

## **The Minutes of the 38th BETH Assembly**

**IBTS, Prague, Czech Republic 19-23 September 2009**

### **Assembly Delegates and Attendees:**

Rebecca Abel, North American Pontifical College, Rome, Italy  
Pierre Beffa, former president of BETH, Geneva, Switzerland  
Kurt Berends, The Theological Book Network, Grandville, Michigan, U.S.A.  
Svein Helge Birkefelt, FTRB, University of Oslo, Norway  
Renata Blazowska, The Evangelical Theological School, Wroclaw, Poland  
Eileen Crawford, ATLA, Vanderbilt Divinity School Library, Tennessee, U.S.A.  
Etienne D'hondt, Vice-President of BETH, VRB, KULeuven, Belgium  
Barbora Drobikova, Charles University, Prague  
Hervé Dupont, Paris, France  
Odile Dupont, President of BETH, ABCF, Institut Catholique de Paris, France  
Anja Emmerich Barke, VkwB, Evangelische Kirche von Westfalen, Bielefeld, Germany  
Penelope Hall, Secretary of BETH, ABTAPL, Edinburgh, Scotland; U.K.  
Geert D. Harmanny, VTB, Kampen, The Netherlands  
Marcel Haverals, VRB, Leuven, Belgium  
Greg Heynen, The Theological Book Network, Grandville, Michigan, U.S.A.  
Laszlo Kontos, EKE, The Collections of the Transdanubian District, Pàpa, Hungary  
Rita Kuu, EBSCO  
Anne Claire Langlois, Paris, France  
Christophe Langlois, BNF Paris, France  
Jan Luprich, EBSCO  
Margot Lyon, Representative from ATLA, Chicago, U.S.A.  
Marina Milovanovic, EBSCO  
Melody Mazuk, ATLA, Palmer Seminary, Philadelphia, U.S.A.  
Tanya Nankovic, EBSCO  
Dusica Otkovic, EBSCO  
Marian Papavoine, VTB and Tilburg University, Tilburg, The Netherlands  
Katharina Penner, IBTS, Prague, Czech Republic  
Marek Rostkowski, URBE, Urbaniana Library, Rome, Italy  
Hermann-Josef Schmalor, Treasurer of BETH, AKThB, Paderborn, Germany  
Gabriel Segui i Trobat, ABIE, Mallorca, Spain  
Paul Sindermann, personal member, Rome, Italy  
Marion Smith, ABTAPL, Birmingham Central Library, Birmingham, England, U.K.  
Botond Gáborjáni Szabó, Board member, EKE and Reformed District College, Debrecen, Hungary  
Kris Van de Castele, VRB, Antwerp Seminary Library, Antwerp, Belgium  
Maaïke van Rossem, VTB, University of Amsterdam, The Netherlands  
Jerzy Witczak, FIDES, Pontifical Theological Library, Wroclaw, Poland  
Renata Włodarczyk, EBSCO

The secretary received an apology from Heinz Finger, who could not be present because of major renovations taking place in his library.

Kate Toft Madsen of the Sankt Andreas Library in Copenhagen sent apologies.

Thomas Riplinger will be joining us for the visits only.

Franck Storne sent apologies, along with the news that he has changed his position in the library and will not be joining us in the future.

The Assembly welcomed the Bibliothèque Nationale de France as an Extraordinary Member, and their delegate Christophe Langlois.

1. The Assembly business session opened on Sunday afternoon, September 20, 2009, with a word of welcome from the President
2. The delegates, guests and all in attendance introduced themselves.
3. The agenda for the assembly business was adopted.
4. The minutes of the 37<sup>th</sup> General Assembly of BETH, which was held in Leuven were adopted as corrected.
5. There was some discussion of the financial situation, and the accounts and budget as presented by the treasurer were adopted.
6. The secretary gave a summarized report of the Board meeting of 3-4 March 2009 in Cologne.
7. The Board members—President, Vice-President and Secretary— gave reports of the various visits that they made during the year to member association meetings, as well as to the meetings of other associations.

The president reported: The visit to ForATL: She noted the supremacy of English as a common language among the various attendees at this conference. She was impressed by the situation of the many small islands in this area of Asia who live in relative isolation, who battle the prevalence of internet problems, who demonstrated a very different attitude to the difficulties created by the internet gap, who put more emphasis on practical theology, recognising the lack of books available in the vernacular and who shared many similar problems to those that we face in our libraries

The President and the Secretary attended the ATLA Conference in St. Louis, Missouri where they notes that a number of the sessions concentrated on the various aspects of the work that were affected by the present economic crisis. In addition, there were several discussions centred on catering to the users' needs.

The President also reported on her visit to the IFLA off-site session in Milan. A report will be posted on the website. The possibility of establishing a specific department within IFLA for theological libraries was suggested, along with the idea of holding a conversation among the directors of the various continental theological library associations.

The Vice-President reported on his visit to the ABTAPL meeting in Oxford, as well as the VRB meeting and the joint meeting of the German associations where a presentation on the new RDA rules for cataloguing was made at this meeting.

