

The Catholic World: A Proposal for Ensuring Global Access to Catholic Scholarship and the Role of Catholic Libraries

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This proposal was written in March 27, 2001 with revisions on May 30, 2002 and July 14, 2004. The examples relating to particular institutions were drawn from conversations among contributing writers and serve as examples only. The July 14, 2004 revisions were editorial in nature, primarily adding institutional affiliations to names and adding the term “portal” to the proposal for a Catholic World Portal on page 2.

Abstract: The discussion today is first, on ensuring permanent, global access to Catholic scholarship and second, on the role of Catholic libraries in making this happen. The issues are those encountered in the efforts to provide enduring access to any subject literature: collection development, cataloging and indexing, preservation and archiving, resource sharing, digitization, and the building of digital library collections, and worldwide access to the vast literature of Catholic scholarship. Reaching the goal of enduring global access has most often been achieved with the participation and cooperation of many libraries. Thus, the second topic invites reflection on what Catholic libraries can and should be doing to define and initiate enduring global access to Catholic scholarship.

Introduction, Purpose and Definition of Catholic Scholarship.

Statement of purpose: To provide enduring, clear, and global access to Catholic scholarship in paper, digital and other formats.

Definition of Catholic scholarship in its broadest context: Inclusive of works about Catholicism, by individual authors, by the Catholic Church, worldwide in scope.

Shared Collection Development. While many libraries and archives are collecting a wide range of materials from a range of sources, coordination and cooperation is needed to ensure the comprehensive collection of Catholic scholarship worldwide. A wide variety of library groupings is possible, perhaps some regional, some thematic, or some by type of library. E.g., in a discussion between Charlotte Ames, Catholic Americana Librarian at University of Notre Dame, and Jonas Barciauskas, Head of Collection Development at Boston College, Mr. Barciauskas proposed a print agreement for collecting Catholic materials from areas outside North America and Western Europe. Based on a stipulated budget, participating institutions would agree to purchase material from Third World and other countries which would not have been acquired if the agreement did not exist.

Enhance Current Indexing Tools. The Catholic Periodical and Literature Index (CPLI) published by the Catholic Library Association (CLA) is essential for finding Catholic documents

emanating from Rome and the American Church, as well as for books and articles. The index is produced in paper format with a CD version marketed through the American Theological Library Association. The indexing on the CD is weak (an author search on Pope John Paul II elicits the response "term not found." Production of a web version is need as is better indexing. This topic has been pursued vigorously with CLA by Ed Starkey and Charlotte Ames. Strong support from academic libraries is needed. Charlotte Ames served on the CLA CPLI Index Committee and with her retirement, we might want to solicit another academic librarian to pursue serving on this important committee.

Identification of Library Strengths and Current Collecting Responsibilities. Identify existing strengths. E.g., the University of Dayton has the exquisite Marian Library. Notre Dame has the Cushwa Center for the Study of American Catholicism and strong collecting interest (and collections) in Catholic Americana. Many other collection strengths exist, known by some but not all.

Publicize Library Collections. Create a web site such that done by the Center for African Studies by a student at the University of Illinois at Urbana/Champaign located at <http://www.afrst.uiuc.edu/libaf.html> Many strengths are known through individual conversations, some through printed guides but in the digital environment, Web access is highly required.

A Catholic World Portal: A proposal for Building a Framework for Global Access to Catholic Scholarship in Libraries, Museums and Archives: a. In January 24th, 2001, Charlotte Ames demonstrated the Catholic Americana Subject Librarian's home page and launched the idea of creating a framework for access to Catholic scholarship and the building of Catholic digital library collections to several people at Notre Dame: Father Richard Warner, C.S.C., Counselor to the President, Rev. John Jenkins, C.S.C., Associate Provost, and Christopher Shannon, Associate Director, Cushwa Center for the Study of American Catholicism. Fathers Warner and Jenkins enthusiastically supported the idea, which suggests there would be great receptivity in many quarters.

A possible model for such a project is seen in the Digital South Asia Library Project. This is a cooperative project hosted by the Center for Research Libraries (CRL) which is making South Asian holdings from important repositories in the U.S., Europe and South Asia available to scholars in a digital format at a single website. The project was initiated by the University of Chicago and Columbia University, and, after initial funding from the ARL Global Resources Program, is being supported by a grant from the U.S. Department of Education. The DSAL project manager is Rebecca Moore. The DSAL website can be viewed at: <http://dsal.uchicago.edu/>

A project to create a Catholic Library Portal could accomplish two goals: make Catholic holdings from important repositories in the U.S. and other countries available to scholars in a digital format at a single website as well as make known those Catholic holdings not in digital format.

