

TOOLS FOR OLD TESTAMENT STUDIES
FOR USE IN HONG KONG AND NEIGHBOURING AREAS

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A PROJECT

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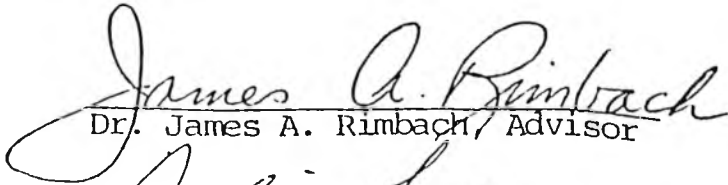
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INTRODUCTION

I. This project aims to compile a bibliography on Old Testament Studies for use in Hong Kong and neighbouring areas.

II. Background -

Hong Kong, a Centre of Theological Education

According to a statistical survey published by the Hong Kong Christian Coordination Centre of World Evangelism in August, 1986 ⁽¹⁾, there are 19 bible colleges and theological seminaries in Hong Kong sponsored by over 10 religious denominations or groups of denominations. These institutes had a total enrolment of about 760 full-time and 400 part-time students in 1986; there were also a large number of laymen attending the extension courses run by some of these institutions. These local seminaries offer various courses leading to Diplomas, B.Th., B.R.E., M.R.E., M.Th., or even Th. D. degrees. Hong Kong which stands on the main trade route of South East Asia, has now become one of the important centres for theological education in the area.

Among these 19 bible institutes, there are two whose libraries can be ranked as among the best equipped and well stocked ones in South East Asia. A few of our libraries are of medium sized. The rest have limited library facilities due to lack of financial resources and space. Mutual sharing of library resources among the bible institutes at present stage is

generally considered to be impracticable. Other ways to improve facilities are being explored. One of the suggestions is the provision of an up-to-date bibliography which might perhaps stimulate an awareness of the present inadequacy of library facilities in the less well equipped bible institutes.

As Professor T.G. Hommes points out, "The quality of theological education depends to a significant extent on its libraries. Efforts of strengthening the libraries within South East Asia have always been one of the priorities of the Association of Theological Education in South East Asia and its Graduate School." (2)

Seminary libraries are important as its reading materials are the lifeline of Christianity. The basic function in a seminary library is to support its faculty and students, thus enabling the enterprise of Christian scholarship to go forward without hindrance. The second function of a seminary library should provide up-to-date information to help its students maximising utilisation of its materials.

There is a need to bring to the attention of our theological students the existence of some very helpful Old Testament bibliographies, such as those written by B.S. Child (Old Testament Books for Pastors and Teachers. Westminster. 1977), D. Stuart (Old Testament Exegesis. Westminster. 1980) and others. Many new titles have appeared between 1977 to 1988. In view of the fact that the number of books published or reprinted during the past 40 years has been unusually large, we

deem that the compilation of a comprehensive list of Old Testament reference materials for the use of theological students is necessary.

III. Importance of Old Testament Studies

Scripture has always served a primary source for theological thinking and doing. Within the Asian context, a great deal has been done theologically with the Exodus event, many of the prophetic writings, especially those concerning social justice. Recently, the Book of Psalms has also been used as a source for theological construction. Many stories in Old Testament provide inspiration for working out an indigenous theology in S.E. Asia. The history of Hebrew people is a typical story of oppressed people. The message of the prophets provided people with vision and strength. Christians in Asia will definitely benefit much from reading the Old Testament texts in our efforts to build up a indigenous theology.

THE AIMS of this project are:

- (1) To make known to fellow students in the less well equipped seminaries in Hong Kong the rich reading materials presently available in our local leading seminaries.
- (2) To supplement and up-date existing local bibliographies.
- (3) To give a comprehensive view of the whole field of Old Testament studies except the more remote areas of investigation.
- (4) To help student realize that they have consulted reliable resources.
- (5) To encourage theological students to set up their personal

O.T. library.

- (6) To encourage theological seminaries with limited resources to plan building up a working O.T. library.

METHOD OF PRESENTATION:

- (1) The selection are of high academic standard and are guided by standard bibliographies and recent publications and aim to reflect current international biblical scholarship. Classic work, though outdated, are also included for reference.

- (2) Short introductions giving brief background knowledge and trends of recent development on selected disciplines of the Old Testament studies are given in order to widen our view of theological education materials.

- (3) The bulk of selected materials will be presented in 4 sections:

Section 1 gives a brief introduction to various disciplines of Old Testament studies.

Appended to it are lists of reference books suggested for library acquisition and students' personal reference.

Section 2 deals with primary working tools.

Section 3 shows list of bible commentaries.

Section 4 introduces tools in the Chinese language.

Note 1: Thomas Wong (Editor-in-chief).

Diaspora Chinese Church:

Volume 2: Hong Kong and Macau.

pp.54-59

Volume 6: Chinese Theological Seminaries and
Para-Church Organisations. pp.48-59

Hong Kong: Logos Book House. 1986.

Note 2: Tjaard G. Hommes.

"The 1986 Indonesian Theological Librarians' Seminar."

East Asia Journal of Theology.

Vol.4 No.2 October, 1986.