The Secretary reported on her contacts with ANZTLA last autumn and distributed flyers about the new Australasian Religion Index. She also reported on meeting with EBSCO and Margot Lyon of ATLA where they discussed the possibilities of setting up consortia in Europe, particularly keeping in mind the smaller libraries that would benefit from such an arrangement. This led the delegates to pause for a brief consideration of the consortium issue. Margot pointed out that she is continuing to work on this matter, both from the ATLA end and in conjunction with EBSCO, and added that she sees that the information that will be gathered from the questionnaire will be useful in providing information for this discussion. She suggested that BETH appoint one person to serve as a liaison with EBSCO for consortia matters.

The President reported on her contacts with the Library of Morocco, and libraries in the Eastern Mediterranean region and asked the Assembly about inviting them to attend the Assembly in Nice in 2010 as observers. The Assembly agreed to issue these invitations.

8. The attendees briefly gave the Assembly some information from our member associations, and from the other associations and organizations present at our Assembly. These reports were kept to five minutes per person but the complete reports from the member associations and other organisations will appear in an appendix after these minutes on our website.
9. Projects:
  - a) The brochure: It was suggested that we design a bookmark or some simple card which gives the principal information about BETH.
  - b) The questionnaire to be filled in by our member associations: The secretary reported that she has been working on this questionnaire and was planning to use Survey Monkey to facilitate this exercise.
  - c) The need for retro-conversion projects in our libraries: Botond reported that he has some 100,000 volumes still to catalogue; Odile has some 200,000; Father Paul some 150,000; Father Marek some 5,000 Japanese volumes and 3,000 Armenian texts. Thus, among our member libraries there is still a great need for help with retro-conversion.
  - d) An historical update on the history of BETH: Many of our member associations have already responded to the historical update questionnaire and the secretary will incorporate the information given into the information on the website; however, the composite updated document will not be available until all of our member associations have responded.
  - e) The formation of a *Religious Libraries* group in IFLA: The Board will explore the possibilities in collaboration of our colleague associations from other continents and will post any pertinent information so that we can continue this discussion.
  - f) The question of consortia: We shall continue to investigate the possibilities for consortium/ consortia for the on-line provision of information, full text documents, and other databases.
  - g) The exchange of periodicals: Although it seems to be best to confine these exchanges within our national associations, for other obscure periodicals or some that are difficult to obtain, we can explore the possibilities of exchange with ATLA member libraries.

10. Collaboration with the other continental associations: ATLA (RDB, ATLAS, etc.)—  
Report from Margot Lyon; ANZTLA; ITLA; RELIT; ForATL

Margot Lyon reported on the new products that have been developed by ATLA and those that have been updated and improved. ATLAS for ALUMNI is available now for institutions that subscribe to the ATLA products on-line. She reported on her continuing efforts to work with EBSCO to provide favourable consortium offers to our libraries.

She brought to the attention of the Assembly the on-line course offered by ATLA, as well as the possibility of sponsorship from ICC-OCLC for study in the United States.

11. Report from The Theological Book Network: They have moved to a new facility that gives them more room. Despite being busy with the move they have shipped some 250,000 books during the past year. They are developing the concept of 'a library in a box', using containers that have been fitted with bookshelves ready for use. TBN is working on building thematic libraries, and encouraging training for those who receive their books. In connection with the latter, he is using the Guidelines Manual recently published by ABTAPL.
12. Regarding the exchange of bulletins, and other publications, along with the update of member addresses used in these exchanges, the member associations were advised to check for these on-line and report and updates or any corrections to the secretary.
13. Future Assemblies: 2010 in Nice, 4-8 September; 2011? 2012? Maaïke van Rossem suggested that Amsterdam could be a possibility for an Assembly; Father Gabriel Seguí i Trobat invited BETH to hold an Assembly in Palma, Mallorca.
14. Other business:

It was suggested that we could perhaps raise some money by offering advertisement space on our website to publishers of theological texts.

Christophe Langlois suggested that we bring the idea of BETH to Wikipedia with entries in the various languages represented in our associations.

The delegates suggested devising a BETH passport—a letter of recommendation for students moving from library to library—which could be downloaded from the website. Meanwhile, the secretary should send out a blank BETH letterhead to our delegates and those on our mailing list.

It was suggested that we plan for a theme for our Assemblies, an idea which is already in place for our Assembly in Nice in 2010, where the theme will be *The Bible and tool for Biblical Study*.

The Board made a call for new committee members; specifically the treasurer would like to resign his position by the next Assembly. It would be helpful to receive any volunteers or nominations before the next Board meeting, which is scheduled for 23-24 March 2010.

There was a suggestion that BETH could put some pressure on *Elenchus Bibliographicus Biblicus* to make their information available on-line. It would be a good

idea to invite them to our meeting in Nice, and to urge Ferdinand Postwick to join us for that Assembly also, considering his expertise in publishing documents for Biblical study. It was noted *Bibliographica Misionaria* will not go on-line until all the printed stock has been exhausted.

15. The Assembly adjourned at 12 noon on Wednesday, September 23, 2009.