

LIBRARY CO-OPERATION IN AUCKLAND

Judith Bright

A number of the theological libraries in Auckland are working towards a joint collection development policy, driven by the necessity to support recently introduced post-graduate courses in theology. All are libraries belonging to the Auckland Consortium of Theological Education (ACTE) which is a consortium of theological colleges linked to Auckland University. The Colleges are Carey Baptist College, the Catholic Institute of Theology, Mount St Mary's College, St John's Theological College and Trinity Methodist College. Courses are taught at all College sites. Students have access to teaching and library facilities at all colleges, and although the colleges are situated in various parts of Auckland, many take advantage of being able to use more than one library. The last few years have seen the introduction of post-graduate degrees to the Consortium, and consequent to that, a need for library materials to resource such study.

Although the four libraries have collections which vary from 10,000 volumes to 60,000 volumes, the majority of resources have been developed only to support certificate, diploma, and more recently undergraduate degree level study. The fairly rapid move to post graduate teaching has necessitated a re-evaluation of existing resources and future directions.

One of the Librarians, while on study leave in 1993, had evaluated models of library co-operation in North America and this information was presented in a report to a meeting of the Librarians and the Heads of the Colleges within the Consortium, and from which an agreement to co-operate on the development of better library resources was made. The meeting looked at various models of co-operation development, acknowledging that no one College had the financial resources to support collection development in all areas. A decision was made to follow a model of a dispersed collection of resources with each college taking responsibility for developing their collection in specified areas.

The Librarians met on a regular basis to determine a plan of action, to enable such development to take place. After many meetings it was agreed that some form of evaluation of existing collections needed to take place before any decisions could be made about future developments. Obvious areas of specialisation such as denominational collections were excluded from this evaluation at this stage. We were keen to use the Conspectus method of collection evaluation, but acknowledged that we did not have the time or resources to do this immediately. We are now involved in a project to assess our collections using forms similar to those used for Conspectus, but asking our subject specialists to evaluate according to the given criteria, rather than checking individual items against bibliographies. Once this evaluation is completed, the information gained, together with discussion with our faculty members will allow us to come to an agreement about areas of specialisation. It is hoped that this will in time enable a collection to be built which will support studies at both Masters and PhD levels in a range of subject areas.

Other areas in which the ACTE libraries co-operate include the purchase of CD Rom databases, the sharing of a single library card; mutual follow up on outstanding loans where necessary, and to some extent, periodical subscriptions. An information pamphlet has been produced, which gives a brief introduction to each library and the services that it offers. These will be distributed to students at the beginning of a semester.

The Consortium has a Post-Graduate Studies Committee which is responsible for approving all courses of study for masters and PhD. The Librarians have one representative on this committee, which enables us to raise any concerns about resources for a particular course of study.

In the future we hope to have access to one another's library catalogues, either on line or by other means, and also a means of rapid book delivery from one site to another.

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