

# THEOLOGICAL LIBRARIANSHIP: A PERSPECTIVE FROM A DEVELOPING REGION

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## *Introduction*

There is almost none theological librarianship literature in Latin America. Even though, in practical terms, Latin American theological librarianship has existed not long after the European conquest in the late XIV. In order to have a better understanding of **Latin American theological librarianship** it is necessary to approach this subject from a wider perspective. One way to do it is the next: the geographical and socio-economic context; the secular librarianship and information in Latin America; the Latin American Theological Librarianship, highlighting some of its aspects; the Latin American Theological Information Network (LATIN); and finally, a quick glance of the challenges that lay ahead of the LATL.

## *The geographic and socio-economic context*

Latin America is formed by 19 countries; 18 of Spanish<sup>1</sup> origin and one of Portuguese origin, Brazil. All these countries are part of a much larger group called developing nations<sup>2</sup>. But what is a developing region? According to De Horowitz, “the term *developing*, however, usually refers to a nation that is making progress toward providing adequate food, health, housing, and educational opportunities to its population”. She adds that the World Bank defines a developing country “as one that has yet to achieve the technical, economic, educational, or social standards available to other more developed nations” (1993, p. 170)<sup>3</sup>. A better image can be obtained from the 1998 *Human Development Report* of the United Nations Development Programme, which indicates that “Of the 4.4 billion people in developing countries, nearly three-fifths lack basic sanitation. Almost a third have no access to clean water. A quarter do not have adequate housing. A fifth have no access to modern health services. A fifth of children do not attend school to grade 5. About a fifth do not have enough dietary energy and protein. Micronutrient deficiencies are even more widespread. Worldwide, 2 billion people are anemic, including 55 million in industrial countries. In developing countries only a privileged minority has motorized transport, telecommunications and modern energy”. The above reality is also stated by numerous authors, including librarians, for instance Zaldívar<sup>4</sup>. This is a circle difficult to avoid, and therefore the chances of getting out this conditions are very slim. If there are no economic resources, then there is not improvement in education system; if there is not an appropriate education for children, then they will hardly have access to better opportunities; and so on. Obviously, this is a very broad subject. The above definition and the brief description of the developing world reality will be good enough for the time being. The causes of why there is a developed world and a developing one are beyond the scope of this presentation.

Latin America as a part of the developing world shares many of the above conditions. This

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<sup>1</sup>Presentada en 1999 en el congreso de la American Theological Library Association.

reality makes the people of this region almost a perfect example for Maslow's theory<sup>5</sup>, in which a basic need has to be satisfied before moving to the next one. A great number of people hardly goes beyond need number one (food, water, clothing, etc. ) and there is no telling if they ever will reach number five (self-actualization needs, what person's need to be and do that which the person was born to do); it will be asking too much to people who are barely surviving. Along this line, local government faces analogous challenges that are difficult to overcome (Zaldívar, 1998, p. 35).

### *Librarianship and information in Latin America*

There is a constant flow of information and technology (hardware, software, traditional technologies, etc) from the developed world to the developing one (Zaldívar, p. 37). In many cases the information from the developing world goes to the developed world, once in there value is added to it (processing, packing, etc.) and then it may be sent back to its original place. In most of the cases, to an unaffordable price. Smith in his article *Mission research and the path to CD-ROM: report on the global quest to share information* makes a small commentary of this subject (1995, p. 147).

There could be a partial explanation for the above reality. The information business has not been taken seriously in Latin America<sup>6</sup>. Páez-Urdaneta analyzes the causes in his article *Information in the Third World*. Although this analysis was published in 1989 it is still valid in most of the cases. He identifies the government, the professional associations, the information workers, the services, the information industry and the information users as the classical components of the national infrastructure. Páez-Urdaneta points out the problems for each of these components (p. 179-181) and summarizes this into six main<sup>7</sup> problems related to the infra-structures of the national information systems in developing Third World countries. Zaldívar also points out some similar aspects along these lines (p. 35).

