Addendum: Denominational Meetings

Presbyterian and Reformed Librarians
by James C. Pakala, Covenant Theological Seminary

We met Friday, June 16, 2017, at 4:30 pm at the Crowne Plaza Atlanta Perimeter at Ravinia (room Oakwood A). Jim Pakala led and took minutes. Present were Donna Campbell, Anita Coleman, Steve Crocco, Paul Fields, Becky Givens, Carol Jarvis, Matthew Jones, David Lachman, Pat Lachman, Gerone Lockhart, Patrick Milas, Greg Murray, Denise Pakala, Jim Pakala, Christopher Richardson, Donna Roof, Brady Shuman, Michelle Spomer, Sharon Taylor, and Andy Wortman. Introductions and institutional news essentially constituted the meeting, but many observations, questions, etc., further enriched the meeting. Reports from attendees occurred in the following order.

First-time attendee Matthew Jones, Duquesne University’s Phenomenology Librarian, has degrees from both Pittsburgh and Princeton Seminaries along with a library degree from the University of Pittsburgh.

Donna Roof reported that three librarians from Westminster Seminary are at the Conference, but not the director [Sandy Finlayson] who is at a wedding. Marsha Blake who has served as a reference librarian for many years is retiring. Steve McKinzie began in June as Assistant Librarian. Karla Grafton is leaving at the end of July. The Archives and Rare Books Librarian position vacancy is supposed to be filled as soon as possible.

David & Pat Lachman attended as usual and mentioned their antiquarian theological bookseller work with a focus on Puritan and Reformed titles and Bibles.

Union Presbyterian Seminary’s Christopher Richardson reported that there’s a new website, and electronic developments/resources, and Ann Knox after thirty years as Director of the Instructional Resource Center has stepped down. (Her successor is Dora Rowe, with the title Instructional Services Librarian, and Jay McNeal remains the Digital Lab Assistant.) NOTE: At the end of the meeting (during some “Q&A”) Christopher Richardson reported that the Seminary is now the only user he is aware of that still is on the [Julia] Pettee classification [developed long ago at Union Seminary in New York by Pettee], but now is switching to Library of Congress classification.

Gerone Lockhart of Calvin Theological Seminary reported that this is her first time attending this annual meeting but her second ATLA Conference. She succeeds Lugene Schemper who retired since a year ago, but she currently is an interim person in the position.

Donna Campbell, Technical Services and Systems Librarian at Westminster, reported on ELP (the E-Book Lending Project among a number of ATLA libraries) and the progress which has been made. She also fielded a few questions about ELP.

Andy Wortman of Greenville Presbyterian Theological Seminary said that this is his first time attending.
Sharon Taylor is still in Pittsburgh and reported that she is in transition with the possibility of returning to a full-time library position, although many openings are for part-time positions, at least currently. [It might be mentioned that during this conference Sharon did an outstanding job of planning and leading the worship service in the Presbyterian tradition, including a stellar homily with in-depth exegesis on a difficult Old Testament text no less.]

Brady Shuman and Denise Pakala deferred to the taker of these minutes for a Covenant Seminary report.

Becky Givens said she is a first-time attendee at an ATLA Conference. This year she just completed her library degree at the University of Alabama and is now working at Samford University’s library.

Carol Jarvis reported that she is a remote contract cataloguer for Brigham Young University and she has voluntarily done some music cataloguing for the University of Utah. Her languages include Arabic, Farsi, Turkish, and Urdu.

Steve Crocco, now head of Yale Divinity School’s library, reported that the Jonathan Edwards Center will possibly be brought into the library, and a possible project is the New Divinity and post-Edwards developments. As is now public information, Andover Newton is no longer what it was [dating back roughly two centuries] but is “embedding” at Yale Divinity with the signing of the official agreement to occur this month (June 2017).

Greg Murray of Princeton Theological Seminary introduced himself and left their report to Patrick Milas.

