

BURKE LIBRARY

NEWS

Winter/Spring 2015

UNION THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY IN THE CITY OF NEW YORK * COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES

Director's Message

By: Beth Bidlack



As you will see in this newsletter, there are many things happening at the Burke Library. Over the past few months, we have completed a major grant-funded, archival processing project and started another. We continue to build strong collections and promote them to faculty, students, and researchers. We

have undertaken several initiatives to support Union's Student Senate theme for 2015-16: #LoveInAction. You will read more about these efforts and others in this issue of our newsletter. The Burke Library continues to have an impact on research, teaching and learning within Union Theological Seminary, Columbia University, and the broader scholarly world.

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Library Instruction

By: Elizabeth Call



Library Tours and Orientations

The library was able to provide numerous tours throughout the academic year, which consisted of a basic orientation to the library's spaces, tools, and collections. The tours were for various Union Theological Seminary and Columbia University groups this academic year, including Union's Fall 2014 orientation to the incoming students, attendees of Union's Alumni/ae Days, Columbia University's Religion Department, and participants of Union's Intersections program, a program designed for prospective students. In addition to the tours, the library worked together with Union's Office of Student Affairs to provide an intensive two-part orientation to using the library's resources for incoming students attending a pre-orientation four-day workshop that introduced them to graduate theological writing.

Library Workshops

The library offered one workshop on basic research in the Fall 2014 and this Spring offered two workshops, one on the citation management software, Zotero, and the other on conducting basic research. Moving forward we plan to offer at least two workshops every semester.

Library Class

Beth Bidlack, Director of the Library, redeveloped and is teaching a long-standing one-credit Union course, SU110 Holistic Approaches to Theological Learning and Research. The course is designed to help students conduct research by drafting appropriate research questions, locating and evaluating resources for research, crafting an argument or thesis, presenting that argument or thesis along with relevant research to support it, and locating themselves within larger scholarly conversations.

Class Visits to the Library

The library regularly works with professors from Union and Columbia to bring in classes to the library, whether it be to learn how to utilize more fully the library's print and/or digital resources or to engage with some of our unique and rare books, manuscripts, and archives. One big initiative that the Public Services Librarian, Elizabeth Call, has been working on is the integration of special collections into courses.

This Spring the library was able to work closely with one Union class and one Columbia class. The Union class, CH108 The History of Christianity Part 2: Introduction to Western European Church History (c.1000-c.2000), taught by Dr. Jane Huber and teaching fellow, Russ Gadia, had a number of rare books and manuscripts pulled for two class sessions. Students had an option either to write a standard research paper or to select one of the pulled rare books and manuscripts and write a codicological (or, the study of books as physical objects) description. The codicologies submitted will then be considered for inclusion on the Library's Blog! The structure of the class visits, the materials pulled, and the assignment were discussed and worked on together by the course's professors and library staff, Matthew Baker and Elizabeth Call.





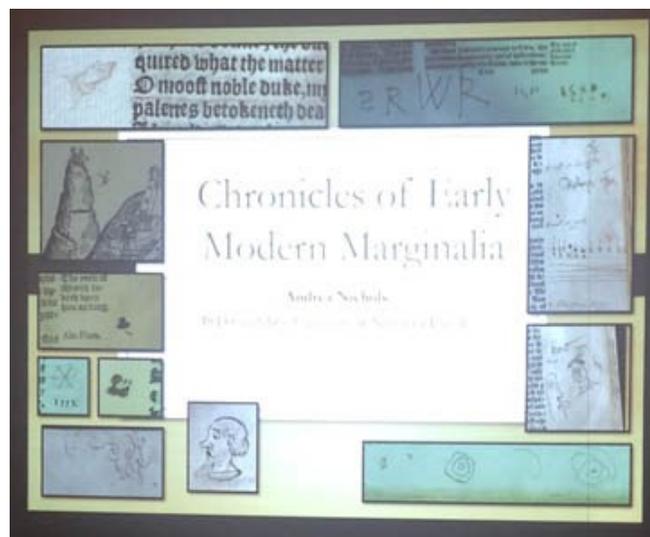
The second course to integrate our special collections was The Renaissance Archive, a Columbia University course taught by Dr. Douglas Pfeiffer. For this course the class visited the library on one occasion when a number of rare books were pulled and arranged in a particular order in stations. The class was then broken into smaller groups and told to pick a station. The groups had 20 minutes to examine the materials in their station and, without any additional information, come up with a brief history of those items from what they have learned so far in class. The professor was able to weave his class lecture in between each of the group's presentations. Students from this class will be required to return to one of the special collections they visited, as