How are libraries, librarians and information perceived? Different librarians share a not very encouraging vision. Amaral considers that "libraries and library services are little appreciated by government administrations, being reduced to a low professional status" (1995, p. 20). Fernández points out that there is an understimation of the value of libraries and subsequent scarcity of resources allocated to them. She adds, "it can affirmed that the authorities and society in Latin American countries are unaware of the importance of libraries and services which they offer" (1991. p. 46). There is a poor information culture, understood in the following way: not being aware of the importance of information, poor libraries systems, low use of information because of low research work. information that is not being collected, few information services, and so forth. This also noticed by Zaldívar (p. 37). According to Páez-Urdaneta, the information users, in the developing world, have a weak cultural attitude toward the value of information for personal growth and social development (1989, p. 181). Some of the quotations are not very recent but the still are valid today. But not everything is lost, some others see hope in this area.

It is in this context where Latin American Librarianship takes place. According to De Horowitz, "most of the library development that has taken place in recent times has stemmed from what may be termed the Anglo-Saxon tradition" (Ibid, p. 176). And in this matter she is wright about it, for instance: the cataloging work (the AACR2), the indexation area (subject heading lists, thesaurus), and in the classification field (Dewey Decimal Classification, Library of Congress). De Horowitz is not alone in her views about this matter. Fernández also thinks that "Latin American

librarianship has followed foreign models for many years during its development. Up to the present, this profession has been dependent on foreign librarianship, especially the one from USA.(1991. p. 50).” This Anglo-Saxon influence has made a substantial contribution to librarianship in Latin America and because of it there is now a more qualified human resource in this field. The schools of librarianship had made a good effort to improve their programs. During the last years efforts have been invested in research work in order to find and offer solutions that are appropriated to the reality of each context. (Morales, 1997).

### *Latin American Theological Librarianship*

Obviously, the term **theological librarianship** has its roots in the definition of secular librarianship<sup>8</sup>, a concept that changes over the time. By definition, theological librarianship is the set of required knowledge for the organization and functioning of information systems in the theological field (information processing tools, information users, information resources, etc.). From this concept derives a very substantial theoretical framework that librarians are familiar with. **Theological librarianship, essentially, is the practice of librarianship in the theological field.** This form of librarianship exists because there is an information user in this field who requires services from a theological information professional. Actually, the theological information user (the market) may include, among others, people, churches, church related organizations, and collective groups. Among the latter there are the theological training centers of different nature. Reality shows that theological libraries exist mainly in the theological education contexts.

It can be said that the origins of Latin American Theological Librarianship (LATL) can be traced to three main sources: (1) the first one started after the European conquest, beginning with the Spanish *conquistadores*. Hallewell states that “The modern world as we know it dawned in the late half of the 15<sup>th</sup> century in the lands of western Christendom “(1995, p. 38). In Latin America, christian religion came with the *conquistadores* in 1492, first from Spain then from other European powers (Netherlands, Portugal, England, France). Religion played an important role in the colonization process. There must be in the libraries a considerable numbers of books on Latin America church history that deal with this subject. Hallewell makes a brief and good description of this process<sup>9</sup>. This was a very simple form of librarianship that was practiced by the friars from those colonial times up to a certain time. Grover mentions that the Jesuits “established traditions of librarianship that were more developed in Brazil than in any European colony” (p. 267); (2) the second origin is a simple form of librarianship practiced by North American and European protestant missionaries who came some time after catholicism. Latin America is mainly a Christian region, although there are some other forms of religion but in a much smaller percentage. These missionaries “saw” or were “told” how library work was done in their home countries and tried to reproduce it in the Latin American mission fields; and (3) the current librarianship that is taught by librarianship schools and practiced by a considerable number of libraries, the so called Anglo-Saxon tradition. Right after colonization the presence of christianism was strongly felt in this region. Eventually, this christian presence led to the creation of theological training centers that supported these christian missions<sup>10</sup>. Grover points out that in Brazil the Jesuits founded schools and also established libraries (10) and book collections of varying sizes wherever they went (1993, p. 266-267). On the other hand protestantism was also creating small information resource centers to

support their theological training projects. Theological library collections of protestantism, to some extent, were initially created by the missionaries who willingly gave their book collections or those who died in the field and inherited their books to the incipient theological libraries of this region. This is the reason why some of these libraries have a great percentage of old books in English. Therefore, it can be seen that theological information<sup>11</sup>, as one of the ingredients of librarianship, made its presence in Latin America. Since this resource is more useful when organized, a form of librarianship was put in practice in a very modest way. This above brief account shows some of the origins of Latin American theological librarianship.

