

SCRIPTUM:

Newsletter for Bahá'í Librarians & Information Professionals

No. 2 (July 1995 = Kalimát 152)

World Centre Librarian Comments on the Need for an Association

When the Universal House of Justice suggested to me that library resource-sharing in the Faith required the first step of building an association of librarians, I wrote back to them with a number of questions. Part of their response was a commentary by the Librarian of the Bahá'í World Centre, Louise Mould. Because this commentary is a thoughtful foundation document for our work, I quote portions of it here.

"A Bahá'í association of library and information professionals would presumably be an international association but would promote or foster interest in the development of Bahá'í libraries and archives on a local and national scale. One of the objectives listed in the Six Year Plan (1986-1992) was the establishment of Bahá'í libraries. The Bahá'í World Centre Library receives numerous queries every year with regard to the establishment of libraries, classification, and cataloging (organizing) of library materials; or more detailed questions such as [those about] the established name authorities for Bahá'u'lláh, the Báb, 'Abdu'l-Bahá, and Shoghi Effendi, which have been established differently by both Library of Congress and British Library. I see the association becoming very active in this whole area, able to coordinate the expertise needed. Often the information requested needs someone on the spot in order to see what the local situation is.

"I think the Bahá'ís in these professions need to be inspired with some kind of vision which would spark thoughts and intellectual movement into the ways and means that their professions promote the interests of the Faith and provide service to humankind. ...[T]here are two obvious quotations which can serve as fuel to such an association. The first consists of the paragraphs in the letter of the Universal House of Justice to the Bahá'ís of the world dated 31 August 1987, concerning the International Archives Building and the International Bahá'í Library respectively:

This institution is charged with responsibility for the preservation of the Sacred Texts and Relics and the historic documents of the Cause of God.

This Library is the central depository of all literature published on the Faith, and is an

essential source of information for the institutions of the World Centre on all subjects relating to the Cause of God and the conditions of mankind. In future decades, its functions must grow, and it will become the kernel of great institutions of scientific investigation and discovery.

"If one studies the great libraries and archives of the world, one quickly comes to realize that what makes them great are not just the buildings that house them or the budgets that feed them..., but a combination of three essential things. The first is the physical building, the second is the collections themselves (the active pursuit of items of value to the institution), and the third is how well its librarians and archivists know these collections." The second quotation is from the most recent statement of the Office of Public Information of the Bahá'í International Community, *The Prosperity of Humankind*:

The tasks entailed in the development of a global society call for levels of capacity far beyond anything the human race has so far been able to muster. Reaching these levels will require an enormous expansion in access to knowledge, on the part of individuals and social organizations alike. Universal education will be an indispensable contributor to this process of capacity building, but the effort will succeed only as human affairs are so reorganized as to enable both individuals and groups in every sector of society to acquire knowledge and apply it in the shaping of human affairs.

"These stress the dual role of librarians/archivists in the new world order. The acquisition of knowledge will demand organization of that knowledge in ways perhaps not dreamed of. Organization of knowledge has been the role of librarians and information professionals. One of the common complaints of the Internet is that the information therein is not organized, no method is being applied which allows easy retrieval of what is actually there to tap into. The preservation of our history... -- that is to assist in educating local and national communities in the establishment of archives and libraries... -- would require the association to raise the level of consciousness of the professionals associated with it to the preservation and conservation needs.

"An informal newsletter (not necessarily printed -- an online journal with news, articles, etc.) could be easily started [as] a forum for discussions and could perhaps be posted on the various networks already established.... This would be particularly advantageous amongst university level students who are perhaps finishing their undergraduate studies and would possibly be interested in pursuing careers in these areas...."

From these remarks by the World Centre Librarian, there is clearly a key and valuable role to be played by librarians and archivists in the new world order of Bahá'u'lláh. Our professions are not mere technical expertise. They can be a source of intellectual and spiritual life, essential contributors to the process of "capacity building," and re-shapers of human affairs.