they had an opportunity to visit several, and work and write a paper on an item of their choosing.

Chronicles of Marginalia

By: Elizabeth Call

On Tuesday, January 20th, Andrea Nichols gave a presentation to members of the Union Theological Seminary and Columbia University communities on her research during a Lunch & Learn. Nichols is a recipient of one of the competitive Columbia University Libraries 2014 Libraries Research Awards. She has made some amazing discoveries while researching reader notations in books (i.e. marginalia) spanning 1480 to 1642. Nichols is a doctoral student at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, specializing in early modern England, women and gender, and print culture. This Lunch & Learn was well attended with about 10 individuals that included both members of the Union Theological Seminary and Columbia University communities!



The Hidden Archival Collections of the Burke Library: A Success Story

By: Brigette C. Kamsler

The Henry Luce Foundation-funded project to process the archives of the Missionary Research Library (MRL) and the William Adams Brown Ecumenical Library has reached a successful conclusion.

From August 2011-December 2014, a team of student assistants and I processed, arranged, described and provided access to 780 linear feet of archives (200 feet over our goal).

We've been providing access to these collections in a number of ways. One way is through our finding aids – all 183 collections have full finding aids available and linked on our website. Other ways we have provided access and spread the knowledge of the work was through the Burke Library's social media accounts and



by uploading finding aids into Academic Commons (see p. 9 of this newsletter). The

Staff at Burke have used a great deal of the archival collections in various classes and presentations (see previous article on instruction). In addition, I promoted the project at archives conferences, and wrote updates to listservs and publications.

We have seen a large increase in researcher requests for these materials. From 2010 until the end of 2014, the number of researcher visits and boxes requested doubled. A big increase can be seen in 2012 when promotion via social media began. Overall, the MRL and WAB collections make up only **17.5%** of the total archival collections at the Burke. Yet, they account for over 72% of the boxes being pulled. 77% of our special collections researchers come to use our archives.



And while it might be surprising, of the 116 individual researchers who used the collections from 2011-2014, 95% of those people were not from theological schools. So where were these researchers from? This map illustrates generally the geographic locations.



One way in which we measured the impact of this project is through the output of these researchers. We know that the following scholarly output has been produced as a result of the MRL/WAB Luce Project (completed and in-progress):

Books (9); Articles (4); Research Papers, Theses and Dissertations (43); General research and genealogy (2); film (1); programs, presentations or symposiums (5).

The moment finding aids go up, we start noticing the increase of requests. We know that the collections are having an impact on research, teaching and learning. One researcher using the Pliny Fisk Papers said about the material, “This was not only critical to my PhD research, it was groundbreaking.” Many researchers said that the Columbia collections provide documents that are not available anywhere else in such complete form.

Needless to say, this experience has left quite the impact on me both personally and professionally. In fact, I even tattooed the MRL stamp on my arm.