Build Catholic Digital Library Collections Through Library Digitization Projects.

Charlotte Ames, ND, met with Jonas Barciauskas and other librarians at Boston College to discuss areas of collaboration. Jonas proposed the digitization of selected Catholic serials indexed in Catholic Periodical and Literature Index (CPLI), using JSTOR as a model. At Notre Dame, Father Warner expressed great interest in the possibility of digitizing Catholic materials from Africa. Notre Dame will be collecting materials from East Africa and South Africa with an emphasis on Holy Cross Missions. Boston College indicated an interest in collecting Catholic materials from South Asia. Collaborative library projects would need an editorial board to select titles from CPLI. Editorial board members would include noted scholars. At Notre Dame we would draw on figures such as Scott Appleby, John McGreevy, Jay Dolan, and Philip Gleason in addition to selected members of the Library faculty. Funding from external sources is imperative.

Create Digital Versions of Catholic Scholarship through the Inclusion of Important Catholic Journals in Digitized Journal Databases using the JSTOR Project as a model.

Propose the inclusion of three journals: 1) *The Catholic Historical Review* (Washington: Catholic University of America Press, Vol. 1, April, 1915-), 2) *U.S. Catholic Historian* (Yonkers, N.Y.: U.S. Catholic Historical Society, c 1980 and now being published by the University of Notre Dame Press, Notre Dame, Indiana), and 3) *American Catholic Studies: Journal of the American Catholic Historical Society* (Philadelphia: American Catholic Historical Society, 2001-) and its predecessor, *Records of the American Catholic Historical Society of Philadelphia*, which began publication in 1887. Established July 22, 1884, the American Catholic Historical Society is the oldest Catholic historical society in the United States. R. Scott Appleby, Director of The Charles and Margaret Hall Cushwa Center for the Study of American Catholicism at Notre Dame, and his associate, Christopher Shannon, agree these are the most important journals in the field. Chris Shannon noted that these are as important to the study of American Catholicism as the *American Historical Review*, *Journal of American History*, and *American Quarterly*, all JSTOR titles, are to the study of American History. Charlotte Ames, Catholic Americana Librarian, proposed this in a letter sent to Heidi McGregor, Director of Publisher Relations, JSTOR, on February 28, 2001. However, JSTOR and the American Theological Library Association (ATLA) had previously discussed this and come to an arrangement in which scholarly journals in the area of religion should be grouped and put into the ATLAS (ATLA Serials) database. In September 2001, we met with Dennis Norlin, Executive Director, ATLA, and have created a joint proposal for which we are now seeking funding.

Build Digital Versions of Catholic Scholarship Through Other Digitizing Infrastructures.

The American Theological Library Association (ATLA) has recently launched, in January, 2001, their ATLAS Digital serials project, Phase I, which includes *Catholic Biblical Quarterly*, *Cross Currents*, *Horizons*, *Journal of Ecumenical Studies*, *Sociology of Religion* and *Theological Studies*, all of which are currently indexed in CPLI. As mentioned above, we are working with ATLA to add additional journals of Catholic scholarship.

The *Catholic Historical Review* from the Catholic University of America Press, previously announced as joining Project MUSE in 2001, is now online. The official organ of The American Catholic Historical Association, the *Catholic Historical Review* was founded at The Catholic University of America (CUA) and has been published there since 1915. It is the only scholarly journal under Catholic auspices in the English-speaking world devoted to the history of the universal Church. It publishes articles, review articles, book reviews, and lists of books received in all areas of church history. It is included in the MUSE Full Database and Arts & Humanities Packages. For the Table of Contents:
http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/catholic_historical_review/toc/cat86.3.html

Global Responsibility. American Catholic colleges and universities, all 235 of us, are a unique body of higher education within the worldwide Catholic Church. Although there are individual Catholic universities in countries throughout the world, no comparable collection of institutions exists in any other country on any other continent. Although we often may feel ourselves to be resource-weak or even poor, we are actually inconceivably wealthy compared to most Catholic universities or institutional libraries in other countries. We have a responsibility to initiate and support the collection of Catholic literature on a global basis and to ensure clear, permanent access to the entire world of Catholic scholarship. It is important, however, to state emphatically that while Catholic libraries should initiate these efforts and play a prominent role, that the participation of libraries, museums and archives with significant collections of Catholic scholarship is necessary and welcomed.