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Australian and New Zealand Theological Library Association

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**Fakes, Forgeries and Bishop Strossmayer
by Blan MacDonagh**

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Reference Resources 2006

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The ANZTLA Newsletter is published two times a year to provide a means of communications between members and interested persons.

Contributions are invited of
- relevant articles and items of interest to theological librarianship;
- scholarly articles;
- information on all aspects of librarianship;
- book reviews;
- library profiles; and
- news about libraries and librarians.

Articles should be typed and submitted to the Editor, on disk, or preferably forwarded via e-mail as an attachment.

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Fakes and forgeries: Bishop Strossmayer and the vexed question of infallibility

Blan MacDonagh

Philosophy and literary theory have made us familiar with the term: *hermeneutics of suspicion*. Nothing is to be taken for granted in a text – at least there are no assumptions beyond question. What relevance do such theories hold for us as librarian-cataloguers? Cataloguing conventions are predicated on the assumption that data is verifiable. We assume we know what an *author* is, or a *title*, and how to establish each of these, even if at times *publishers* confuse the issue. Collection management may turn into an exercise in literary detection, but we are sure we can find an answer.

Literary forgeries present us with an interesting predicament. How do we prove that they are forgeries and do our rules tell us how to describe them adequately? Curiously enough, some of the most famous of forgeries have been religious documents. Topping the list of *Top Ten Literary Hoaxes*[1] from the *Guardian Unlimited* several years ago was *The Donation of Constantine*, which bolstered the Papacy's temporal claims for several centuries. The Internet blogger who went on to top the *Guardian*'s Top Ten with a Top Twenty paraphrases: 'In *Lost Christianities*, Bart Ehrman describes four motives for forging literary documents in the ancient world: profit, malice, admiration, or to support one's views.'[2] Without proposing a 'hermeneutics of forgery', I think it fair to suggest that interpretation of a text and the authority conferred on it owe much to the reader's perception of its authorship – never more so than in theology.

Which brings me to the discovery I made in the course of some routine collection maintenance. Reviewing the library's pamphlet collection, I came across a pamphlet entitled *Bishop Strossmayer's speech in the Vatican Council of 1870*, which was unusual enough to arouse my curiosity. Having perused

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1 'Top ten literary hoaxes' Guardian Unlimited, 15 November 2001, viewed 13 April 2007, <http://books.guardian.co.uk/news/articles/0,6109,594060,00.html>
2 Blog: Loren Rosson Blogspot viewed 13 April 2007, < http://lorenrosson.blogspot.com/2005/10/top-20-literary-hoaxes.html>

it, I admit to a tiny niggling of suspicion, which sent me to the Internet and to several encyclopedias. I discovered that Bishop Strossmayer had certainly been at the First Vatican Council and was remembered as both an eloquent and controversial speaker. I also learnt, from both the Internet and the *Catholic Encyclopedia* - the 1907-12 edition on the web[3] was more forthcoming than the recent *New Catholic Encyclopedia*, 2nd ed. (2003) – that a forged speech had been circulated which had a persistent life in print and now was flourishing on the Internet.

So who was Bishop Strossmayer and how did it come about that a forgery was published in his name? Josip Juraj Strossmayer (1815-1905), the Croatian bishop of Djakovo (Bosnia and Syrmia), was prominent amongst the liberal bishops who attended Vatican I. Distinguished both as a religious and political leader, he championed the unity and welfare of Slav peoples within the Hapsburg Empire and was deeply committed to ecumenism, hoping to bring about the reunion of Eastern and Western Churches. His passionate support for Arts and Sciences led to the re-establishment of the University of Zagreb and he undertook vast building projects, including schools, academies, seminaries, libraries and the beautiful cathedral of Djakovo (significantly named St Peter's). At the same time he had 'ideas on the mission of the Church, the reformation of the Church's central government, the reorganisation of Europe, the liberation of Southeast Europe from the Turks'[4] – his involvements at a national and international level brought him friends and supporters such as British Prime Minister W. E. Gladstone.

Bishop Strossmayer was a leading opponent of the definition of papal

infallibility at Vatican I. He was deeply disappointed by the failure of the Council (called to deal with the problems of the times) to address many issues which he regarded as important, including the freedom of nations and individuals, the freedom of the Church in the world and religious tolerance. His liberal and democratic tendencies brought him into conflict with the increasingly reactionary views of Pope Pius IX and the majority bishops who supported him. Pio Nono, initially moderate in his sympathies, found himself at odds with the *Risorgimento* which aimed to unify Italy. In the wake of the loss of all the Papal States (including the capture of Rome in 1870) he progressively centralized authority in the Church. He came to see liberalism as the source of antireligious feeling and turned against contemporary intellectual movements. Thus, though he strengthened the Church within, he cut it off from modern scientific thinking.

The really divisive issue amongst the bishops of Vatican I was the definition of the primacy and infallibility of the Pope. A ruling was made that a majority vote would decide all debates. Strossmayer was dismayed and spoke against this. His opposition to absolutism in the Church and his defence of consensus and 'moral unanimity' in the Council caused him to make procedural protests and to contemplate walking out of the Council. He was among the bishops who did not remain at the Council on 18 July 1870 to vote on the constitution *Pastor aeternus*, affirming infallibility.

The principal source for the proceedings of the ecumenical Councils is *Sacrorum conciliorum nova et amplissima collectio*, familiarly known as Mansi (after one of the editors, G.D. Mansi). The best history in English is Cuthbert Butler's account based on the letters of Bishop Ullathorne, published in a second edition as *The*

3 'Joseph Georg Strossmayer' *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, Vol. XIV, New York: Appleton, 1912, viewed 13 April 2007, < http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/14316a.htm>
4 Sivric, Ivo. *Bishop J. G. Strossmayer: new light on Vatican I*. Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1975, 7.