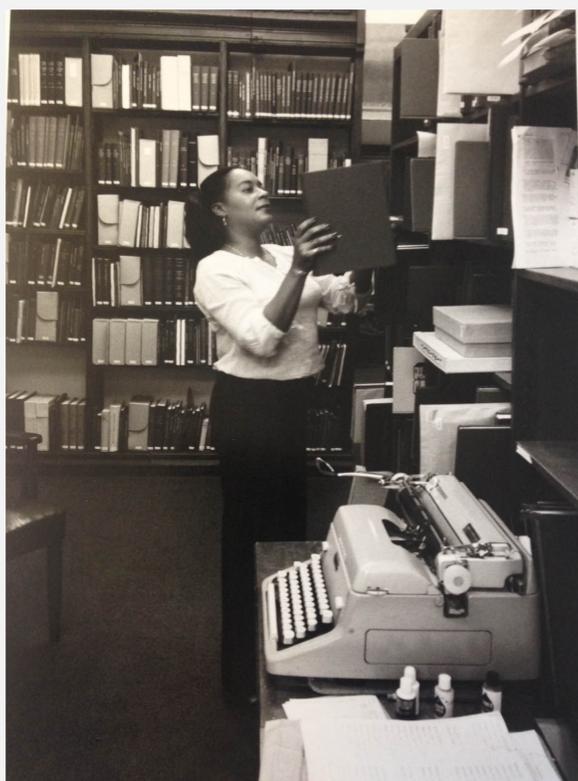
Thanks to funding from the Henry Luce Foundation, we were able to make this amazing set of collections available. I’m looking forward to seeing even more scholarship produced thanks the archival collections. After all, work in the archives funnels out into the community and brings up new and interesting ideas for all of us to discuss.



Getting to Know: Betty Bolden

How/why did you decide to become a librarian/archivist or work in a library?

I was casually looking for work one day and met a friend at her work place General Theological Seminary. Upon meeting and chatting with her boss he discovered I needed work so he arranged an appointment with his friend who was the human resources person at Union Theological Seminary. When I came in for my interview there were two positions available: one in the library at the circulation desk (and one I don't remember), and I took the library job.



I worked in that area for many years doing circulation work, reserves and interlibrary loans (ILL). After becoming a Columbia staff member in 2004, I continued doing ILL and took on the responsibility of processing new books and serials. As more and more readers were beginning to access Rare Books and Archives, I was asked to move into a new department. Yes, this is a photo of Betty from the late 1970s!

What are 5 of your favorite books?

Octavia Butler *Parable of the Sower* and *Parable of the Talents*

Mart Morena Vega *The Altar of My Soul: the living tradition of Santeria*

James Baldwin *The Evidence of Things Not Seen*

Delores Williams *Sisters in the Wilderness*

Paulo Coelho *The Valkyries*

What "interesting" thing(s) do you do outside of your job that people might not know about?

I'm an ordained elders in the PCUSA; part of a Chicago Step Group; and worked as a community organizer for 10 years around NYC transit. The group was the Harlem Initiative Together (H.I.T.) under the umbrella of the Industrial Areas Foundation.

Where is a place you'd like to travel to, that you haven't already been?

I've been to Brazil, but not to Baha'I—would love to go there. I have a strong interest in non-traditional religions.

Favorite ... (Reference) Question? Collection at the Burke? Favorite thing you've worked on here?

While going through some of the UTS archives to fill a copy request for someone, I discovered that a former pastor from the church that I attend graduated from UTS and was the first African American Board member at UTS. I've really enjoyed going through the Student Interracial Ministry boxes and seeing some visitors' excitement of finding notes or letters from relatives whom they didn't know existed and were not searching for as part of their research.

Tales From the Archives

By: Ruth Cameron

Did you know? Union's Registrars from the 1890s to the 1930s worked with all the student records, Union's financial records, as well as keeping large scrapbooks of Union events and activities.

These 'elephant folio' ledgers must weigh 20 pounds each! Thank you for testing them out, Jeremy !



William W. Rockwell, former librarian of Union's library (now the Burke Library), was one of the leaders in the 1920s of a large group of theologians developing a new American Encyclopedia of Christianity. Financial problems stopped the project, but these papers telling the story are newly discovered in the archives.



Academic Commons

By: Brigette C. Kamsler

Did you know that Columbia University offers a research repository? Academic Commons is a **freely accessible** digital collection of research and scholarship produced at [Columbia University](#) or one of its affiliate institutions ([Barnard College](#), [Teachers College](#), [Union Theological Seminary](#), and [Jewish Theological Seminary](#)).

