

# ***New Projects for the Australian and New Zealand Theological Library Association***

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## **1. Electronic serials.**

The issue of electronic versus hard copy journals has become very real. There is a perceived need to control and regularise the sprawling expansion of this periodical medium. There is the problem of accessibility; not all libraries can achieve access satisfactorily on their own. There is the problem of monitoring pre-existing electronic journals and keeping up with new ones that go online. Questions of subscription costs are further complicated by the available lifetime of the serials; a lapse in payments can mean the journal is suddenly not available.

One project could be a consortium or consortiums of libraries sharing databases. Anne Morris-Bannerman made the original suggestion for such a project.(i) How would it work? Member libraries would need to agree to an equal sharing of responsibility. We would need to be equal partners in decision-making about which subscriptions to take out and how costs are affrayed, always with an understanding of common agreement. The means for access to the electronic serials would have to be guaranteed for all, and would include considerations of downloading and printing. A union list of serials would have to be regularly updated and be accessible to all member libraries, if not for all libraries within ANZTLA. Such a project could save wasteful duplication of subscriptions to costly serials. Libraries with such subscriptions could rationalise which titles they kept and make them available to all other participating libraries.

This raises the question of whether the project should be for all ANZTLA members or only those who are subscribing members of the project. If ANZTLA covers the costs then the answer is simple, but can ANZTLA do so and does it want to? If not, then the rights of those who pay for the service comes into play. Another option is to create a confederation of libraries willing to give access to electronic journals at any one library site to all ANZTLA members.

Disadvantages to these plans include the following. The unpredictability of cyberspace is not helpful for libraries that require the information now rather than when the site is again active or when the searcher can get through to the site via the means available. We know from experience that not all the information in the printed journal necessarily appears in the electronic form. Are there extra costs involved in downloading or using the material that do not occur with the hard copy format? The whole question of costs includes the fluctuating and expensive subscription rates, often unpredictable. Who will manage the whole project and how will it be structured?

**2. A list of new theses in religion and theology published in Australia and New Zealand.** The need for thesis lists in special subject areas has become apparent in the last year. The Anglican General Synod Office published last year a bibliography of post-graduate theses concerning the Anglican Church of Australia.(ii) This bibliography was created to meet a need of the Synod. Then Diane Bertelsmeier produced a similar bibliography of theses about the Uniting Church within the Camden Theological Library, North Parramatta,(iii) again to meet a need within that institution. This

second list has inspired a plan, already underway, to compile a list of all theses on the Uniting Church in Australia. Diane Bertelsmeier and Philip Harvey are collecting thesis citations from theological, university and other libraries as well as repositories like archives. The period covered is from 1970, though earlier theses will be considered. Post-graduate work is the prime concern, but again if there is graduate work on the Uniting Church that is special, unique or has some historical significance then the editors will consider its inclusion.

A consolidated list of all theses in religion and theology is a project akin, in magnitude and time spent, to the Australasian Religion Index (ARI). Could this be like the UMI (i.e. University Microfilms International) lists? Or, if that is too broad a subject range, could we be thinking of a thesis list in a special subject area, e.g. church history in Australia and New Zealand? Such a list would not require the fine analysis required in producing ARI nor would there be as much information to handle. It might not even be necessary to arrange by subject, certainly anyway not necessary to be assigning sophisticated subject headings. It could be a straight bibliography arranged in broad subject categories.

Questions arise, whatever we choose. What detail would we want to include? How would the information be collected and in what time period? Who would do the editing and how would it be published and distributed? An annual collection would be more realistic, rather than two times per year as is the case with ARI. Could it be maintained on the ANZTLA homepage and printed out at the end of each year or half-yearly? Subscribers would simply pay for the costs of printing and postage. Is it a list of theses only from within the recognised examining bodies of theology, or would we want to be true to the scope of the list and search out titles from the wider academic world?

The advantages of such lists include ready access to work being done in all subject areas of theology and religion; documentation of original thesis work often not available on catalogues or available only in a limited way; and, useful coverage of theses in particular collections. Disadvantages include the enormous amount of time and energy for librarians with large workloads, who are then asked to produce 'Son of ARI' or 'ARI: The Sequel'; the inevitable gaps in such a list that make it, of itself, less than comprehensive; and, the difficulties of updating.