#### *A more recent vision*

Over the time theological institutions have grown in number. They offer different programs and academic degrees<sup>12</sup>. The number of theological libraries has also grown. Bibliographic production in Spanish and Portuguese languages has increased. There is a greater number of authors and research centers of different nature. The last decades have seen an steady increase of publishing houses in those languages. Technological tools have also made an outstanding contribution in the theological publishing business. As a result of this, there is larger body of theological information available in Latin America.

According to Fernández “there is a general lack of information regarding libraries and their services and this makes quantitative or comparative studies difficult (1991. p. 50). The above is also true in the LATL. More than that, information about Latin American theological libraries almost does not exist in the traditional form, such as a book or a comprehensive report. In practice, LATL has been there for quite some time but there are not written records of it. This information must exist mostly in library reports to their parent institutions and in the library committee minutes. If somebody wanted to approach the development of LATL, this person would have to do a lot of field research before coming up with some findings. Therefore, what is being written here has been taken from bits of information on LATL that appear here and there from time to time.

LATL is in the making in this part of the developing world. It is affected by those conditions that plague this region: lack of economic resources, which means working within very tight budgets, when available; the access to information technology is very difficult, and many libraries do not have access to it at all; bibliographical resources must be bought using difficult to get currency. Education theological institutions are constantly struggling to survive<sup>13</sup>. The priority is on the teaching staff and the students, things they can't do without. If there is not money for a library, the professor's personal library could be a resource to count on. If there are no bibliographical resources at all, the institution still can resort to a form of teaching that will allow knowledge transfer, such as the oral method. The results will be far from desired but still some limited goals can be achieved. In the past in many institutions the teaching staff was in charge of teaching and also doing administrative work, including taking care of library matters, if there was one. This practice is still current in a number of theological institutions.

#### *Size of library collections*

Library collections are fairly small compared with the developed world “standards”. The

statistical section of ATLA's **Summary of Proceedings** is good reference for comparison purposes. If librarians were to provide information about the size of Latin American theological libraries collection, they would have to: (1) do field research about it, or (b) depend from outside sources, such as the **International Directory of Theological Colleges**<sup>14</sup>, 1997, which contains information on 94 institutions from 17 Latin American countries. A careful analysis shows that 87% of the libraries collections have less than 32000 volumes. 57.44% receive between 1 and 25 theological journals<sup>15</sup>. Since then some minor changes have taken place but they do not alter this picture very much. In 1994 a survey<sup>16</sup> was conducted which included 18 countries. Unfortunately not all the theological institutions sent back the questionnaires. In spite of it some relevant data was obtained. This survey shows that 42% of the collections had less than 4,000 volumes, 29% was between 4,000 and 10,000 volumes, and the rest was above 10,000<sup>17</sup>. This information seems to be consistent with data collected during theological librarianship workshops (see footnote no.-- ) conducted in Costa Rica (1983), Guatemala (1990), Guatemala (1991), México (1993) and Ecuador (1997), and which were attended by people from 14 countries. These collections include mostly traditional printed material. The access to electronic information is expensive and out of the reach for a great number of theological libraries.

### *The theological librarian and its image*

In the 1994 survey it was found that 29% of people working libraries had formal training in librarianship, 14% had learned this trade, whatever they knew about it, by attending theological librarianship workshops and 57% had not training at all in this field. This clearly explains why only 33% of the libraries used standards, 14% was using some kind of "standards" and 53% did not use librarianship standards at all. There is this image of people working in libraries, that very little knowledge is required for such a job, as a matter of fact, anybody could do it<sup>18</sup>, even a secretary. The current reality may be the result of such a vision and practice. Of course, there may be good reasons, as it was stated earlier, that explains this reality. A trained librarian is a more expensive resource, and there may not be money to hire one. Therefore, an institution could consider that a secretary is a cheaper resource or they can even resort to a professor. In either case they can take care of more than one job.

The above reality is slowly changing. The institutions are becoming aware of the importance and the difference it makes to hire a professional trained librarian to be in charge of their libraries. This means, that presently there is a larger number of professional librarians in Latin America than a few years ago, particularly in the larger theological schools. Recent research on this area shows that this trend continues.

