Munksgaard, 1955); Bruce M. Metzger (ed.), *New Testament Tools and Studies* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1960-). Of the nine volumes of the latter which have been published to date volumes 1, 6 and 7 are bibliographical indexes on specific New Testament topics (periodical literature on St. Paul, periodical literature on Christ and the gospels, literature on the Acts, etc.).

[8]Jeanette Murphy Lynn, *An Alternative Classification for Catholic Books,* 2nd ed. rev. by G.C. Peterson (Washington: Catholic University of America Press, 1965); Oliver L. Kapsner (ed.), *Catholic Subject Headings: A List Designed for Use with Library of Congress Subject Headings or the Sears List of Subject Headings,* 5th ed. (Collegeville, Minnesota: St. John's Abbey Press, 1963).

[9]Jean Aitchison and Alan Gilchrist, *Thesaurus Construction: A Practical Manual* (London:Aslib, 1972). The 16 steps constitute the bulk of this brief but excellent guide

[10]Nina Walls, 'Thesauri and Classification in Non-scientific Areas', *Drexel Library Quarterly* 8(1972):130.

[11]Lynn, *op. cit.*, p.17.   [12]Rogers, *op. cit.*, p. 123.

[13]A name which comes immediately to mind is that of John Hurd at Trinity College, Toronto, who has used computer technology in his work on Pauline Literature; there must be others in either teaching or librarianship with similar experience and interests.

[14]Lynn, *op. cit.*, p.18.

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