
"Going It Alone" - Life at the Reformed Theological College Library

Carolyn Wakefield

Set in the outskirts of Geelong, the library at the Reformed Theological College (RTC) provides an attractive and friendly environment for all who choose to make use of our facilities. The library consists of approximately 18,000 titles, as well as a selection of journals and audio-visual material.

Our primary users are the faculty and students of the College and for this reason collection policy relates strongly to their educational needs. With this in mind, the collection offers a broad range of theological material as well as specialising in materials representing the Reformed Faith.



In 2002 two major changes occurred within our library. The first was my own appointment in February, replacing Elizabeth Riddle who had served as the

college librarian for many years.

The second was the introduction of a new library catalogue. We were pleased to change from our previous Oasis catalogue to a new Amlib system in March 2002. This system has allowed us to establish a catalogue which is Internet accessible, and can be found through our website at <http://www.pastornet.net.au/rtc>.

As well as our primary users, we also seek to offer our library resources to the wider Christian community, especially those Christian ministers living in the area. Having an Internet accessible catalogue has increased our ability to attract users from a wider population as well as enabling us to better serve those students accessing the library from a distance.

Working in a one-person library means involvement in every aspect of library management. This variety both challenges and increases the enjoyment of library work. I am increasingly thankful for my work within the theological area of literature.

However, life working at the RTC library is certainly different from anything I had expected as I studied librarianship or experienced previously as I worked in different libraries. Some of the differences I am aware of are

- the users' desire to make great use of the material held by the library and the support they provide;
- the high levels of academic staff support;
- the enthusiasm of voluntary support,
- and most of all I had never imagined I would be cataloguing Dutch books!

Dutch language theology books are a feature of the library.

The denomination of the "Reformed Churches of Australia" (first congregations instituted in 1951) established the Reformed Theological College in 1955, primarily as its ministry training facility. The first ministers of congregations were themselves Dutch migrants. It is not surprising therefore that in the early years of the RTC's existence, a substantial proportion of the library collection was in Dutch. In recent months attention has been given to reviewing the stock of Dutch material and further cataloguing of donated items has been undertaken.

The support within the College itself is the primary way in which the library is able to overcome the issue of isolation. We have a library committee which meets several times a year, and is made up of a faculty member, two representatives...over page

from the student body, and myself. As a group we are able to address the issues which affect staff and students in relation to the library and propose solutions to any problems as well as suggesting new directions we can take.

For example, recently the committee has begun looking at the idea of a library open day to coincide with a possible book launch. We feel that this would create greater community awareness of our

library's resources as well as attracting a larger user base.

All faculty members also take a strong interest in the library and are responsible for making suggestions as to library purchases. This ensures that I have the support I need in my position, and that the resources continue to be relevant to the needs of our users.

Carolyn Wakefield

TUSSOCKS DANCING [CD] **draws people from inside and outside the churches**

Australians and New Zealanders from a wide range of church backgrounds, and none, are responding enthusiastically to a new collection of hymns and songs.

Tussocks Dancing, a CD hymns and songs by the Christchurch poet and composer, Dr Jane Simpson, was released in October last year and is already into its second pressing.

After six years teaching the Christian tradition as a lecturer in Religious Studies at the University of Canterbury, Dr Simpson took up full-time writing in 1999. In Easter 2001 Dr Simpson and her husband, Dr William Ahlers, launched a multi-media hymns website. The idea of putting MP3 sound clips of the hymns on the website led to the recording of a full CD. Dr Simpson formed a chamber choir, *Poema Voices*, for this purpose: they have also appeared on TVNZ's 'Praise Be' hymns programme.

Ministers, teachers, musicians and members of congregations find *Tussocks*

Dancing particularly useful as a resource. The music spans styles ranging from serene *a cappella* singing to highly rhythmic children's songs.

The 32p. booklet includes all the texts and notes. The website has fuller background notes on the sources for each hymn. Both the CD and the sheet music can be ordered through <http://www.godzonehymns.com>, and a number of parishes have bought their own choir set. Parishes without a choir have even played the CD and invited the congregation to join in!

Price of the CD is \$A26 ; \$NZ29.95

Contact details:

Email: jane@godzonehymns.com

Website: <http://www.godzonehymns.com>

Dr Jane Simpson, Godzone Hymns,
5 Taramea Place, Christchurch 8002,
New Zealand

Poema Voices
on the Port Hills,
Christchurch

