The Kenneth Scott Latourette Initiative for the Documentation of World Christianity

A case study in the preservation and repatriation of documentation

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Today I would like to tell you about the Kenneth Scott Latourette Initiative for the Documentation of World Christianity and the efforts we at Yale Divinity Library have made to preserve the documentation of world Christianity, to provide access to that documentation, and to repatriate it.

I. The Day Missions Library

The Latourette Initiative grew out of the Day Missions Collection at Yale Divinity Library.[i] George Edward Day (1815-1905) was a professor of Hebrew language and literature at Yale Divinity School. In his retirement he and his wife, Olivia Hotchkiss Day, began building a library of missions-related materials, which they intended to be as comprehensive as possible. They donated their collection to the Yale Divinity Library in 1891 along with an endowment to support the collection. When the School moved to its present location in 1932, three collections were brought together to form the Yale Divinity Library. The largest of these collections was the Day Missions Library, which constituted two thirds of the new Library's collection of ca. 30,000 volumes.

Kenneth Scott Latourette (1884-1968) was appointed as the D. Willis James Professor of Missions at Yale Divinity School in 1921. After the Divinity School moved to its current location, he worked closely with Raymond Morris (1904-1990), the first Divinity Librarian, to change the focus of the collection from a collection used to train missionaries, to one that was more historical in its focus. From then on, the collection broadened its scope to include Roman Catholic and Orthodox missionary documentation in addition to the Protestant materials with which it had begun.

Kenneth Scott Latourette

After his retirement in 1953, Latourette made provisions for the establishment of an endowment to support the Day Library. The terms of the bequest were quite restrictive: the income "shall be used only for the purchase of books, periodicals, pamphlets, reports, and manuscript material on Protestant, Roman Catholic, and Eastern Orthodox foreign missions which shall be added to the [Yale Divinity Library]. No part of the principal or income of said fund shall be used for expenses of administration, the binding of books, or the purchase of equipment." Latourette died in 1968, and his estate originally supported two maiden aunts. In 1981, after his aunts had died, income from the fund started to come to the Divinity Library.

II. The Kenneth Scott Latourette Initiative for the Documentation of World Christianity

When income from the Latourette fund started to come to the Yale Divinity Library, we were able to expand our acquisitions program greatly. Initially we did so in two ways: we purchased commercially available microfilm of mission archives, and we began to purchase publications by and about the churches the missionaries established. That is, we began to document world Christianity, in addition to the Christian missionary movement.

But, alas, there was only so much microfilm and microfiche available. So Yale joined the Pacific Manuscripts Bureau (Pambu), an organization that is sponsored by a consortium of nine libraries that copies documentation across the islands of the Pacific. The member institutions include:

- The Mitchell Library, Sydney
- National Library of Australia, Canberra
- The Library, Australian National University
- The Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington
- The University of Auckland Library
- Library of the University of Hawaii, Honolulu
- Library of the University of California, San Diego
- Yale University Library, New Haven
- Library of the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor

Approximately one-fourth of the one hundred reels of microfilm they produce each year are related to Christianity in the Pacific. The Pacific Manuscripts Bureau copies records, leaving the originals with their owners or custodians. Copying is usually done at no cost to the owner or custodian either on-site, using Pambu's portable 35mm microfilm camera, or in the Pambu studio at the Australian National University. Access to the microfilms is determined by the owner/custodian of the original documents. Where appropriate, the original records are arranged, listed, and packed for storage by Ewan Maidment, the Bureau's archivist. Arrangements for institutional custody of the original documents can also be made, if necessary. The microfilm master negatives are held in the National Library of Australia. Digital images of the documents can be scanned from the microfilms if required. Copies of the microfilm are distributed to the members of the consortium, and, if not restricted, are available for sale. [ii]

Even with these expansions of our collecting activity, the restrictive nature of the Latourette bequest led to a growing accumulation of unspent funds. We are obligated to follow the terms of a bequest so far as we can. When it is no longer possible to do so, we can submit a request to the Yale Corporation (Yale's governing board) to broaden the interpretation of the bequest. If necessary, Yale will take the matter to court for approval. And so, we submitted a request in 2001, asking that "acquisitions" be understood not to be limited to the purchase of something from a vendor, but more broadly to include activities that a vendor might undertake prior to the sale. Thus, vendors select collections that they think they will be able to sell, copy them, and then market them. Under our new way of understanding "acquisitions," we could be involved in identifying collections for filming, and arranging for them to be filmed. We envisioned the arrangement as a win-win proposition. The repositories whose collections we filmed would have their documents preserved and distributed to people interested in using them, and in return they would receive a positive copy of the film. In turn, we would have documentation we otherwise would not have been able to collect.

Over the years such vendors as IDC, Adam Matthew, Research Publications, and Scholarly Resources have filmed and/or distributed large collections of print and non-print sources documenting the Christian missionary enterprise and world Christianity. We have regularly purchased those collections. The model we planned to explore was to develop partnerships with such vendors through which we would cooperatively identify collections of interest to us, and which the vendor considered to be commercially viable. We would underwrite the cost of the filming. We would establish an agreement with the

holding institution giving us permission to film the material, and for the vendor to distribute it. The vendor would be in charge of the filming, and then would be responsible for marketing and distributing the microform edition. We would then share the proceeds of any sales with the vendor.