A Dewey-Based Classification for Bahá'í Materials

Although not in use at the World Centre, there exists a classification for Bahá'í publications that is based on the Dewey Decimal Classification. Below is the summary of the classification. The full schedule is available in:

Collins, William P. "Classification for Materials on the Bahá'í Religion: A B200' Schedule Based on the Dewey Decimal Classification - Part 1," *Cataloging & Classification Quarterly*, v.16 no.4 (1993), pp. 103-121; "Classification for Materials on the Bahá'í Religion: A B200' Schedule Based on the Dewey Decimal Classification - Part 2," *Cataloging & Classification Quarterly*, v.18 no.2 (1993), pp. 71-86.

It will also be available shortly on the World Wide Web at:
<http://www.uwm.edu/People/mrowe/bahailib.html>

GENERALITIES

B200 General works
B201 Bibliography
B202 Media
B203 Encyclopedias, Dictionaries, Handbooks, Ready references
B204 Meetings; Exhibitions
B205 Periodicals, Newspapers
B206 Societies, Associations, Clubs, Organizations
B207 Education
B208 Classes/Types of People
B209 Opposition and Defense

SCRIPTURE AND INTERPRETATION

B210 General works
[B211]
B212 Authorship; Method and nature of revelation/writing
B213 Concordances, indexes, dictionaries
B214 Hermeneutics (principles of scriptural criticism)
B215 Commentaries, textual studies
B216 Treatises on special subjects, A-Z by subject
B217 Study and teaching
[B218]
B219 History
B220 Selections, compilations from Bahá'í Scripture

Writings by the Báb

B221 General works on the Báb's writings
B222 Selections/Compilations & Specific works

Writings by Bahá'u'lláh

B223 General works on Bahá'u'lláh's writings
B224 Selections/Compilations & Specific Works

Writings and Talks by 'Abdu'l-Bahá

B225 General works on 'Abdu'l-Bahá's writings
B226 Selections/Compilations & Specific Works

Interpretation by Shoghi Effendi

B227 General works on Shoghi Effendi's writings
B228 Selections/Compilations & Specific Works
[B229]

ADMINISTRATIVE ORDER

B230 General works
B231 Guardianship
[B232]
B233 Rulers
[B234]
B235 Learned
B236 Elections
B237 Nineteen-Day Feast
B238 Consultation
B239 Other Institutions

DOCTRINES; COSMOLOGY

B240 General works
B241 God
B242 Manifestations of God
B243 Covenant
B244 Creation; Worlds of God
B245 Good and evil
B246 Eschatology; Millennialism
[B247]
B248 Pilgrims' Notes
[B249]

LAWS; SOCIAL TEACHINGS; SPIRITUAL OBLIGATIONS

B250 Laws (General)
B251 Laws of personal status
B252 Devotional practices
B253 Social teachings
[B254]
[B255]
B256 Teaching (propagation of) the Bahá'í Faith
[B257]
[B258]
[B259]

RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER RELIGIONS

B260 General works
B261 Sabaeism
B262 Hinduism
B263 Buddhism
B264 Zoroastrianism
B265 Judaism
B266 Christianity; Bible
B267 Islam; Qur'an (Koran)
B268 Bábí Faith
B269 Other religious groups; atheism/agnosticism

HISTORY AND BIOGRAPHY

B270 Biography
B271 Comprehensive, general history of the Bahá'í Faith
B272-273 Bahá'í history by period

B274-279 Bahá'í history by geographical location

AESTHETICS

B280 General works

B281 Art

B282 Architecture

B283 Handicraft

B284 Recreation; pastime

B285 Music

[B286]

B287 Narrative literature

B288 Literature about Bahá'ís

B289 Folklore, Legends, Mythology, Oral tradition

RELATION OF THE BAHÁ'Í FAITH TO OTHER DISCIPLINES

B290-299

N.B. Numbers in square brackets [] are those intentionally left unassigned for future expansion.