Vatican Council 1869-1870.[5] Hans Kung, in his critical examination of infallibility, *Infallible?: an inquiry,* cites Mansi as the source for his discussion of Bishop Strossmayer's controversial speech[6] which broke up the Council on March 22 1870. Butler notes that this was the 'single real scene of the Vatican Council'.[7] Papal infallibility was not the issue here. Strossmayer spoke against the part of the prepared document *On the Catholic faith* which ascribed to Protestantism the

discussion.[8]

Back to the pamphlet in our collection entitled *Bishop Strossmayer's speech in the Vatican Council of 1870,* described on the cover as *From an Italian version published at Florence. Reprinted from 'The Bible treasury' No. 195 August 1872.* A quotation may give the flavour of this pamphlet, whose contents are easily found on the Internet: 'the church has never been more beautiful, more pure, or

errors of the day such as rationalism, pantheism, materialism, and atheism. He maintained that these *errors* had existed before Protestantism and he defended the integrity and the faith of many Protestants who had opposed them, as well as speaking with admiration of the work of some Protestant writers. Butler comments that Strossmayer's protest bore fruit and the final version of the document was greatly toned down as a result of the

more holy, than in the days when there was no pope'[9]. Sivric identifies this as the forged speech repudiated by Strossmayer which appeared also in Germany, England (in the *Guardian* of June 28, 1871), South America, the United States and even in Croatia. The Bishop wrote in a pastoral letter,

> Several years ago an abominable speech, under my name, circulated almost over the whole world which (speech), by its form and contents is so strange to me, as is that place (Buenos Aires) where a fallen

5 Butler, Cuthbert. *The Vatican Council 1869-1870: based on Bishop Ullathorne's letters,* ed. Christopher Butler. London: Fontana, 1962.
6 Kung, Hans. *Infallible?: an inquiry.* New York: Doubleday, 1983, 160-161.
7 Butler, op. cit., 238.

8 Ibid, 240.
9 'Bishop Strossmayer's speech in the Vatican Council of 1870' Mission to Catholics International Inc., viewed 13 April 2007 < http://www.mtc.org/bishop_s.html>

away priest penitently admitted that he had forged that speech, offering me satisfaction through his confessor... the speech caused not a small anguish to quite a few Catholics. (MANSI 53, 999).[10]

This speech, (purporting to be Strossmayer's fifth oration of June 2) challenges the scriptural and historical bases for papal primacy and infallibilty. Butler asserts that the printed Acts make clear that no such speech was made at the Council by any bishop.[11] As it is readily searchable, I will not detail the content. Sivric identifies it by the five points in which the author summarizes his argument. It has been thought (the *Catholic Encyclopedia* entry on Strossmmayer claims as much) that the author of the forged speech was Dr Jose Augustin de Escudero, a Mexican former Augustinian monk. A copy of a magazine in which he declared himself the forger, together with a letter from his confessor were reputedly sent to the Bishop. According to the letter Escudero accepted Protestantism but later returned to the Catholic Church and married. An interesting note is to be found on another (admittedly less than authoritative) web site:

Update 8 April 2007. I have been kindly informed by George Medina that Escudero, whom Fr. Pedro Stollenwerk declared to be the author of the speech, was not responsible for the forgery. Escudero was in fact a noted Mexican politician, not a priest. Either way the fact remains that Strossmayer himself denies having made the speech. Fr. Stollenwerk appears to have been in error as to the identity of the forger.[12]

Bishop Strossmayer was several times compelled by Church authorities to repudiate the speech, which he did indignantly, pointing out that they and all who participated in the Council knew it to be false, that 'my principles are basically different from those found in the spurious speech' and that he had never asserted anything 'which might undermine the authority of the Holy See'.[13] That he was asked to *refute* the document rather than *recant* suggests that nobody associated with the Council believed in the bogus speech, whatever the intentions in requiring his public denials. According to Sivric, there was a final twist: the Chuch authorities in Rome considered his repudiation of this forgery (which caused him so much annoyance in his life) as the sign of his acceptance of papal infallibility:

He (Strossmayer) accepted the Constitution (Pastor Aeternus) by protesting against the pamphlet 'Papa e Vangelo, discorso di un vescovo al Concilio' (MANSI 53, 997)[14]

It might be hoped that libraries would have cast doubt on this spurious publication. Butler notes indignantly that a copy is found in the British Museum published as late as 1928, without any identification as a forgery.[15] Sivric records that it was published in 1967 in Belgrade in a selection of famous speeches.[16] The Internet ensures a renewed currency for the document – although it also provides a forum for challenging it. Butler identifies the forger's motive as hostility to the (Catholic) Church. Certainly the forger chose the name which had just the right *clout* and recent fame/notoriety to give the publication maximum impact. It is not the intention of this article to debate the issues of papal primacy and infallibility. But surely a precondition for dialogue, religious or otherwise, is a degree of confidence in the

10 Sivric, op. cit., 248-9.
11 Butler, op. cit, 423. 'Strossmayer's real speech on June 2 is in Mansi, IV (52), 391-404.'
12 'The Bishop Strossmayer forgery of Vatican I (1870-1871)' Sean's Faith Website, 8 April 2007, viewed 13 April 2007 < http://www.angelfire.com/ms/seanie/strossmayer.html>

13 Sivric, op. cit., 250.
14 Ibid, 251.
15 Butler, op. cit., 423.
16 Sivric, op.cit., 249.

authenticity of historical documents – and a *nose* for the 'inauthentic' ones. *Truth* is oddly served by deliberate falsification of sources such as may be encountered on the site Mission to Catholics International Inc. The Strossmayer article in the *Catholic Encyclopedia* is misquoted to make it appear that the Encyclopedia validates rather than condemns the spurious speech.[17] All mention of the forgery disappears into an elliptical 'black hole'.