The first vendor we worked with was IDC Publishers (Leiden), now owned by Brill. The first project was to film the World War II-era documents held by the World Council of Churches. We subsequently signed an agreement with the WCC to continue filming material from their collection. To date we have completed the filming of the following:

- World Student Christian Federation
- Programme to Combat Racism
- Dialogue with People of Living Faiths
- Correspondence of the General Secretariat
- Suzanne de Dietrich correspondence
- General correspondence
- Christian Medical Commission
- Relations with the Roman Catholic Church

Filming has been suspended temporarily, until they have more archives processed. We also underwrote the cost of filming documentation from the Russian Old Believers in collaboration with IDC.

We have also worked with Adam Matthew Publishers. They filmed two archival collections at the Centre for the Study of Christianity in the Non-Western World at the University of Edinburgh: the Regions Beyond Missionary Union and the Sudan United Mission. We also filmed selected missionary periodicals and a large pamphlet collection held by the Centre.

In fall 2002 Martha Smalley, Archivist at Yale Divinity Library, helped to coordinate a conference called "Rescuing the Memory of our Peoples" sponsored by the International Association of Mission Studies in Rome. One of the things that grew out of that conference was the production of a booklet by the same name that is a manual for how to create and manage an archive, written by Martha Smalley and Rosemary Seaton. A further consequence of the Rome consultation was the development of two proposals requesting funding from the Latourette Initiative.

The first proposal came from Frederick Mukungu, Librarian at the Uganda Christian University. Mr. Mukungu had arranged to have the archives of the Church of the Province of Uganda (Anglican) transferred to the Uganda Christian University[iii] and approached me about the possibility of having this collection microfilmed with funding from the Latourette Initiative. We asked IDC Publishers if they would be interested in managing the project, and they agreed to do so. IDC selected the equipment, set it up in Uganda, and trained a couple of local people to operate the equipment. The operators scanned documents and sent the images to Leiden, where IDC did quality control and produced computer-output microfilm. IDC is now distributing both the microfilm and the images, which will be linked to the on-line finding aid (this work is still in progress).

This is an on-going project, and we expect to expand it to include other material relating to Christianity in Uganda and elsewhere in Eastern and Central Africa.

Another participant in the Rome consultation was Darrell Paproth, who is a professor at the Bible College of Victoria, located outside Melbourne, Australia. After the consultation he contacted me about the possibility of filming some missions' archives held there. That project is now in its first phase. In most of our projects to date the holding institution has worked with the vendor to prepare the material for filming. The archives held at the Bible College of Victoria had not been adequately processed for filming. So we made arrangements with Pacific Manuscripts Bureau for Ewan Maidment to process the archives in much the same way that he does for other Pambu projects across the Pacific. The Latourette Initiative pays for the cost of the filming and the film is distributed by Pambu. Our agreement stipulates that we provide two copies of the film to the Bible College of Victoria, one of which they distribute to an institution in the area to which the missionaries went. In the first phase of the project we are filming the archives of the Unevangelized Field Mission. That will be followed by the archives of the South Seas Evangelical Mission. The Bible College of Victoria also holds archives documenting missions in China and Borneo. We are interested in filming those, as well, but will have to make other arrangements, as they are out of scope for Pambu.

Conclusions

What I have described thus far are our successes. Rest assured that there have been failures as well. For some institutions we approached, preservation was not a priority. Other institutions would have been happy to have us film their archives, but balked at the notion that we would hold the master negative and that we would distribute copies of their archives.

Some observations on the progress we have made.

1. Our projects thus far have been somewhat serendipitous; that is, while all the projects complement our collections, we have not taken a systematic approach. Rather we have pursued "targets of opportunity" as they have arisen.
2. Our successful projects have been cases where either we have established relationships with an institution (as in the case with the WCC and Edinburgh), or someone close to the institution has been our advocate.
3. We continue to rely on microfilm as the preferred medium of preservation. Until standards for preserving electronic resources are developed, that seems to be the prudent course.
4. While the Latourette endowment produces substantial income, it is merely a drop in the bucket when one surveys all that is in need of preservation. We are interested in exploring ways that our resources can be used to leverage other resources.
5. Some question our commercial model and have suggested that we should make copies freely available. In fact, we do send microforms on interlibrary loan, and people who come to Yale have access to both microforms and (when available) digital copies. Moreover, in our model, those institutions that purchase microform and/or digital copies, are, in effect, helping to subsidize the cost of

additional filming. In a sense, they are our partners in preserving and providing access to this documentation.

The Reading Room at Yale Divinity Library

I welcome your comments on the Latourette Initiative, along with suggestions of how it might be improved, and collections you know of that might be candidates for inclusion.

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[i] For a more complete account of the Day Library, see Stephen L. Peterson, A 'steady aim toward completeness': the Day Mission Library centennial lecture." *Yale University Library gazette*, 67 (April 1993), 138-150. On the general history of Yale Divinity Library, see Paul F. Stuehrenberg, *A Library worthy of the School: a history of the Yale Divinity School Library collections* (Yale Divinity School Library occasional publications, no. 1; New Haven, Conn.: The Library, 1992; rev. ed., 1994). and *Bulldozers on the Quad: Yale Divinity School Library ten-year report* (Yale Divinity School Library occasional publication, no. 15; New Haven: The Library, 2001).

[ii] For more on Pambu, see: http://rspas.anu.edu.au/pambu/

[iii] For a description of the archive, see Frederick N. Mukungu, *Archives of the Church of Uganda: a catalogue of the Provincial Secretariat files and maps of dioceses* (Mukono: Uganda Christian University, 1999).