The mission of Academic Commons is to collect and preserve the digital outputs of research and scholarship produced at Columbia and its affiliate institutions and present them to a **global audience**. Works in AC are freely accessible online, regularly backed up, easily discoverable across search engines and given a permanent URL so they can always be located (and shared!).

Why should you deposit your research in AC? Some reasons:

1. I have a chapter in a book that is prohibitively expensive. Very few people will be able to buy the book, so no one will read my chapter.
2. People in other countries can't read my articles or books because they (or their libraries) can't afford to buy them.
3. My article won't be published for another year/6 months/1 week, but I want it to be read NOW.
4. Because you can.

Please note that copyright restrictions may limit what you can contribute.

Types of Material to include: articles, blog posts, dissertations, theses, and fictional works. Not only will you make these materials available to a global audience, you will also receive monthly usage statistics.

If you are interested, please talk with any of the Burke Library staff!

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Burke Library Awarded \$190,000 from Henry Luce Foundation



The Burke Library was recently awarded \$190,000 from the Henry Luce Foundation to continue our work processing archival collections, this time focusing on the Union Theological Seminary papers. The work will to be carried out by our prolific project archivist, Brigette C. Kamsler.

The Union Theological Seminary (UTS) papers contain approximately 141 collections (1,135 linear feet) of materials from faculty members, students, and others associated with UTS. The archive includes primary source materials from many sub-disciplines within theological studies, including biblical and historical studies, practical theology, and systematic theology. The chronological and geographical scope of the archive is quite broad. Some materials in the archive date to a period prior to the founding of UTS in 1836, and the archive continues to grow via donations from alumni/ae and retiring faculty members.

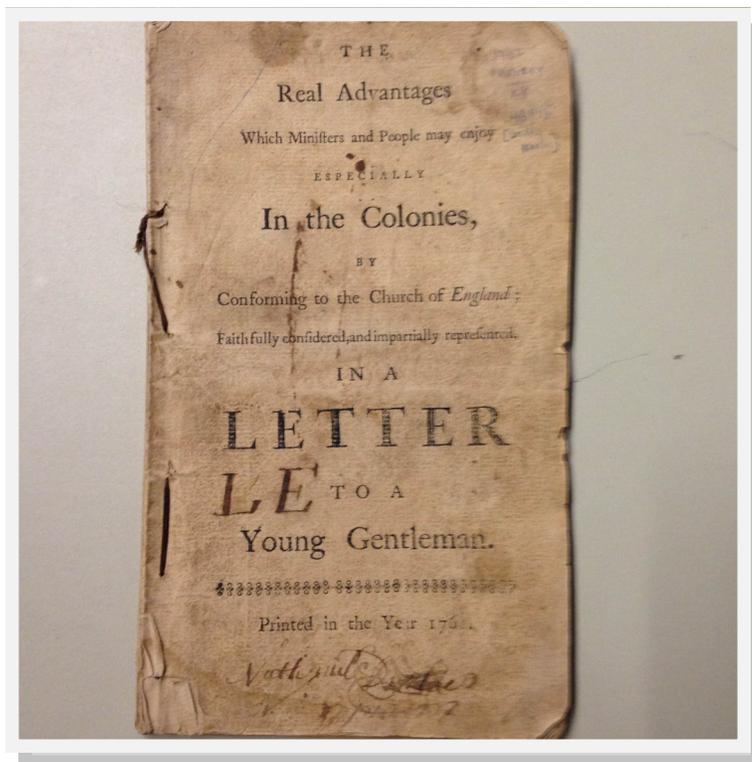
“The Luce Foundation is pleased to provide support for the processing of the Union Theological Seminary archive, a testament to Union’s distinctive place within the history and development of theological and religious studies,” said Jonathan VanAntwerpen, Program Director for Theology at the Henry Luce Foundation.