How can we as librarians help to untangle such a web of claim and counter-claim? I submit that we have a course of action which flows from our rules and conventions. AACR2 states:

> *21.4C1. If responsibility for a work is known to be erroneously or fictitiously attributed to a person, enter under the actual personal author or under title if the actual personal author is not known. Make an added entry under the heading for the person to whom the authorship is attributed, unless he or she is not a real person.*

Doubt about authorship is sufficient in this case to justify removal of the main author entry for *Strossmayer, Josip Juraj, 1815-1905*. This is an acknowledgment that I cannot verify the author of the document. Further background detail might be added in the general note field.[18] In checking

references to the document elsewhere I can exercise a degree of *suspicion*, endeavouring in so far as I am able to combat misinformation. After all, none of us would claim infallibility or inerrancy in our professional dealings, but as information managers we play a critical role in filtering 'misinformation' and 'disinformation', especially now when so much of it is at everyone's finger tips.

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17 'Bishop Strossmayer's speech in the Vatican Council of 1870' Mission to Catholics International Inc., viewed 13 April 2007, < http://www.mtc.org/bishop_s.html>
18 Philip Harvey gave the following suggestions: 'I would suggest two other things a cataloguer could do here. A Note (Tag 500) detailing the history of the document and including all important names, dates and words would give clarification of its meaning and immediate access to all keywords, e.g. Strossmayer, Vatican Council, Infallibility, Mansi and the names of the suspects. An added title entry (Tag 246) for the cover title would catch the eye of the serendipitous, serious researcher.'

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Library-anxious students: a study of their concerns

Robin McComiskey

Librarians have long recognised that undergraduate students, particularly first-years, often feel overwhelmed by the size and complexity of an academic library, and don't know how to make it work for them (Grosser 1988). Negative emotions can run from confusion to debilitation, and can adversely affect a student's patronage of a library. The following discussion presents the findings of one library's attempt to investigate the causes of this apprehension, in order to foster more user-friendly relations with its particular clientele.

1. Literature Review

Australian studies in the 1980s to early 1990s refer to this phenomenon as a "psychological barrier". No further literature has been published in Australia since that time. The more recent studies are American and they document the same phenomenon as "library anxiety".

Australian studies

Studies show that a high number of undergraduates are reluctant to ask for assistance in the library (Hatchard and Toy 1984b; Hatchard and Toy 1986b; Hatchard and Crocker 1990; Sullivan-Windle 1993). Kosa's study (1982) found that 49% of undergraduate students prefer to ask lecturers, tutors or peers. He assumes the inhibition reflects immaturity but he does not test the assumption. Reasons for not requesting assistance include: fear that the question is trivial or displays ignorance, librarians are too busy, and intimidation from librarians. Other studies concur (Hatchard and Toy 1986b; Roe 1975). Hatchard and Toy (1986b) contend that the problem is primarily a personality trait and only secondarily is it a library-induced problem. The basis of their conclusion is that two-thirds of students admit to emotional difficulties approaching strangers or authority figures, and to avoidance of unpleasant situations.

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It is likely that several variables combine to erode student confidence (Kosa 1982; Hatchard and Toy 1986b; Hatchard and Crocker 1990).

The problem of reluctance to ask library staff is widespread. Studies have shown that it can be partially mitigated with user education (Hatchard and Toy 1984b; Person 1981; King and Ory 1981), but it will never fully resolve (Hatchard and Toy 1984a; Hatchard and Crocker 1990). To overcome unease, students stress the importance of staff friendliness, approachability and ability to set others at ease, clear communication, helpfulness, patience and sound professional knowledge (Hatchard and Crocker 1990; Hatchard and Toy 1986a).

American studies

Mellon (1986) performed a seminal study on the phenomenon and coined the term "library anxiety". The results of her research estimate that 75-85% of students experience anxiety due to intimidation by the size of the library, and lack of knowledge about what to do, how to research, and how to find the right location. She recognises a destructive cycle: the overwhelming feelings curb effective functioning; the student perceives all other students as library-savvy and so feels inadequate; in turn it causes reluctance to request assistance in order to conceal the lack of knowledge, and further confusion and incompetence result. The resulting emotions towards the library are strongly negative.

Bostick built on Mellon's work (Onwuegbuzie, Jiao and Bostick 2004) and developed the Library Anxiety Scale to measure anxiety. Bostick categorised five dimensions of library anxiety: barriers with staff, affective barriers, personal comfort in the library, knowledge of the library's resources, and mechanical barriers.

In the last decade, Jiao and Onwuegbuzie have become the foremost researchers on library anxiety, and prolific writers. They were the first to publish empirical studies in the field and Cleveland (2004) has published a literature survey of their research. Their primary focus is postgraduate students (Onwuegbuzie and Jiao 1998b).

In a study to validate the phenomenon of library anxiety, Jiao and Onwuegbuzie (1999a) test the criticism that library anxiety is merely another manifestation of personality trait anxiety. Unlike Hatchard and Toy in Australia (1986b), they found no significant relationship between the occurrences of the two types, thereby validating the independent existence of library anxiety. They are concerned to find situation-specific factors that contribute to library anxiety, and their research includes studies of learning styles (Onwuegbuzie and Jiao 1998a), self perception (Jiao and Onwuegbuzie 1999b), procrastination in studies (Onwuegbuzie and Jiao 2000), and perfectionism (Jiao and Onwuegbuzie 1998), study habits (Jiao and Onwuegbuzie 2001), reading skills (Jiao and Onwuegbuzie 2003) and user education (Onwuegbuzie and Jiao 1998a). All factors show a positive relationship to library anxiety, though a causal relationship is not always demonstrated.

2. The Study

A study was performed at an Australian tertiary college in 2006. The college has two distinct and totally separate clientele: undergraduate students at the university and theology students in the denominational theological school.

System statistics and other counts showed that only 3.1% of undergraduate students used the library during the course of an academic year. The purpose of the study was to investigate various factors which may be affecting patronage of the library

by the undergraduates, with a view to implementing strategies to encourage usage. Library anxiety was one of several factors under investigation.

The data was obtained by small group interview, or focus group, comprised of 12 undergraduate volunteers: ten young women and two young men at various stages in their undergraduate careers. The discussion was audio taped and the data analysed using Grounded Theory Methodology. Details on this methodology can be found in Creswell (2003), Gorman and Clayton (2005), and Strauss and Corbin (1990).