### *The Latin American Theological Information Network (LATIN)*

LATIN was the result of a number of voices arising from various sources. From time to time, such as 1991 and 1992<sup>19</sup>, some concerns were stated around the need of creating a theological library network in the Latin American Region. In 1994, in the Southern Cone colleagues were also concerned about regional theological librarianship cooperation, as Mariel Deluca Voth states it in her article *La biblioteca teológica: sus funciones* (1994, p. 12, 13). Another interesting aspect is the

work of the ASIT's libraries<sup>20</sup> which aims to improve theological librarianship in that part of Latin America. One of the goals for LATIN was to create an association of information professionals that would be concerned with theological information services in Latin America rather than to be exclusively involved with the old traditional library vision. The idea behind this was to find a way to coordinate library work and at the same time to share theological information. Of course, it was easy to say, taking it into practice was something else. In 1993 the first issue of **the Boletín del Bibliotecario Teológico Latinoamericano** (Latin American Theological Librarian Newsletter) made its appearance. It was like throwing it up in the air just to find out if it was to land somewhere, hoping to get back an echo, a response. In this issue was stated that this was an attempt to create a link between theological information professionals in the region, a window through which we could see what each other was doing, expecting to mutually benefit from each other's work. Fortunately the newsletter landed in fertile soil. It is still issued twice a year.

In 1996 a call was made to Latin American theological librarians to attend a meeting to consider a more formal way of uniting efforts. A number of librarians answered this call and met in that year. During this meeting it was decided to move ahead and establish LATIN. Another congress was called for 1998. During this II Congress bylaws were approved, a coordinating group was elected and clear objectives were stated. These objectives are: to work on standards for information processing, to analyze and to diffuse the Latin American theological information, to promote the interlibrary cooperation in the field of the Latin American theology; to encourage research that improves Latin American theological librarianship, and to highlight the role of the library and the role of the librarian in the theological education process in this region. An initial workplan was drafted in order to start achieving the above goals. LATIN is in the process of putting together the last pieces of this first workplan.

Theological librarianship in this region currently faces numerous challenges. Some of these have been already approached in the II Congress of Latin American Theological Librarians<sup>21</sup>. The following are some of the challenges, including part of feasible solutions:

**Cooperation:** Latin American theological librarians for most of the time have been working in isolation<sup>22</sup>, and because of this they haven't had the opportunity to develop a way of working as a team. They are just beginning to get together, getting to know each other and shyly participating in committees. Having created LATIN is a partial solution, a step forward to a future increased regional cooperation in this field. LATIN is a newborn that needs a lot of care, and without it and the appropriate strategy this organization may disappear. It will take time and a lot of efforts from the Latin American colleagues to consolidate this step. At the end, LATIN only means benefits to the theological education in the region and to the librarians as well.

**Training:** It is necessary to improve theological librarianship training in such a way that it matches the needs of theological institutions in Latin America. This training, besides traditional librarianship, must also focus on the use of technological tools<sup>23</sup> related to theological information. The marketing area has not been approached yet and it must be seriously considered. Already some training has been provided<sup>24</sup>. Research is required to find out precisely the particular training needs. Fortunately, a research work is underway that will provide useful information for a future strategy along these lines.

**Image:** the theological librarian has a second, or even lower class image in considerable number of theological institutions. Unfortunately, LATIN does not have a magical formula to change this perception overnight. The ability to quickly understand and to anticipate Latin American theological information needs, the ability to design the appropriate strategy to effectively meet that demand, the determination to achieve the strategy's proposed goals, plus a good dose of hard work are part of the ingredients that will change the current image of the theological librarian. It may change for good the image of the Latin American theological library itself too. It is easy to say but difficult to do. This too will take time and also the librarian's willingness to change the current image of this profession.

**Real Latin American theological librarianship:** So far theological librarianship in Latin American have been a consumer of the developed world librarianship tools and products, whenever it have been possible to afford them. Many of the tools from the developed world are excellent, particularly in a globalized environment. Some others are not so convenient because of language problems. Translating them does not help too much because of distinct realities. A solution to a specific problem in the developed world does mean a solution for a developing region for the same problem. Therefore, Latin American theological librarians must attempt to create or to adapt some tools to suit their own specific needs. If we don't do it, we may be forever depending on foreign sources to provide for our information processing tools and for own information needs. Not doing it means killing the creativity of some of our colleagues and leaving out the ability of developing the know-how to solve our problems. Again, easier said than done but not impossible.