The Henry Luce Foundation is dedicated to encouraging the development of religious leaders through theological education, and fostering scholarship that links the academy to religious communities and other audiences. In 2011, a three-year \$295,000 grant was awarded to the Burke Library for the processing of the Missionary Research Library Archives and the William Adams Brown Ecumenical Archives.

Since beginning the project in January 2015, 16 collections totaling over 150 linear feet have been processed and made available to researchers. Keep checking the Burke Library Archives website for updated finding aids!

Recent Acquisitions

By: Matthew Baker



Welles, Noah. *The real advantages which ministers and people may enjoy, especially in the colonies, by conforming to the Church of England: faithfully considered and impartially represented in a letter to a young gentleman.* [New York: s.n.]: printed in the year 1762.

<http://clio.columbia.edu/catalog/11165051>

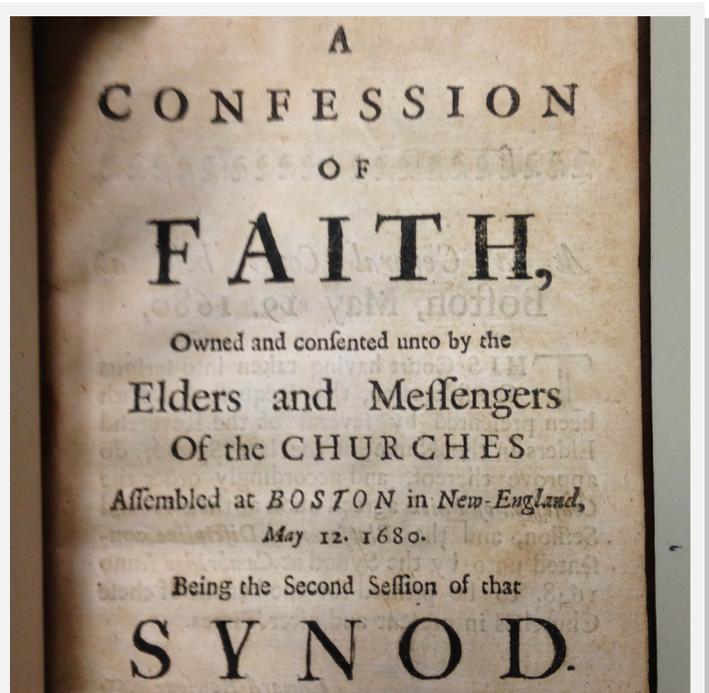
A pamphlet by a prominent New England Puritan satirizing the Church of England.

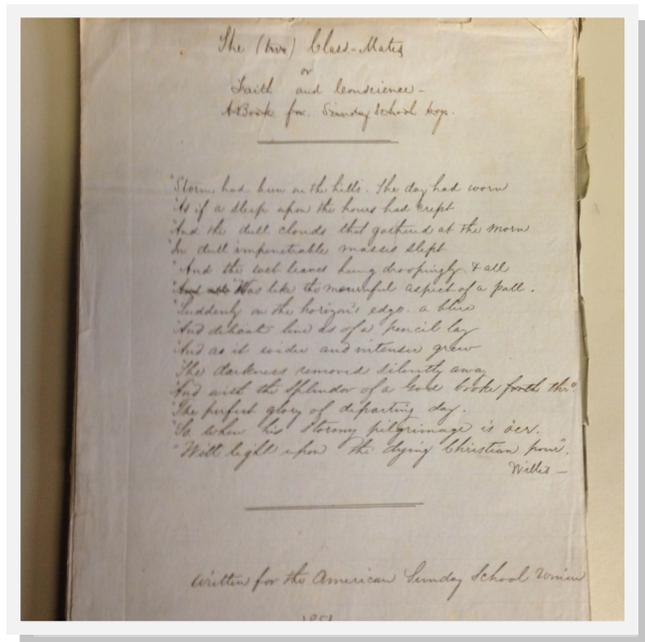
A confession of faith, owned and consented unto by the elders and messengers of the churches assembled at Boston in New-England, May 12, 1680. Being the second session of that synod.