All the students in the focus group were Arts students, so the results should not be generalised to undergraduates in general, or to theological students. Nonetheless it is expected that some elements of library anxiety may reach across the disciplines and the age differences, and correspond to some of the difficulties facing theological students as well. Theological students were not included in the study because the concern was for the low patronage statistics amongst the undergraduate population.

The following factors were found to contribute to the student's anxiety about the library:

Lack of knowledge

Unfamiliarity travels hand-in-hand with lack of knowledge. It can raise issues of potential embarrassment, fear of error or perceived ignorance, and elevate student insecurity and frustration, all of which can discourage library use. Half the students at interview said they would borrow resources if they knew how to perform the transaction, which indicates that lack of library knowledge appears to frighten would-be users.

The participants demonstrated a consciousness of expectations. They are keenly aware that a university career expects students to learn, manage and discover on their own, including library use. If they are unable to use the library successfully, they prefer to avoid the issue or find another route around the lack of knowledge, such as asking friends. Interestingly, one student frequents public libraries because their staff welcome questions, whereas she feels that academic libraries expect students to know already.

There appears to be a self-perception issue at stake for the students. Inability to use the library effectively is not an objective matter to them; it is personal and highly subjective. They feel there is a lot to lose personally in an admission of a lack of knowledge and perceive it to adversely reflect on their abilities. As a consequence they may choose to simply avoid library use or wait until a library assistant (a student peer) is on duty. Alternatively, a question may be prefaced with an apology for ignorance.

The library in general

One first-year student reports that the library feels like "an alien place", and several others nodded. She described the doorway as a critical place: on one side she is in control of her surroundings but on the other side (in the library) the surroundings control her. Students postulate that increased familiarity with the library and how it operates may help to disarm these sentiments.

Students attribute the cause of this reticence to themselves: they do not know what they ought to know about the use of libraries and, to complicate the situation further, they don't know what it is that they don't know. They appear to experience a common bond in this predicament, rather like a secret society for reluctant library users, and they prefer to devise ways around these gaps in their knowledge by assisting each other rather

than asking for assistance. Five students said they appreciate staff initiative to offer assistance when students look perplexed, but staff can't expect (some) students to initiate requests for assistance, for this would mount a new anxiety upon the back of another.

Library staff

Students are apprehensive of library staff because they do not know them. The unfamiliarity elevates the anxiety factor, reduces interaction, and ultimately affects library patronage. The following reasons were offered as factors underlying their apprehension: lack of knowledge about what to do, which both raises feelings of inadequacy and reduces personal confidence to ask for assistance; shyness of staff whom they regard as authority; a presumption that librarians expect students to know; and intimidation by an anticipated or imagined staff response.

Anxiety about library staff causes one student to prefer the nearby State Library where she believes librarians have a more crucial public role than in academic libraries. Her fear of a "brush off" reflects anxiety, so avoidance is the preferred option. Students are unanimous that anxiety would be significantly relieved if one of the librarians is designated with responsibility for undergraduate students, and whom they could regard as "ours". It would increase their confidence to approach. They stressed that this librarian would need to be actively friendly, not just possess a distant politeness. The latter does not encourage library use in their view, because it doesn't actively quash fears.

Circulation procedures

Students also experience anxiety in performing circulation transactions. Most of them do not know the circulation period, the fines policy, the possibility of reservations, or how to return borrowed items. About half the students presume that they cannot borrow because they do not possess a library card (students simply state their name).

Students agree that the most anxious time is the first borrowing transaction, because they are unfamiliar with the procedure and borrowing conditions. Successive uneventful transactions quickly reduce anxiety. This initial anxiety is alleviated to some extent if the checkout is with a student library assistant rather than a librarian, because the assistants are peers who do not invade their comfort levels. One student revealed that she had not renewed her overdue books because she was anxious about how to do it and possible staff response, but then found that renewal anxiety increased proportionately to the length of time overdue. She felt her only option was to allow the charges to accumulate.

Catalogue

Most students have never used the library catalogue and do not know that it is remotely accessible. They are unaware that the theological collection holds many secular books that may be relevant to their information needs, and they find the Pettee system that classifies it "so scary" that they choose blanket avoidance rather than attempt to use it. Their unfamiliarity breeds insecurity, which in turn generates anxiety about library use, and anxiety paralyses them into avoidance.

Electronic databases

The subject of electronic databases arose three times during the interview and it is clearly one of the students' more anxious concerns. All participants said they had tried to search databases in the past, and all admitted that they really didn't know how to use them and none felt able to attribute success to their attempts.

The students find the names of the

databases very confusing and do not know which one to use for their subject, nor how to use it effectively. They are unaware that the university library's web page contains guides to the relevant databases for specific subjects, and that database training is offered in group sessions. Students see databases as complex and non-intuitive, and readily concur about the escalating feelings of anxiety, but it is difficult to measure. The extent of this anxiety varies: one student said she simply "didn't like them much", another "hates" them, still another admits to becoming "flush with anger", and one student simply avoids the anxiety by resorting to manual searches of bound journals in order to "plump-out" bibliographies. Although only four students volunteered the personal effect of this anxiety, all students reported that anxiety exists. As anxiety is a personal topic, the non-contributing students were not asked for their personal experiences.

All students are keenly aware of their lack of knowledge on database use but none had ever dared to ask for assistance. Interestingly though, at interview they were eager to ask the library to provide group sessions, possibly because they felt an element of solidarity together in a group. It would appear that anxiety is at a level where a one-to-one session with a librarian is threatening and would further compound the anxiety level.

On the other hand, students regard search engines as entirely intuitive and they know that hits are guaranteed virtually every time. Internet searching does not raise anxiety levels, so therefore it is the information repository preferred by all the students in the focus group.

