

## President's Report 1996/1997

Wendy J Davis

It was in the midst of grief that I took office in October 1996, the death of our esteemed and much loved founding President, Trevor Zweck, still fresh in our minds. Trevor's knowledge and wisdom is sorely missed and I still find myself wondering sometimes what he would do in a given situation and wishing that I could ask his advice.

However, life goes on and so does the work of the Association. Notice of a change to the constitution to include the office of Vice President was one of the Association's first actions for this year. The Association at its 1996 AGM also accepted Tony McCumstie's proposal concerning the publication of the third edition of AULOTS. ANZTLA agreed to provide funds as necessary. It is extremely pleasing to be able to report the successful completion of this project. AULOTS 3 is currently being published and more than \$800 in orders has already been received.

Thanks must go to Tony and his team, and to Corpus Christi College for its generous support of this project. The need for an updated edition of AULOTS was seen as urgent. Now that this has been achieved, it is time to consider the future of AULOTS as an ongoing project of the Association. There is an obvious need for such a publication, however its future needs to be looked at in light of changes in the Australian library scene, particularly the redevelopment of ABN and the impact of technology. The future of ANZTLA's other major publication, ARI, also needs to be monitored.

ANZTLA has proved over time, that it is an effective vehicle for bringing together specialist libraries in the field of theology in Australia and New Zealand. It is our voice. Jocelyn Morris and the New South Wales chapter took the opportunity to make our voice heard at the recent Gardini inquiry into library co-ordination and representation. The review was sponsored by the Australian Council of Library and Information Services (ACLIS), the Australian Library and Information Association (ALIA) in conjunction with the National Library of Australia to consider "the needs of the Australian library industry and profession to determine its needs for leadership, representation and co-ordination into the 21st century"<sup>1</sup>

Their submission covered a number of issues pertaining to the national scene and concludes that librarians involved in ANZTLA are grappling with many of the same issues which challenge other sectors of the library industry. Therefore it is important that groups such as ANZTLA are involved in decision-making about the future of the profession.<sup>2</sup> The results of the review favour the amalgamation of ACLIS and ALIA to form one peak body representing the Library and Information industry with provision for consultation with such associations as ANZTLA. Further information is available in *Incite*, June 1997.

Now that these projects are complete, I would like to suggest three areas for future consideration. There have been many changes in theological libraries in the past few years. Are these changes for the advancement of theological libraries and librarianship, or are they merely expedient?

It is time for us to dust off the ANZTLA standards and have another look at them. By and large they

<sup>1</sup> *Incite*, February 1997

<sup>2</sup> R Barry et al, *Strategic Review of Library Co-operation & Representation Submission*, p 6

are as pertinent now as they were in 1988, however technology has had, and will continue to have a huge effect on the delivery of library and information services. Our standards, like our collection development policies, should be changing and evolving to reflect the changing environment and our commitment to continuous improvement. This may be an appropriate time to reconsider this cornerstone of our Association.

In considering the future, let us not forget the past. Should ANZTLA have an archive so that the documents of the past twelve years that detail clearly the growth and development of the Association are not lost?

Finally, the relationships with ATLA and the International Council of Theological Library Associations that Trevor Zweck began should be nurtured so that ANZTLA can contribute to interlibrary co-operation on an international scale. Technology is shrinking the world so that in the very near future international co-operation will become as important as co-operation within Australia and New Zealand.

Although this year has been a particularly busy year on a personal level, I have enjoyed my work as President and wish the Association and the incoming President all the best for 1997-98.



## Brisbane Conference Keynote Address

### *A brief comment*

Some of the immediate responses to Paul Inglis' presentation, *Theological education for the future church and the future world* suggested that the theme was of doubtful relevance to ourselves as librarians.

While the vocabulary and concepts of futures research may seem too 'big' and the thrust of theological education not really something we can stick our noses into, I feel that we too need the foresight and imagination that Paul recommends. Theological education is the *raison d'être* of most of our group and as such something about which we must surely care.

Paul encouraged us to take hold of a positive vision of the future and as librarians to be proactive, to be open to change, not merely reactive - or even worse, reactionary.

In 1991 at a joint ANZATS/ANZTLA session, Lawrence McIntosh touched on a similar theme in terms of our professionalism. He observed that some librarians are active, some reactive and some hardly active at all. He challenged us to move from the custodial, servant role to embrace a sound professional mode - one in which our education, experience and expertise could be influential and beneficial to our institutions. I encourage you to reflect on the issues raised by this paper.

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