Michelle Spomer, who last year has assumed the headship of Pittsburgh Theological Seminary’s library, reported that her focus is the very major renovation. The library will close at the end of June and everything is being moved to a temporary location, with [LC classifications] BR—BX kept on campus and other books as well as periodicals going to Iron Mountain. Construction is to begin in the fall and hopefully the library will reopen in 2019. The Seminary is switching from three terms per year to the semester system this fall.

Dr. Anita Coleman is an Indie Scholar and [Principal Investigator] with the Anti-Racism Digital Library. She is Presbyterian and this is her second ATLA Conference and second meeting of this Presbyterian and Reformed Librarians group. [The Digital Library’s site gratefully acknowledges funding from the Presbyterian Women of the Synod of Southern California and Hawaii, as well as the Center for Applied Research on Human Services, San Jose State University.]

Paul Fields is Meeter Center Curator / Theological Librarian, Calvin College and Seminary [where the ATLA Conference there was my first, in 1976 when Calvin's 100th anniversary was being celebrated]. He mentioned Gerone Lockhart following Lugene Schemper at the Heckman Library and that enrollment dipped but is steady now at Calvin. The Grand Rapids Hispanic certificate program is proving very popular. The Calvin Center is doing one.

Jim Pakala reported that Covenant Theological Seminary has team visits from ATS in October and then in February 2018 from the HLC (Higher Learning Commission; the name “North Central Association” was dropped in 2012). A capital campaign is in
progress. Finances have improved and there is a new strategic plan. Membership in the MOBIUS consortium is invaluable.

Princeton's Patrick Milas reported as follows. He kindly provided this in an email following the conference.

Chip Dobbs-Allsopp has been appointed as James Lenox Librarian, effective January 2018. There is now an active search for a Managing Director of the Library. Anyone interested should contact the Rev. Dr. Anne Stewart, Deputy to the President (librarian.search@ptsem.edu).

The Office of Access, Research and Outreach is now the Office of Research and Public Services.

Long-time staff member Betsy Soans — a critical member of the public services team — has retired. Susan Britt is now Head of Circulation Services. Collection Development Librarian Jeremy Wallace has moved under the Office of Research and Public Services. Discovery and Web Services Librarian Virginia Dearborn remains an integral member of the Office of Research and Public Services.

After three years of using an outsourced Shelf Ready Program for the cataloging and processing of most of its material (using two different vendors), the Princeton Theological Seminary Library has made the decision to bring cataloging back in-house for many reasons: to provide excellent original records for our researchers and library partners; to contribute richly to the enhancement of records in cataloging collaboratives; to contribute more meaningfully in authority work; and to restore on our campus (and hopefully beyond) an understanding of the importance of cataloging and metadata in advanced research broadly. To this end, on June 1, the library was delighted to welcome Melvin Hartwick (most recently of Cairn University) to the PTSL team as Head of Cataloging and Collection Services Librarian to lead a new team to begin this important work.

In April 2016, PTSL moved to a hosted Voyager implementation. The library will be reviewing its ILS system in the coming 1-2 years. In early 2017, the library implemented the ProQuest 360 MARC Updates service, which provides monthly title-level MARC records in Voyager for all of our e-journals.

On June 15, Director of Digital Initiatives Greg Murray presented “Using the Internet Archive as an On-Ramp to Digitization and Access for Local Collections” at the 2017 ATLA Conference.

PTSL was one of the eighteen participating libraries in the Ithaka S+R study on Research Practices in Religious Studies. The library will be a key participant in the institution’s upcoming Self-Study and future Middle States and ATS accreditation visits in Academic Year 2019-2020.
After Patrick’s oral report at the meeting, the discussion focused on the Presbyterian Historical Society in Philadelphia. E.g., will it be offering more material digitally? Princeton Seminary reported that they have been having conversations with the Society and will continue doing so. Original material will remain in Philadelphia but digitization through the Internet Archive is feasible and has been used some. The Society’s director is Beth Hessel.

Regarding brief closing discussion about the Pettee classification system, see the Union Presbyterian Seminary report above.