Procrastination and perfectionism

Students admit that procrastination in assignments can trigger anxiety in regard to the library. Students laughed at the idea that perfectionism can yield

library anxiety, and gallantly volunteered that perfectionism is not a problem for them. Students are confident that their personal study habits and reading skills do not contribute to their anxiety about the library. They said that anxiety mostly accompanies simply not knowing; if they had someone familiar who could explain some things to them, they would feel at ease and use the library more.

Theological students

Several girls commented that they are "petrified" of the theological students who share the library with them. Their major concern is the middle-aged men, though some of the younger men inspire fear as well. The male participants did not acknowledge anxiety triggered by theological students, but nonetheless understood how the girls may experience it. As reasons for their anxiety were not forthcoming at interview, it is unclear whether it is an intangible issue or they were simply unwilling to say, so reasons for the anxiety can only be surmised.

The university students have not figured out how to regard theological students, who evidently carry (or are attributed with) an awe that perplexes them. They were unable to explain how or why theological students are different, or what specifically causes their anxiety. They have no poor experiences to report, and they do not interact. Most likely, undergraduate student anxiety is built upon fears of presumption rather than actual circumstances.

Anxiety about theological students is effectively library anxiety, because the library is the only location where the two groups mix. Theological students inhabit the reading room during the day and leave when the library closes. The undergraduates on the other hand have 24 hour access to the reading room, and it is only after the library closes to theological students that they feel comfortable to take occupancy of the reading room.

The undergraduate students are silently pushed out of the library environs by their anxiety.

The impact on library patronage must be considered significant even though it cannot be quantified. There are no published studies on similar situations. This is an avenue that is worthy of further investigation.

3. Conclusion

In the current state the students find the library is fraught with anxiety on several levels, and lack of knowledge and unfamiliarity underlie virtually all of them. All twelve participants experience library anxiety in relation to various aspects of library policies, resources, library use, and staff, and the female participants experience library anxiety in relation to the other clientele: theological students. The degree of anxiety for each factor varies for each individual.

The anxiety-inducing issues do not operate independently, but rather several issues amalgamate and heighten anxiety in a similar way to the destructive cycle described by Mellon (1986). The students are unable to tackle the anxiety issues because each anxiety-promoter cannot be extricated from the others. Clearly, anxiety has adversely affected student patronage of the library.

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CRED

Recent developments in open-source library systems

Paul Chandler

Recent years have seen increasing consolidation among vendors in the Integrated Library System (ILS) market. Consequences for libraries can vary from minor (renegotiating contracts and forging relationships with new vendor representatives) to major upheavals (costly upgrades or system replacement, data migration, staff retraining). An ILS represents not only a large initial investment for a library, but also incurs significant recurrent expenditure for licensing fees and technical support. As the nerve-centre of any library, ILS shortcomings quickly produce staff and user unhappiness. All in all, it's a sensitive area at every level of library use and management from top (funding bodies) to bottom (casual users). The recent announcement by SirsiDynix (itself the result of a 2005 merger) that it would not proceed with the development of Horizon 8.0 seems to have caused especially widespread dismay in the library world, no doubt because of its significant reputation and market share. Dissatisfaction seems to be spreading: anxieties produced by the effects of corporate mergers and vendor lock-in are now picking up pre-existing complaints about a lack of technical innovation among commercial ILS products and the perceived unresponsiveness of large corporations to user needs.[1]

A consequence has been increased interest in Open Source (OS) library systems. We are perhaps on the brink of major change in the ILS market, and the highly-respected Karen Schneider has predicted that 2007 will see interest in OS solutions reach a tipping-point.[2]

I don't claim any particular technical expertise about library

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1 See, for example, Karen Schneider's now-famous posts on "How OPACS suck": <http://www.techsource.ala.org/ blog/2006/05/how-opacs-suck-part-3-the-big-picture. html>
2 "Evergreen, the open source ILS, will reach a tipping point in 2007—just enough new customers to put it on the brink of being to the ILS what Apache has become for web servers: the common-sense choice." <http://freerangelibrarian.com/ 2007/01/trends_ trends_trends.php>

automation matters, but simply want to call attention to two noteworthy open-source ILS initiatives which may be of interest to ANZTLA members as they consider the future directions of their library software installations. I'm not an expert on, or even an experienced user of, either program: I've merely explored their demonstration interfaces, made a few inquiries, searched the web for user commentary, and think it's worth reporting briefly in case readers may like to explore further. Other emerging developments of interest include the University of Rochester's eXtensible Catalog <http://www.extensiblecatalog.info>, but as this is a pilot project exploring differerent data models rather than an implementable replacement for existing commercial software, I don't address this or other such projects here.[3]

First, a word about Open Source software. Unlike proprietary systems, OS software makes the source code freely available to users, who may adapt and develop it further. The hoped-for result is that programs will then develop incrementally through collaborative effort. Although only about a decade old in its present form, the OS movement has speedily produced some highly complex and significant programs and software suites, including the web-browser Mozilla Firefox, the office suite OpenOffice, the web servers Apache and Tomcat, and the operating system Linux. Some large companies, which perhaps would have once developed in-house software proprietarily, have realised that it can be in their financial interest to make source code freely available in order to increase the user and developer base and thereby spread the cost of ongoing development.

However, it has become a commonplace

3 Current discussion about new data formats and the like, in the context of the FRBR model and the Dublin Core Initiative and other such models, has far-reaching implications but these are not relevant here; see, for example, "Framework for a Bibliographic Future" <http://futurelib.pbwiki.com/> and its links.

that OS software is "free as in kittens, not free as in beer": i.e., while the program and its source code are free, it cannot be expected that there will be no cost of ownership. Such costs may include installation and set-up, staff training, technical support, and so on. However, in nearly all cases, the absence of initial purchase costs and recurrent licence fees will represent significant savings to a library, and sometimes very substantial savings indeed. There is no vendor lock-in for support services, and the user base is more empowered to determine development directions. The greater the user base which an OS program attracts, the more secure its future and the more immune it becomes to the dead-end of program abandonment which often results from the failure or merger of commercial vendors. The uptake of particular OS programs by large institutions (state enterprises, universities, large companies and the like) is a sign which can inspire particular confidence, as it is likely to bring a level of investment and overall direction in further development of a kind which will generally not be possible for a dispersed user base, however enthusiastic it may be.