Boston, printed for B. Eliot and D. Henchman, 1725.

<http://clio.columbia.edu/catalog/11164989>

An important pamphlet in the history of England Congregationalism, adding to the Burke's strong Americana holdings.





Letters and papers of Francis Eugene Butler (1825-1863)

<http://clio.columbia.edu/catalog/11164972>

Manuscript and copybooks of letters from the founder of New York Y.M.C.A. that help document religious life in the city in the nineteenth century.

COMING VERY SOON:

Patrologia Orientalis online

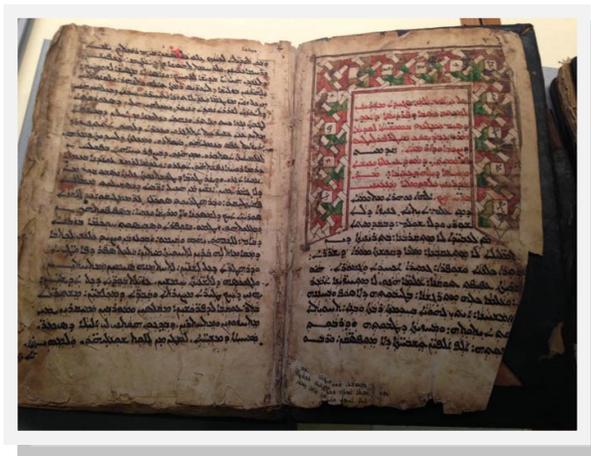
Electronic version of a landmark collection of the works of eastern Church Fathers, with texts in Arabic, Armenian, Coptic, Ethiopian, Greek, Georgian, Slavonic, and Syriac.

Cataloging Our Syriac Manuscripts By: Elizabeth Miraglia

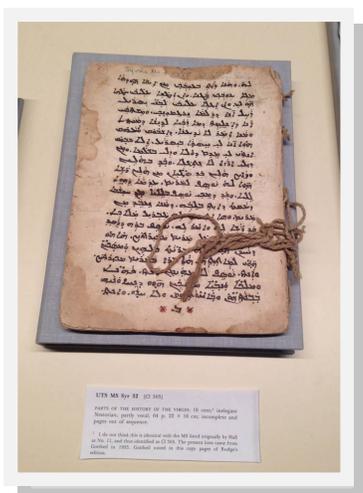
(adapted from the Burke Blog: <https://blogs.cul.columbia.edu/burke/2015/01/23/cataloging-our-syriac-manuscripts/>)

I took one class on Syriac while I was a student at Union and I was immediately in love. It combined the structure of a Semitic language with seriously fascinating theology and had the added bonus of being relatively obscure. If there's anything I love it's languages few people have any use for.

Imagine my delight when I started working at Burke and realized we had a collection of Syriac manuscripts that were uncatalogued. That was almost 4 years ago. Now, thanks to a supportive director, enthusiastic co-workers (both at Burke and Butler), and my need for a final project at library school, we're finally able to start working on them.



About the collection: Burke has 48 manuscripts, ranging from single page fragments to a large, red leather-bound volume with hundreds of pages. Most of them were acquired in the late 19th century, many specifically produced for Union. Writings like these were most often acquired from monasteries, since early religious texts were almost always produced by monastic scribes. Monasteries were generally unwilling to sell their own originals, but collectors could purchase copies. There are a number of print catalogs describing these manuscripts, most notably Goshen-Gottstein's [Syriac Manuscripts in the Harvard College Library](#), in which Union's items are included as an appendix. Most of the manuscripts come from Urmia, Iran, which is evidenced in the heavy use of eastern scripts. There are also a few manuscripts written on what almost looks like loose-leaf paper. At first glance these look like they might not be of much interest, but in fact a few of them may be among the only extant versions of the originals from which they were copied.