World Wide Web Site for Bahá'í Librarians

Mary Rowe, a student of librarianship at the University of Wisconsin - Milwaukee, has set up a page on the World Wide Web entitled "Resources for Bahá'í Librarians." The page currently includes a couple of short bibliographies, access to other important Bahá'í information resources on the Internet, and the text of Scriptum v.1 no.1. By the time you read this, we hope to have made available copies of the World Centre's Bahá'í classification based upon the Library of Congress system, and William Collins's full Bahá'í classification based upon the Dewey model. The site is accessible at:

<http://www.uwm.edu/People/mrowe/bahailib.html>

Responses to Scriptum v.1 no.1

A few recipients of Scriptum took the time to respond. The feedback was favorable regarding the newsletter, although it was mixed regarding the nature and scope of an association of Bahá'í librarians, archivists and information professionals:

Several respondents, especially those who emailed me, were very positive about the possibilities of networking. A few raised questions: How will such an association work, and why is it necessary? Would it not be better to have an association for Bahá'í librarians only? Would an association be dominated by one nationality, overwhelming the professionals from other countries? A handful expressed a willingness to help. Some showed personal initiative, such as Mary Rowe with her Web page.

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The purpose of my effort has been to begin a process of networking that can lay the groundwork for Bahá'í information professionals to share knowledge, cooperate on projects, and provide expertise to the Cause. Presumably a formal association will be the result in time.

I understand some of the fears expressed by respondents, particularly the worry that North Americans may overwhelm the rest of the world; and the concern that non-library information professionals, such as computer specialists, may sidetrack the discussion. However, I think too rigid an adherence to certain types of national and professional credentials can only undermine the sharing of experience and knowledge that such a networking effort requires. The majority of professionally-trained librarians and archivists in the Bahá'í community are in North America. This is a fact that should not be considered harmful to the rest of the world. Likewise, librarians and archivists ignore other information workers at their peril. Therefore, while the network focuses on degreed librarians and archivists, and on nondegreed information workers with on-the-job experience, others who have an interest are also welcome to become involved.

Meanwhile, there are Bahá'í libraries and archives, most of them staffed by non-professional volunteers, which are crying out for assistance. A particular need is for basic documentation on Bahá'í librarianship and archival practice to be made available. Mary Rowe's World Wide Web page is one step in making such information available to those in the materially-developed countries where such electronic access is easy. The Web page cannot be considered the panacea, since most of those who handle Bahá'í libraries are not readily able to access this information. A network of librarians, archivists, and other interested individuals can surely evolve ways to share this information more widely, and to provide basic training and facility in managing the printed, archival and other information resources of the Faith.

-- William Collins

Cataloging from the World Centre

The Environment : our common heritage / edited by Richard W. Bell, Jimmy Seow. -- Mona Vale, N.S.W. : Association for Baha'i Studies Australia, 1994.

[6], ix, [1], 144 p. ; 22 cm.

1. ENVIRONMENT -- MORAL AND RELIGIOUS ASPECTS -- BAHAI FAITH. 2. BAHAI STUDIES - AUSTRALIA. 3. BAHAI FAITH -- DOCTRINE -- NATURE. I. Title: Our common heritage. II. Series: Association for Bahá'í Studies - Australia. Monograph ; no.5. III. Association for Bahá'í Studies - Australia. IV. Bahá'í Studies Conference (9th : 1990 : Perth, W.A.). V. Bell, Richard. VI. Seow, Jimmy Ewe Huat.

BP 366.429 .E55

The Proofs of Bahá'u'lláh's mission / selections from the writings of Bahá'u'lláh, the Báb, 'Abdu'l-Bahá, Shoghi Effendi and the Universal House of Justice ; compiled by Paul Lample. -- Riviera Beach, Fla. : Palabra Publications, 1994.

[2], xx, 234 p. ; 18 cm.

1. BAHAI FAITH -- COMPILATIONS. 2. BAHAI FAITH -- APOLOGETICS. I. Báb, 1819-1850. II. Bahá'u'lláh, 1817-1892. III. 'Abdu'l-Bahá, 1844-1921. IV. Shoghi Effendi, 1897-1957. V. Universal House of Justice. VI. Lample, Paul.

BP 366 .A14 P76

Association for Bahá'í Studies Annual Conference (9th : 1984 : Ottawa, Ont.).

The Vision of Shoghi Effendi : proceedings of the Association for Baha'i Studies ninth annual conference, November 2-4, 1984, Ottawa, Canada. -- Ottawa, Ont. : Association for Bahá'í Studies, 1993.

ix, 234 p. : col. ill. ; 24 cm.