**Research work:** if the above is to be achieved, then the Latin American Theological librarian must invest efforts in research work in order to come up with the required information to produce, if possible, the things they need. This research work should be oriented towards reaching the goals of LATIN. Currently, the theological librarian in this region is fully dedicated to solve the pressing needs at his or her work, with almost no time to for research activities. At home he or she also have to worry a lot to make ends meet, a situation already explained in the first part of this presentation, the reality of the socio-economic context. It is well known that serious research, among others, takes time and money, it requires access to adequate information sources, it demands capable and trained minds, and interdisciplinary human resources. In spite of severe limitations some research work is being carried out. Not as much as we would like, but better than nothing. This research would eventually lead to the production of electronic information products that would, hopefully, meet the information needs of our clients.

**Discovering Latin American theological librarianship identity:** it would nice to have a vision of this librarianship with Latin American eyes. We hope that there may be a colleague who will be willing to attempt to write at least a brief, old, and recent history of theological librarianship in our region. A history that let us know about our origins and where we are at the present time, a document that tells us something about our real identity.

**Standards:** working in isolation has caused some problems, such as the use of standards. In some cases libraries started to process information without any standards while others did it partially. This

issue has been taken by LATIN. A solution to this problem may mean to be able to be in a better position to provide better some information services and to facilitate information exchange. There could be a few challenges to research work.

**Limited bibliographical resources:** It has been previously stated that in a high percentage theological libraries function within very tight budgets. This actually means, for example, from \$1000 to \$2000 for bibliographical acquisition. It was also stated that information products from the developed world are way beyond the reach of 95% of theological libraries, a fairly good guess (remember the previous information on the size of library collections). There is more, Allen<sup>25</sup> in his article *Resources, acquisitions and the viability of university libraries in developing countries* points out that

“It is well established that in the libraries of the developed world the major part of the use of the collections is concentrated upon the recent literature. Recent is of course a relative term, but overall any book or serial over ten years old has a very greatly reduced likelihood of being borrowed or consulted. If a developing country library is unable to maintain a steady intake of the current literature then either the level of use will decline severely or the users will be forced to rely upon sources that are to a considerable extent already regarded as superseded in the affluent world” (p. 234)

What can be offered to theological libraries in the Latin American region? Is there any accessible information product for these libraries? If so, who will provide them?

**Latin American theological institutions:** it has already been said that LATIN only means benefits to the theological education in this region. This is something that has to be demonstrated. And the way to do is by designing and providing information services that matches the information needs of our theological information user. If this goal is achieved, LATIN will secure the full support of its customer. And as in any business, the customer is the key factor to survival. This could be the thing that may change our profession's image. Actually, the above means been able to develop the correct vision and add hard work to required solution.

**Challenges to colleagues of the developed world:** the Latin American theological librarians must work cooperatively with their counterparts in the developed world, seeking the transfer of knowledge (know-how), avoiding duplication of work, trying to complement each other in areas where needed. There is no doubt, Latin American theological librarians have a lot to learn from their colleagues of the developed world. Therefore, ways must be sought to establish formal links to achieve the above. Unfortunately there are language barriers that somehow may be a hinder to this relationship, but it will not make it impossible. The LATL reality has briefly been presented, a step forward, but one step among many. It could be proposed to you, the colleagues from the developed world to help their colleagues from the developing one with at least with one of many steps. Attending this presentation is a step, but knowing the reality from inside would be much better. You can visit our region. Spent

from two weeks to a month in a theological library in Latin America. Get first hand information on the reality of our libraries (budgets, available technological tools, existing bibliographical resources, etc.), for a while help with the library work, spent time with the librarian. You can even further, “adopt” a library for some time, and during this time be its “consultant”, sharing your experience as necessary and fit for the case. The sharing of experiences can be done in both ways. Invite a librarian to your library. Let this person be a part of your library’s team, getting involved as much as necessary in the library processes at all levels. Such an exchange may produce positive results for both worlds. We are not asking to have free access to your vast information resources, we are asking to help us develop our own information infrastructure and resources.

### *Conclusions*

It is clearly seen that librarianship is affected by the prevailing socio-economic conditions, including political factors in a given context. Unfortunately, theological institutions and their libraries do not have control over these conditions. There is less money, the information resources from outside the region are becoming more expensive and also there is an increased theological information demand in Latin America. Theological information resources are becoming more important in this part of the developing world. It is also becoming more important the presence of theological librarians, who can effectively mediate between the user and the information (wherever it may be at), particularly in limited funds and resources context.