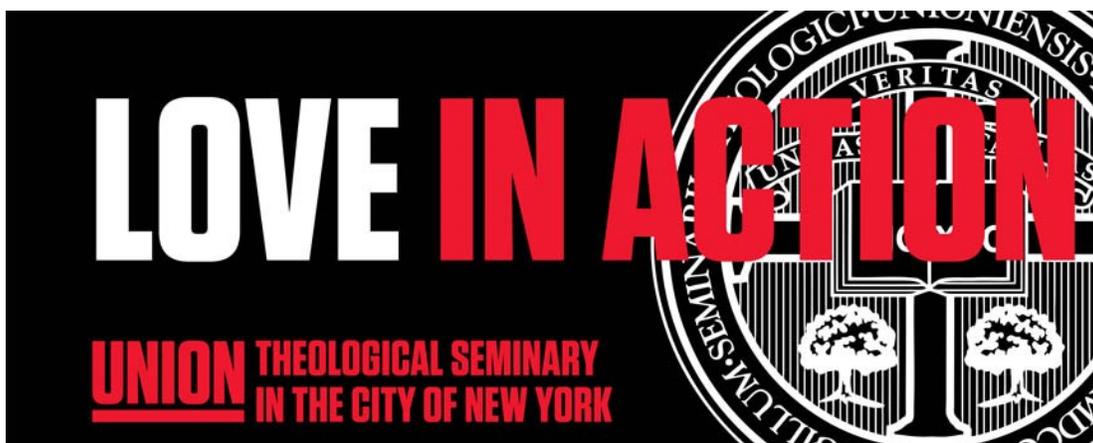


About the project: The goal is to make these items findable for researchers who are interested, but do not have access to or are unaware of the print catalogs. Each of the 48 manuscripts will have its own record in [CLIO](#) with the most complete description possible. As far as any of us can tell, this project will be the first time a Western library has cataloged materials using Syriac characters. In the past most titles were either created in English or transliterated. Other descriptive elements will be in English, including subject headings so the items will be findable by anyone. In addition, we will likely include a transliterated title to add another way to locate the materials. The ability to let items speak for themselves is perhaps more important than ever in an age where self-identification is what people have come to expect. It is also easier than ever given the (relative) flexibility of newer cataloging tools.

The project is slated to be completed by the end of Spring 2015 (assuming I want to graduate, and I do). In the meantime, enjoy the pictures and check out the print catalogs!

#LoveInAction

By: Elizabeth Call



For the academic year 2015/2015 the Student Senate of the Union Theological Seminary adopted a theme, #LoveInAction. Inspired by Cornel West's words, "Never forget that justice is what love looks like in public," #LoveInAction embodies perfectly the activist spirit held by the students, alumni/ae, and faculty here at Union, both today and historically.

Elizabeth Call, Public Services Librarian, has been working closely with students in order to enrich and complement their activist experiences and find their voice within Union's rich history. This multifaceted project consists of a series of student-curated display cases (3 rotations throughout the year starting May 2015 and ending April 2016); a small digital exhibit of all items that will be on display; and a website that encourages all Union students, faculty, staff, and alumni/ae to submit materials that document Union's activist spirit.

The [#LoveInAction](#) site is complete and live!

On March 24th there was a "Contribute-a-thon" to advertise the site's creation and to promote contributions. Continual efforts will be made to spread the word and to get as many contributions as possible.

We are planning events that will occur in conjunction with the openings of the three small physical displays in the Burke Library, each with a theme that focuses on the history of activism at Union. The first display will be on view starting the last week in April/first week in May just before commencement; the second will be on view starting October 8th to correspond with Union Days; and the third will be on view starting December 8th to mark the anniversary of The Hub, Union's activism headquarters.

Comments/Questions

Have a comment/question/concern on this or future newsletters?

Would you like to receive this digitally (and in **full color!**)?

Please contact Elizabeth Call by phone or email:

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(212) 851-5609



Burke Library News

Winter/Spring 2015

Burke Library at Union Theological Seminary

Columbia University Libraries

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