
Presbyterian and Reformed

Virginia Dearborn, Princeton Theological Seminary, Secretary

MEMBERS PRESENT

- Burton Callicott, Louisville Seminary
- Virginia Dearborn, Princeton Theological Seminary
- Becky Givens, Covenant Theological Seminary
- Sam Ha, Calvin Theological Seminary and University
- Steve Jamieson, Covenant Theological Seminary
- Denise Pakala, retired, Covenant Theological Seminary
- Jim Pakala, retired, Covenant Theological Seminary
- Vance Thomas, University of Dubuque
- Andy Wortman, Greenville Presbyterian Theological Seminary
- Robin McCall, Union Presbyterian Seminary (moderator)

MEMBERS ABSENT

- Those on the list who sent regrets about schedule conflicts or did not RSVP.

AGENDA

Introductions: Robin welcomed people as they joined the Zoom call. She mentioned that an AI transcript would be available and asked for someone to take minutes. Virginia offered to prepare the report for the Atla Yearbook by the deadline. She introduced herself and asked that, by next year, the group consider appointing a new moderator.

First-Time Attendees: Sam Ha (Calvin Theological Seminary and University) and Burton Callicott (Louisville Seminary) introduced themselves. Andy Wortman (Greenville Presbyterian Theological Seminary) noted that he had been to the denominational group meetings in the past but was new to the virtual meetings. Vance Thomas (University of Dubuque) introduced himself.

Reflections on Atla Annual: There was some reflection on David Schmearsal's (Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary) panel discussion on librarian neutrality, in which Robin participated. It was noted that many of this year's sessions, including "Visible AI: Building Trust Through Transparency, Teaching Transparency Through Story" by Chris and Heath Rosser, and the closing plenary by Keith Webster, were about artificial intelligence (AI). This is a critical issue for librarianship right now.

Current Issues: The group discussed the need for preservation and continuing access to Presbyterian and Reformed publications as the publishing and collecting landscapes continue to change. There was a shared interest in possible collaborative collection development efforts for serials and in Atla facilitating a Presbyterian and Reformed periodical index. Andy talked about the Log College Press, which was founded by a PCA pastor and has been republishing long-out-of-print materials and gathering PDFs of Archibald Alexander's and others' writings. They have collected 24,000 items. The Greenville seminary is actively involved in redoing the Log College Press' web presence. There is a great need for periodical indexing in this space. Atla has indexes for some nineteenth-century Methodist periodicals, but not Presbyterian and Reformed. Sam said that Calvin Theological Seminary has a Christian Reformed Church periodical index based on a very old system. Robin mentioned Union's extensive online collection of Sunday School literature and periodicals from the nineteenth century and that Union Presbyterian Seminary is the institutional repository for Presbyterian history in the (U.S.) South. Virginia confirmed that the periodicals published out of Princeton Theological Seminary are available in a collection in the Theological Commons digital library. Both Union and Princeton have been working with the Internet Archive, so their materials are also available on archive.org.

Union Presbyterian Seminary significantly cut its serials budget by switching to a document delivery service and may no longer be subscribed to some of the titles that people want to borrow. Others may be reducing their subscriptions as well, and it would be useful to work together to ensure that no titles completely disappear from Atla libraries' collections.

Robin contacted the following Reformed and Presbyterian schools in an effort to expand membership and participation in the group:

Calvin Theological Seminary, Columbia TS, Erskine TS, Gordon-Conwell TS, Lancaster TS, Louisville Presbyterian TS, McCormick TS, Pittsburgh TS, Puritan Reformed TS, Reformed Episcopal Seminary, Reformed TS, San Francisco TS, University of Dubuque TS, Western TS, Westminster Seminary California, and Westminster TS. She will add their names to the listserv so they can be in the loop about when we meet. Jim also named Canadian Reformed TS, where Margaret Alkema, who has been in the group in the past, is, and Mid-America Reformed Seminary in Dyer, Indiana. New Brunswick TS has also participated in the past and is on the listserv already. NBTS has the Reformed Church Center (Reformed Church in America). Knox TS does not seem to have a librarian.

Jim expressed curiosity about non-accredited schools' holdings and suggested that the preservation of denominational history is not something that is necessarily dependent on academic accreditation. The group may invite the Presbyterian Historical Society in Philadelphia to meet sometime. Jim noted some historical precedence for this in Atla.

Hiring and retaining adequate staff continues to be challenging, as we all have shrinking budgets.

Laura Ladwig (Puritan Reformed Theological Seminary) has indicated that PRTS is about to launch a theological librarian master's degree program that's half theological education and half librarianship, and Sam confirmed that it is coming along nicely. Carisse Berryhill's Theological Librarianship course through the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign continues to be available as well.

Atla Board of Directors Listening Session: Vance put on his Atla Board "hat" and invited feedback and conversation from the group about the Atla core values.

ROUND ROBIN REPORTS

Calvin Theological Seminary and University (Grand Rapids, Michigan, USA): Sam Ha had to drop off for another meeting before the round robin reports began and, unfortunately, was not able to offer a report.

Covenant Theological Seminary (Creve Coeur, Missouri, USA): Steve Jamieson reported that Covenant (along with all 62 MOBIUS libraries) are live with EBSCO FOLIO and were recently re-accredited by ATS for 10 years. The library was called out as a strength of the organization in the final report. They are also live with OpenRS consortial resource sharing software, which is still a work in progress.

Greenville Presbyterian Theological Seminary (Greenville, South Carolina, USA): Andy Wortman gave thanks for a quiet summer following last year's major renovation. They moved the collections out of the library into the commons, renovated the space, and then moved everything back into the library, installing compact shelving in the process to make room for additional study spaces.

Louisville Seminary (Louisville, Kentucky, USA): Burton Callicott shared that the focus at the moment is trying to keep the building cool (it is an older building). They do have some summer courses going on, although enrollment for those is relatively low and campus is quiet. The seminary relatively recently started offering programs online, so that has meant fewer students on campus. The library is adjusting collection development policies to accommodate the growing number of distance-learning students.

Princeton Theological Seminary, Wright Library (Princeton, New Jersey, USA): Virginia Dearborn reported that Wright recently welcomed a new Digital Library Technologist to the Digital Initiatives team. A search is currently underway for Head of Cataloging, and the Reference Librarian position will be posted later this summer.

Union Presbyterian Seminary (Richmond, Virginia and Charlotte, North Carolina, USA): Robin McCall announced that their current academic dean, Ken McFayden, is retiring; Dan Ott (formerly of Eastern Mennonite University) will be the new dean. Andy Keck (ATS) is leading an external library assessment this summer. Chris Bates is now serving a dual role on the Charlotte campus as Campus Librarian and Director of Facilities.

University of Dubuque Theological Seminary (Dubuque, Iowa, USA): Vance Thomas announced that a new Vice President for Academic Affairs will begin on July 1. The Charles C. Myers Library is awaiting administrative approval to find replacements for a couple of staff members' positions.