1. SHOGHI EFFENDI, 1897-1957. 2. BAHAI STUDIES -- CONGRESSES, CONFERENCES, ETC. 3. GUARDIANSHIP. 4. BAHAI FAITH -- SCRIPTURES -- INTERPRETATION. I. Title. II. Title: Proceedings of the Association for Bahá'í Studies ninth annual conference. III. Association for Bahá'í Studies (Ottawa, Ont.).

BP 364.1 .A7 V57 1993

Matthews, Gary L.

The Challenge of Bahá'u'lláh / by Gary L. Matthews. -- Oxford : George Ronald, 1993.

xii, 283 p. ; 18 cm.

1. BAHAI FAITH -- INTRODUCTORY WORKS. 2. BAHAI FAITH -- PROPHECIES -- FULFILMENT. I. Title.

BP 365 .M29

Bahá'u'lláh, 1817-1892

[Lawh-i-Karmil. English]

Tablet of Carmel / Bahá'u'lláh ; translated from the original Arabic by Shoghi Effendi ; illustrations by Mark Sadan ; introduction based on an original essay by Roger White. -- Centenary ed. -- London : Nightingale Books, 1992.

[8], 54, [9] p. : col. ill. ; 16 x 18 cm.

I. Title. II. Sadan, Mark. III. Shoghi Effendi, 1897-1957. IV. White, Roger.

BP 362 .L52 A2 ENG 1992

Bahá'í Libraries

Readers: please supply addresses of other such libraries:

Bahá'í World Centre Library

P.O. Box 155

31 001 Haifa, Israel

Bosch Bahá'í School Library

500 Comstock Lane

Santa Cruz, CA 95060, USA

Green Acre Bahá'í School Library

188 Main St.

Eliot, ME 03903, USA

Louhelen Bahá'í School Library

3208 South State Rd.

Davison, MI 48423, USA

Peoria Bahá'í Library
5209 N. University
Peoria, IL 61614, USA

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Communicating Among Ourselves

Since I began the project of creating a network of Bahá'í librarians and archivists, it has become clear that there are a number of ways to share information and communicate. The cost and labor to print and mail a newsletter is considerable for one person. I am therefore including a questionnaire with this newsletter, asking for a response regarding how you would like to receive the newsletter and other communications, your willingness to become part of a formal association, and other issues related to funding. The minimum annual cost for supplies and postage to mail a quarterly newsletter to one person is approximately U.S.\$5. Please look over the questionnaire and take the time to respond.

PLEASE NOTE: Because of limited resources, and the outdated addresses on some of my lists, those who do not respond to this questionnaire will be dropped from my list for mailings.

Please mail this questionnaire to:

William Collins
6819 Stoneybrooke Lane
Alexandria, VA 22306 USA

or reply by electronic mail to:

wpc09@hotmail.com

Questionnaire

NAME:

MAILING ADDRESS:

ELECTRONIC MAIL:

TELEPHONE (HOME):

TELEPHONE (WORK):

FAX:

EDUCATION (DEGREES & INSTITUTIONS):

CIRCLE YOUR RESPONSES:

1. DO YOU WISH TO BE PART OF AN ASSOCIATION?

Y

N

2. HOW DO YOU PREFER TO RECEIVE INFORMATION? (Circle all that apply)

POSTAL MAIL

ELECTRONIC MAIL

WORLD WIDE WEB

FAX

BULLETIN BOARD

OTHER (SPECIFY):

3. HOW MUCH WOULD YOU BE WILLING TO PAY AS DUES FOR AN ASSOCIATION (IN U.S. DOLLARS)?

WOULD NOT PAY

\$5

\$10

OTHER (SPECIFY):

4. IF YOU ARE PRESENTLY IN A PROFESSIONAL OR VOLUNTEER INFORMATION JOB, PLEASE SPECIFY WHICH ONE:

LIBRARIAN

ARCHIVIST

OTHER (SPECIFY):

4A. ARE YOU:

DEGREED PROFESSIONAL

JOB-TRAINED PROFESSIONAL

VOLUNTEER

OTHER (DESCRIBE):

5. COMMENTS AND OTHER USEFUL INFORMATION:

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