Technical support for OS programs has traditionally been through informal user groups, which are inevitably of varied competence, accessibility, helpfulness and resourcefulness. However, the increasing success of the OS model has also generated commercial technical support services, and the additional confidence that comes from reliable and accessible paid support will often need to be considered by library administrators and policy makers.

Koha

The first of the significant open-source ILS was Koha. Originally developed for

Horowhenua Library Trust in New Zealand, it has been under development since 1999, and is currently at version 2.2.8 (12/3/2007), with version 3.0 expected later this year.[4] Koha is a quite complete integrated library system, including modules for circulation, cataloging, acquisitions and orders, serials, reserves, patron management, and branch relationships. It is MARC21 compliant, and includes a Z39.50 client, though it's not entirely clear to me if at this stage it also includes a Z39.50 server, though it is mentioned in the documentation. The OPAC is web-based and so can be accessed with any browser, and its design can be easily adapted to the needs of a particular library, as can be seen from the variety of sample OPAC presentations at the Koha site <http://koha.org/ showcase/ opacs.html>.

An early adopter of Koha was Nelsonville Public Library in Athens County, Ohio, which has seven branches, 250,000 items, and approximately 650,000 transactions a year. The largest collection appears to be North East University (2 million records). However, Koha developers claim that scalability will not be an issue: future versions will adopt the Zebra database engine, and early tests show a one-second search time on a 5 million record database on a fairly modest server, and version 3.0 has been tested in the 14 million record Library of Congress data set.

A demonstration librarian interface can be explored at <http://koha.liblime. com/>. I won't attempt to describe the features in detail. I was impressed with the integrated access from one screen to all librarian functions, including circulation and cataloguing, authority, serials, reports and acquisitions functions. There is a budgeting function for orders

and even a programmable exchange rate function. Various cataloguing entry templates, called frameworks, can be created to suit different media and cataloguing levels, including the most detailed and comprehensive. The System Administration interface appears to allow tweaking of every imaginable parameter. This level of end-user control means there is a certain complexity in the default interface, and I imagine many librarians would want to work with a technician to achieve a suitably simplified initial set-up. Original MARC records can be easily created, or they can be imported from a file, or copied from a Z39.50 search.

Koha claims there are about 300 libraries presently using it. There is a smattering of university libraries in South America, mainly Argentina, and some significant institutional libraries in France, but in general the listed users tend to be smaller institutes, many of which would be comparable to our theological libraries. Market penetration outside the English-speaking world is reassuring for libraries with foreign language materials and the special issues they generate (display and searching of accented characters, and so on); the interface even allows language switching for use in multi-lingual areas.

Support is provided by the usual OS user groups, but there are also seven commercial companies currently listed as providing paid support services, including several in Australia and New Zealand.

Evergreen

Evergreen began development in 2004 as a project of the Public Library System in the American state of Georgia, which has 252 libraries, 1.6 million cardholders and 8 million items; it was implemented in September 2006.[5] Where Koha began as

4 I have drawn much of the following information from the Koha website <www.koha.org> and a test-run of the demonstration user and librarian interfaces on the Koha Showcase page.

5 An account of Evergreen's development by Jonathon

an ILS for stand-alone libraries and later developed consortial features, Evergreen was conceived from the ground up as a massively-scaled standards-compliant integrated system to operate across an extensive network. It is not presently as complete as Koha: it includes cataloguing and circulation modules but acquisitions and serials are still under development. However, Evergreen has quickly attracted very substantial attention, particularly in North America, partly for its sheer elegance and partly because it has proven itself in an extremely demanding environment, where it also produced massive capital and recurrent cost savings. Recently the University of Windsor has joined the Evergreen development team, and the financier George Soros has funded an Evergreen-based "library-in-a-box" project to develop an easily-installable version for distribution especially in resource-poor areas. Consequently, its development path seems assured.

The Evergreen OPAC, called PINES <http://demo.gapines.org/> is a remarkable piece of work, elegant and simple but very powerful, with beautifully integrated user access not only to expected features such as detailed holding information and MARC-format display, but also to book cover artwork, summaries, tables of contents, reviews, and so on, all very clearly set out. In concept it is similar to the web interfaces likely to be most familiar to users, such as Google and Amazon, and includes features which web users are now coming to expect, such as auto spell-checking and alternate suggestions for misspellings.

Librarian features are accessed through the Evergreen Staff Client, of which a demonstration version is available for download here <http://www.open-ils.org/

cvs.html>. While its conceptual and design elegance is evident it is also clear that in some important respects it is in an earlier stage of development than the more feature-rich Koha. Acquisitions and serials modules are lacking, and since most of the current Evergreen libraries use OCLC for MARC cataloguing, easy creation of local MARC records seems not to have been highly developed yet. There is an integrated Z39.50 client, but apparently no Z39.50 server. Evergreen has a highly developed hierarchical permission system which reflects its origins in a very large networked consortium and which would make it particularly suitable for multi-branch libraries.

As for Koha, support can be found from the usual OS user groups, and commercial support is also developing, including a support company spun off by the Evergreen development team <http://esilibrary.com>.

Conclusion

Both these programs are in rapid evolution. Evergreen's origins in a large state-funded system no doubt means there is a very solid base for further development, which will be further consolidated as other stakeholders come aboard. I gather many potential users are holding back from Evergreen until its missing modules and enhanced reporting functions are provided in version 2.0 (projected mid-2008), at which point it may well achieve a very rapid increase in acceptance. Koha is soon to release a major upgrade to version 3.0. Because they are OS projects, there is likely to be a certain amount of feature cross-over between them as far as the underlying architectures allow.