It is the individual that makes history. It is the responsibility of the individual to plan and work to change his/her surrounding environment and make it suitable to the current needs of his/her group. The LATL should not expect that other people come from outside the region to take care of their business. They are the ones called to find a way to solve their own problems, they are the ones called to find a way to develop the know-how to solve their own problems, to be able to develop the required tools, to be able to provide an adequate training to their librarians in order to respond to the needs of theological institutions in Latin America. They should dream with a day in which they can fully respond to the challenge of taking care of their own information. At the present time, because the way things are, a helping hand for the first steps would be greatly appreciated.

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#### Endnotes

1. Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Costa Rica, Chile, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, México, Nicaragua, Panamá, Paraguay, Perú, Venezuela. Puerto Rico, Dominican Republic and Cuba are part of the so called Spanish Caribbean countries.

2. Because of its status, Puerto Rico, may have different characteristics.

3. This concept can also be deducted from Paez-Urdaneta's article, a region that has not achieved a balanced level of progress in the three components of the national society: the social structure (the economy, the technology and the occupational system), the polity (the principles of regulating distribution of power and adjudicating the conflicting claims and demands of

individuals and groups), and the culture (the means of allowing for the fulfillment and enhancement of the self. Páez-Urdaneta, Iraset. *Information in the Third World*. **International Library Review**. 21:177-191, Apr., 1989, p. 185.

4.Zaldívar Collazo, Modesto. **Políticas y estrategias en la sociedad de la información**. *Ciencias de la Información*. 29(3):33-40, Sept., 1998.

5.Hierarchy of Needs (1: physiological needs; 2: safety needs; 3: love, affection and belongingness needs; 4: esteem needs; 5: and self-actualization needs). Abraham Harold Maslow (1908-1970) was a founder of humanistic psychology in the 1960s, along with others. He first became known for his description of the "hierarchy of prepotency" in human motivations. Observing that "man is a wanting animal" and that one desire is no sooner satisfied than another takes its place, he noted sense and order in the succession of motives. Grollier Encyclopedia, 1996.

6.The constant use of information is related to research work. If this does not occur, then, the demand for information diminishes, because there is not too much need for. Zaldívar exposes a reality that affects the implementation of policies and strategies dealing with the information society. These are: very limited economic resources, lack of adequate infrastructure for information and data transmission, low training level in computer, information and telecommunications (1998, p. 35). In a developing region is quite common the non-existing access to education and health, there is unemployment and sub-employment. Because of the low income and the high cost of telecommunications services and computer equipment, there is a very limited access to this kind of technology or tools. (Zaldívar Collazo, Modesto. **Políticas y estrategias en la sociedad de la información**. *Ciencias de la Información*. 29(3):33-40, Sept., 1998.)

7.(1) The government's lack of notion of information as a strategy and an instrument for national effective development, (2) the weakness of the organized professional support regarding the integration and expansion of the sector, (3) the low capability of the professional, managerial, technical and academic human resources to undertake a meaningful transformation of the sector, (4) the lack of qualitatively and quantitatively adequate system of public, university, and specialized services to effectively support the strategy for development, (5) the non-existence of an industrial initiative to support the consolidation and modernization of the sector, (6) the low competence of the user groups to value and use information for individual and collective development ( Páez-Urdaneta, 1989, p. 181). These six main problems can be equally identified in all developing countries, their particular differences relating to the presence of absence of one or more variables associated with each problem (p. 182).

8.From the Greek *Bibliothēke* (*biblio*: now meaning information; *theke*: now meaning anywhere). In Spanish one more word (*logo*) is added to include the theoretical knowledge required to do *Bibliothēke*'s work.

9. As the galleon, the horse and the musket secured to new European imperialism its physical dominion over the American continent, the printed book and Western book-learning soon followed to ensure a complementary spiritual conquest. Where books already existed, in the indigenous cultures of México and Central América, they were seized and destroyed as an inadmissible obstacle to the effective imposition of the invader's ideology" (Hallewell, 1995, p. 38)

10. See the following works: Jean Pierre Bastian, *Breve historia del protestantismo en América Latina*; CEHILA, *Historia general de la iglesia en América Latina* and Pablo Deiros, *Historia del cristianismo en América Latina*.