3. A shared catalogue of books, i.e. a **union card catalogue**. This would be useful, especially for those libraries not on Kinetica.(iv) In the current electronic environment it is no longer common to hear librarians express the need for a union catalogue for sharing resources. Unless the union catalogue has a very definite purpose - say, a shared subject base or a solution to locality problems - union card catalogues are regarded as cumbersome and not viable. The generation of cards itself is no longer a regular feature in most libraries. Libraries that wanted a union card catalogue would need to have a shared vision, a joint purpose, and would need to agree on the production of cards to everyone's mutual satisfaction. On this last point anyway, the library world is decreasingly able to create such union catalogues given their changing environments built around computer networks and databases. There are other ways of cultivating shared information in such a way as to imitate the union catalogue, the most obvious being the Internet. Library catalogues on the Net can be accessed via search engines or websites, which leads in nicely to the next project.

4. The **ANZTLA website** has been talked about informally for some years, but the time has arrived when it is now very high on the action list. The facility of a website to make accessible large files of information makes it irresistible as a means for ANZTLA members to search for the latest. The democratic nature of the Internet makes such a site very useful for non-members of ANZTLA as well.

Putting aside for the moment questions about mounting the website - how, who, where and what - let's consider some projects that a website could readily solve.

1) A list of links to library catalogues. Those of us with regular access to the Internet collect library

sites, including those of ANZTLA members, when and as we need them. An updated list of such links to our libraries and, by extension, their catalogues would be time-saving and of great practical interest and use. We could be searching for holdings, cataloguing detail, classification information, as well as general detail about the relevant library. Such a page of hypertext links could contain background information about each library for the uninitiated, e.g. address, denomination, collection strengths. Essential search strategies, especially for catalogues, would be stated clearly on the page. Such a page would be of especial help to those users who do not have access to Kinetica. Such a page would help those requesting a union catalogue. As we know from experience, availability of the catalogue in this way speeds up the inter-library loan process. As with all such information of the Internet, the main disadvantage is updating the site.

- 2) Where links may change name overnight it can be frustrating to wait weeks or months while the new link is set on the website. This touches also on the vital question of who maintains the website and with what regularity.
- 3) Likewise, links to journals and lists of journals on the Internet could be loaded. We are aware of the pitfalls in this area: limited accessibility, reliability, passwords. A united plan would have to be devised by ANZTLA if this link system was to work. Other advantages and disadvantages have been covered in the first proposal.
- 4) Updated list of *Australasian Religion Index* descriptors for indexers' consultation. Helen Greenwood has compiled a list of all descriptors used in ARI from Volume One. This list contains many aberrations and curiosities in amongst the authoritative descriptors and will need to be thoroughly edited before being made available to indexers. Its value to ARI indexers is enormous, not only detailing what is acceptable in ARI but also the style in which they are presented. The list, entitled 'The ARI Thesaurus', is only available at present in hard copy; its availability online would be an ideal solution. An online ARI Thesaurus could be updated every time a new issue, semi-annual or cumulative, is published and would save on the endless printouts of updates.
- 5) Features that keep the site updated on a regular basis, e.g. ANZTLA news bulletins. ANZTLA-forum is the most immediate form of relaying the latest news and information to members of ANZTLA. The editor of the website could collect any relevant updates from this or other sources and include them here. New and emerging resources could be announced, with relevant links. There is even the question of loading the ANZTLA newsletter onto the site, though the website could never be a replacement for the Newsletter.
- 6) Websites serve as archives for organisations and this could be a utility of the ANZTLA site also. Articles on ANZTLA, more extended historical pieces, important documents that need to be referred to quickly, e.g. the Constitution - these can be listed and left on permanent access. One danger is loading too much extra information in this case; a policy that is broad and inclusive would need to be set out to avoid including pieces extraneous to the central purpose of an ANZTLA website.

Other features of the website will occur as a matter of need. Any such needs should be aired; all requests are welcome and will be considered on their merits. The first task of the website is to advertise the Association and its many activities. How much or little of this information is relevant on the website could also be open to discussion. Beyond that, as is our experience on the web, the extent of any one site is anyone's business.

5. A special project that has been discussed in New Zealand is a **bibliography of religion in New Zealand**. Religion is defined very broadly and the bibliography can include anything, even works like parish histories. The actual subject scope would have to be defined, also the style and level of the citations. The bibliography would not be limited to works written by New Zealanders, but

should include works by New Zealanders who live and work overseas (e.g. Ian Breward) as well as overseas authors who write specifically on the subject. There are works on Maori religion, for example, that fall into this last category.

The means of reporting and tabulating this material is a major consideration. This would be a much more focussed and easily accessible work than the currently unwieldy access via Te Puna, the New Zealand national database. Te Puna is regarded by many as too broad and hard to search. At one stage the planned process was, when the theological cataloguer added records a screen dump would be made of those records which was then sent to a central data entry agent. So far the mechanics of this operation have defeated those experimenting with it. Filling in online forms is seen as one solution, but there would still have to be someone to maintain the background database. The requirement would be for a simple database structure, e.g. Microsoft Access, or a bibliographical citation data program, e.g. Endnote. Te Puna was never involved in the original concept.