Libraries are rightly risk-averse. Changes in library systems can be very costly

Weber, "Evergreen: Your Homegrown ILS" is at <http://www.libraryjournal.com/article/CA6396354.html>. Another account by Michael Stutz, "Librarians stake their future on open source" is at <http://enterprise.linux.com/enterprise/06/12/04/1538214.shtml?tid=101>.

and disruptive and can disorient staff and users alike. Workflow problems and work backlogs can quickly become major difficulties. Data migration makes even the most intrepid librarian understandably nervous. In the past open-source solutions were seen as high-risk enterprises, unreliably supported by geeks and enthusiasts, and unsuitable for critical functions. However, this is a picture that has already changed dramatically. Given the instability of the ILS industry, it may be that open-source library software is actually now about to become a lower risk prospect than traditional proprietary commercial solutions, with the added attractions of greater technological innovation and substantial cost reduction. 2007 could indeed represent a tipping-point for interest and confidence in OS library systems.

At the very least, especially if your library is unhappy with or concerned about its current ILS, it should be well worthwhile to keep an eye on the development of these two programs, to which I simply call attention. Some more technically adept ANZTLA member may wish to investigate further and give a more detailed and

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"Of the making of many books...": theology, academy and Church in a media age

Clive Marsh

An address delivered on the occasion of the re-dedication of the library at the Queen's Foundation for Ecumenical Theological Education, Birmingham, 12 December 2006 and publish in Bulletin of ABTAPL (Vol. 14 No. 1 March 2007). It is reprinted with permission

I cannot think of too many things more worthy of cause for great celebration than the rededication of a theology library. Admittedly, that is the kind of statement which would make my teenage children wince and confirm along with the many other pieces of evidence they have gathered over the years, that I really have lost the plot and become an ecclesiastical anorak. But even if I say it slightly tongue in check, I also mean it. A good theology library is a great thing. But I want us to celebrate the library's re dedication this evening in the light of two challenges to us all, challenges I want to present in the form of stark questions.

First if theology is so exciting, then why are our churches often so dull? Second, if theology is ultimately so practical, then why is so much of it so inaccessible when it finds its way on to the page or the screen, or into the words of a lecturer?

I suggest we consider those two questions with respect to the title offered for this evening: "'Of making many books...": Theology, Academy and Church in a Media Age.' What I'm signalling by my title, of course, is that church, academy and wider society are all involved in the task of doing theology. There is, though, some tension between making of books and the so called media age in which we now live. Yes, more books are now published than ever before. But more and more books are also pulped than ever before. And theological books make up a small percentage of book- production. All theological publishers struggle to make ends meet. Very few theology books become bestsellers. You have to become Archbishop of Canterbury, and already be known as a good academic, to make it into Waterstone's. Otherwise, you are left - like a number of us here - dragging your wares round with you in a suitcase whenever you are invited to speak anywhere. So if theology is exciting and practical, how are church and academy to do any kind

Dr Clive Marsh recently concluded his work at the The Queen Foundation for Ecumenical Theological Education in Edgbaston, Birmingham in the UK where this address was delivered

of theological task in a media-saturated society and age? And what place does a theology library play in all of that?

What does a theology library represent?

A theology library represents the church's collective wisdom. Having access to a library of the quality of the one on this campus is like having a whole load of people from the Christian past and the present crowded into the room as you do your thinking, prepare your sermon or write your essay. They are all having their say about who and what God is, pressing us all the time to clarify our own position - where we stand and why - asking us to think very carefully about what can be said about God in the present, whatever our context. Sometimes this is a bewildering experience.

We may enter a place like Queen's thinking our grasp of Christian belief is fairly good - quite with-ranging even. Its comprehensiveness quickly gets challenged however, when we actually meet people who are very different: different theologically, different culturally, of different social and ethnic, backgrounds, of different personality type.

When we explore the theological differences, in all their interwovenness with those other differences, we find that they all have deep roots. We need a library to enable us to explore those roots. And as we explore, interesting things start to happen. We are reminded, or made aware for the first time, that Augustine was an African, that orthodoxy may not quite have been what it seemed in the early centuries, that there are some blips in the apostolic succession, or that Methodists have not always been the gentle materially comfortable, mild-mannered, middle-class people they sometimes are now (!). That's what libraries are all about.

What will any self-respecting theology library contain?

But what should we expect to find in a theology library these days? It will always contain the classics. A 'classic', of course, is a work which has proved itself over time and always merits being returned to, because it will go on offering new and fresh meanings which prove helpful to those who encounter it. The notion of 'proving its worth over time' is crucial. It takes time, in other words, to find out even what the classics are. 'Classic' is such an overused word now that it has been devalued. I find myself talking about a CD that may have come out last week with a few 'classic tracks' on it. But that is a misuse of the word I am simply meaning 'it sounds like a great track to me' and 'I really like it'. A classic track would merit returning to again and again. And not only that, lots of other people would have to agree with me that the track was worth repeated listening and over a long time. That is exactly how it is with theological resources. The reason that Augustine, Aquinas, Julian of Norwich, Luther, Calvin, Teresa of Avila, Hooker, Wesley, Schleiermacher and the like are regarded to have produced classics is that their works merit re-visiting.

But to ensure that it has the classics, any self-re theology library has to take the risk of gathering together lots of stuff which may prove ephemeral too. Today's classics are, after all, yesterday's journalism. The great systematic theological texts of today were the apologetic, contextual texts of the past. So theology libraries have to buy the journalism and the contextual theology of today, only some of which will last. But without libraries doing that, we do not remain present. We would be too dependant only on the past. And we would not already be working with texts now which will become classics over time. The fact is, in the present, we simply don't know which texts will be classics. It is not

possible to predict.

And there's another twist, of course, in our media-dominated age. The 'texts' with which we work are changing in form. Yes, print copy is not likely to disappear. There are palm-tops but they need batteries, or charging up, and their screens are so small. Until we have technology which is as satisfying and as easy as throwing a paperback into you bag when you go on a train journey, this is not likely to change. (We have the right-sized technology. But is the reading experience as gratifying?)