11. With respect to Brazil, "The country's literary output was virtually confined to *autos*, religious plays composed by the missionaries for use in catechising, all of which remained in manuscript, except for the few that survived to excite the interest of nineteenth antiquarians..." (Hallewell, 1995, p. 92).

12. See **International Directory of Theological Colleges**, the section about Latin America. An analysis of the information shows that the theological institutions offer the following degrees: Certificate, 10.45%; Diploma, 15.68%; Bachelor, 38.56%, Licentiate, 13.72; Master, 14.37%; and Doctorate, 7.18%.

13. A picture of this situation can be seen in **Educación teológica en situaciones de sobrevivencia**, a book published in 1991. Since then economic conditions have not improved, they may have worsened.

14. The information in there is of general nature, but includes some numerical data related to the libraries of the theological institutions of the world, data that is analyzed for this presentation's purpose.

15. There are some accuracy doubts regarding the **International Directory of Theological Colleges** data. These doubts may have an explanation, such as: whoever filled the questionnaire did not understand the question, this person could not tell the difference between a single issue or the title's collection of that issue. The information about the total number of the theological collection could have been mixed with data information from other collections in the secular fields in which education is also provided, such as law, management and medicine.

16. See Pérez, **Propuesta de una red latinoamericana de servicios de información especializada en teología**.

17. These categories were arbitrarily defined, and their only function was to provide some parameters in order to get a picture of the theological library collections in Latin America.

18. Voth, Mariel Deluca. **La Biblioteca teológica: sus funciones**. Encuentro y Diálogo. (10):9-14, 1994, p. 12.

19. See **Educación teológica en situaciones de sobrevivencia**. -- [San José, C.R.]: Programa de Educación Teológica, Consejo Mundial de Iglesias, [1991], p. 12-17 and **Educación Teológica en Abya-Yala: una consulta internacional, 20-24 de julio de 1992, San José, Costa Rica**. San José, C.R.: Comunidad de Educación Teológica Ecuménica Latinoamericana, Educación Teológica Ecuménica, Consejo Mundial de Iglesias, Seminario Bíblico Latinoamericano, 1992, p. 13, 15, 17.

20. This report clearly shows that the theological librarians of this region have an excellent vision and strategy for theological librarianship development. The concerns of this group are also shared by librarians in other regions of Latin America. ASIT's librarians take in account critical issues that are relevant for the Latin American theological librarianship as a whole. Zuliani, Noemí. Electronic mail of March 15, 1999. SITB<biblio@logos.com.ar> sent to perquir@sol.racsa.co.cr.

21. Pérez, Alvaro. **La bibliotecología teológica Latinoamericana: una primera aproximación**. (a speech given during this congress, July, 1998, at La Paz, Bolivia).

22. Theological librarians that are members of the Asociación de Seminarios e Instituciones Teológicas have had the experience of meeting together and addressing some common problems.

23. According to Zaldívar, this is a fundamental problem related to the information professional in the developing world, his/her professional training is not up to the current context in which the use of new technologies is critical (p. 38). But the area of technology has its own problems. Amaral, regarding the use of new technologies in library services in Third World countries, states that "this will depend on the level of development of the infrastructure in each country and their relationship to social, economic and political factors" (1995, p. 19). These are variables that must be taken in account if training is to be provided in technology.

24. Several theological librarians workshops have been carried out already: 1983, San José, Costa Rica; 1990, Guatemala; 1991, Guatemala; 1993, México; 1997, Quito, Ecuador). All these events were all supported by the **Asociación Latinoamericana de Instituciones de Educación Teológica** (Latin American Association of Theological Education Institutions) and in the last one was also involved the **Comunidad de Educación Teológica Ecuménica Latinoamericana** (Latin American Theological Education Community) y la **Red Latinoamericana de Información Teológica** (LATIN). Other organizations have also supported these types of workshops in other parts of Latin America, such as **Asociación de Seminarios e Instituciones Teológicas** (Seminaries and Theological Institutions Association) and **Associação da Seminários Teológicos Evangélicos** (Evangelical Theological Seminaries Association, Brazil).

25. Allen, G. G. *Resources, acquisitions and the viability of university libraries in developing countries*. **Libri**. 43(3):232-244, 1993, p. 234. A very interesting article.