Neil Darragh and Rita & John England have been working as well in this area, so the Association would need to determine if this project was not a duplication of their own work. Currently Darragh and the Englands are working on a bibliography of contextual theology in Asia, a work in which Australia and New Zealand are represented. Peter Lineham produces 'Religious History of New Zealand,'(v) but that is specifically a church history bibliography. In discussion with Helen Greenwood, Peter Lineham said that any New Zealand religion bibliography like the one proposed would be complementary to what he is doing and not in competition.

The bibliography, for that is in effect the result, could simply be a printed list. This list could be published annually, perhaps as an annual supplement to the ANZTLA Newsletter, e.g. Material added in 2000. One original listing was published in the ANZTLA Newsletter, no. 33 running for ten pages.(vi) The project itself, however, has not gone any further.

6. 'Classification of the Library of Union Theological Seminary in the City of New York', commonly known as the Pettee System after its editor Julia Pettee, has had systematic updating at the local Australian level ever since the most recent edition in 1967. New classification numbers are discussed at ANZTLA conferences and common agreement is reached over the majority. However, there is a need for all numbers approved at the Australian level to be presented in one list. Also, because of new numbers being added each year, there is a need for updates.

A larger project proposal is to put all of **Pettee on disk**. The editors of such a work could start with the updated schedules according to the directions of the UTS Library at Richmond, Virginia. They could then document all approved Australian decisions. Ideally all of Pettee could be on CD-Rom. Advantages of such a reference tool include access to all the latest numbers for new as well as established subjects; clarification of the Australian standard as distinct from the classification vagaries of particular libraries, including one's own; and, a return to the updated edition practice of Pettee, albeit only at the local level.

Disadvantages are also apparent. The question of the advantage of the book over the CD-Rom for ease of access is a critical one. Searching for numbers is arguably quicker in a book than on the computer, which must be in one place at all times and can be slower to search than simply flipping a few pages. Indexing of the schedules on CD-Rom is problematic: what kind of system do we choose to get the classifier swiftly from index terms to the number or numbers of choice? how would such cross-referencing be implemented? Questions like the distinction of authorities between American and Australian, and the extent and style of layout come into play. In terms of production, we have to ask if the initial outlay is worth the final result, especially if the work is time-consuming

and needs yearly updating.

There is the question of whether such a project is really of advantage to only a section of ANZTLA. More seriously still, there is the conundrum of copyright. It has never been clarified who owns the intellectual property that is the Union Classification and until this is satisfactorily answered the risks of devising a new edition, in effect a revised and enlarged Australian edition, are too great. If negotiation with Dr John Trotti and the classifiers at Richmond becomes necessary we could find ourselves in a protracted discussion involving conflicting allegiances and varying directions.

All of that said, the need exists for a Pettee schedule that has Australian authority. Even a listing of all new numbers approved at ANZTLA conferences by a quorum of users, is a way forward. How such a list could be made, distributed and updated is a live issue.

#### Endnotes

- i. Morris Bannerman, Anne. Email to Philip Harvey, 14 February 2000.
- ii. *A bibliography of post-graduate theses concerning the Anglican Church of Australia, 1945- 1999*. Compiled by Judi Long. Sydney: Anglican General Synod Office, 1999.
- iii. *A list of theses about the Uniting Church*. Compiled by Diane Bertelsmeier. North Parramatta: Camden Theological Library, 1999.
- iv. Cohen, Ilana. Email to Kim Robinson, subsequently reported to Philip Harvey in an email of 23rd February 2000.
- v. Lineham, Peter. *Religious history of New Zealand : a bibliography*. 4th ed. 1999 Found at: <http://www.massey.ac.nz/~wwhpp/Research.htm>
- vi. 'Select bibliography of New Zealand religious and theological materials.' Compiled by Helen Greenwood. *ANZTLA newsletter*, no. 33, December 1997, p. 11-21.

## Chapters Personnel Update

### *New Zealand*

Chairperson/Secretary : Denise James, Bible College of New Zealand

### *Queensland*

Chairperson : Carolyn Willadsen, Pius XII Seminary  
Secretary : Patti Overend, Qld Baptist College of Ministries



### *New South Wales*

Chairperson : Diane Bertelsmeier, Camden Theological Library, Centre for Ministry  
Secretary : Rotating each meeting.  
Contacts : Jo Lloyd, Avondale College  
Irika Sworak, Wesley Institute for Ministry & the Arts

### *Victoria*

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Secretary : Kathy Caddy, Bible College of Victoria

### *South Australia*

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