Be that as it may, theologians and ministers' work with a wide range of material; art; film, and music are part of what need to be interpreted. We work in the present not only with classics, but with popular culture (and with classics of popular culture) too. And we have to work increasingly with material the theological content of which may be quite oblique, yet present nevertheless. Perhaps, in fact, it has always been so. It is just that the combination of the cultural dominance of Christianity for much of the recent history of the West and the way that histories of theology have been written (and by whom and for what purpose) mean that the interplay between theology and popular culture has been clear only to certain types of historian. And some have perhaps not wanted to, or been able, to highlight the theological aspects of their work. Or perhaps it has been the case that theologian have not really wanted to listen.

The evidence which is now being brought together through media and cultural studies, though, is showing us that Christians in the present are certainly not different in kind front others in the way they do their meaning making. Yes, we may use resources which the explicitly non-religious do not. But we also consume films and music and TV and Internet broadcasts. And we read the Bible on our Blackberries and watch films on our laptops. This will have an impact, in time, on what libraries will field and how we access the material to be found in them.

Theology can be reduced in its focus mid purpose, of course, if it's too easily subsumed under the concept of 'meaning-making'. And some of the work which is done from the theological end in the field of popular culture is facile to say the least. But the fact of the ways in which meaning is discovered and made - whatever resources are used - cannot but be of interest to theology as a discipline.

In what way does a library help Christians to be critical?

But what, in more precise term can a library actually do, other than provide people with information? In a recent collection of essays on the current state of the disciplines of theology and religious studies in the academy, Julius Lipuer, Professor of Hinduism and the Comparative Study of Religion at the University of Cambridge, comments: 'It is the academic study of religion that helps rescue religion front its own worst excesses?' (Lipner 2005, p. 101)

I think that is absolutely right. It does not overstate the case. It recognises that it is not academic study alone that may prevent religion getting out of hand, and it does not claim a guaranteed success. But it acknowledges the dangerous tendencies which lurk within 'religion itself and shows how the academy can actually serve its own and public good. So long as that kind of insight does not come to mean that universities are always the ones correcting what is delivered in church-run institutions, or that religious studies is inevitably in a better position to evaluate critically what the theologians get up to, then I suggest we pass Lipner's message on.

Religions can - indeed must - be internally

self-critical. They will always receive criticism from outside anyway. And no-one is value-free. So if you stand outside of one tradition, religious or not, you are always standing in another. But such critical enquiry - wherever it happens has to be *resourced*. And that's what libraries do. And because beliefs are held by people, .not books, we are reminded that in resourcing the contemporary critical enquiry that religious traditions need - that contemporary *Christianity* needs – through places such as this, libraries resource people. Libraries enable informed conversations to happen between living people, who embody the traditions which *humanity as a whole* needs; in all its complex variety, for it to flourish.

To put it another way: at their best libraries create, and are related to, communities of learning. Communities of learning are rarely bunches of people who always think the same way. But they are bodies of people committed to the kind of informed critical conversation I have just described. The problem with the phrase 'communities of learning', of course, is that it can too easily conjure up an outdated image of a rather fusty Oxbridge common room with leather sofas, a ticking clock and copies of *The Economist*, *Punch* and *The Times* on the coffee table. Communities of learning need to be heard to exist equally in such forms as a church study group, a regular gathering, of at students around a kitchen table, a Diocesan evening course, or a Local Preachers' Continuing Development group. All such groups can only be communities of learning - as opposed to being groups which simply provide opportunities for the pooling of impressions or opinions, important though those are - when they are fed. Libraries can offer the food. Information is not of itself education. But uninformed conversation is not necessarily education either.

But if a theological library like the one in

this institution represents the collective wisdom of Christianity; and if it contains a mixture of classical and contemporary material, as a living tradition, the leading edge of which is so fresh that we do not yet know what will last and if it resources contemporary, critical enquiry, and serves both church mid society by means of that resourcing then what roles do church and academy play in making the best use of such a resource, and in guiding people - us- who use it? And how is the sheer excitement of accessing the collective wisdom of the tradition, of seeing just how broad and deep theological enquiry can be, and sharing that excitement in whatever communal settings we find ourselves in...how is that to be grasped hold of?

I offer two comments. First, church and academy are not polar opposites. Yes, the. academy is not a place of worship (unless, of course, there is hidden worship of the human intellect going on). But as I have reminded us already, it is not value-free. It is a place of clashing political, ethical and ideological commitments. One thing that makes a university very different from a religious tradition is that a university does not usually have a single, dominant view which binds all its members together (save, perhaps, for a desire for free-spirited enquiry). But a university has a purpose - the expansion of knowledge for human good. Prosperity, and thus an economic drive, might have become more prominent in university aspirations in recent years: But there remains something in a university's reason for being about helping its students and staff develop and about benefiting society.

Churches exist, it has been said, for their non-members. But they benefit their members too. If they in practice exist *only* for their members, then they have denied what they should be existing for. Do they need an academic arm? Certainly - and this campus is one such academy within the church which itself links both church

and academy. In order to be the kind of academic institution which the church needs, there has also, though, to be a distinct form of institution like a university, to which a church institution like this can relate: But each has a different ethos. It is often being said at the moment how much universities are losing their sense of being communities of learning because they are too big, because study is becoming so individualistic, and because the practice of studying is becoming so utilitarian. Academic institutions in the church like Queen's have a chance to resist such tendencies. But let us not pretend that they can exist on their own. Arguably, the excitement of theology can be fostered more easily, and even more radically, in universities because of the spirit of free enquiry at work. But church academic institutions are the ones that remain closest to 'real religion'. For every conservative tendency which may be apparent in church life, there is a social radicalism - being in touch with the roots of where, and by whom, beliefs are actually held and practised - which universities sometimes cannot get anywhere near. Universities and church institutions have something to teach, and need, each other.

And the excitement of theology in the church must not, of course, be reflected only in academic institutions like this one. Most people here already do have, or will have, a pr responsibility to be. leaders of worship, local theologians, or managers of small group processes in the lives of churches (even call them committees if you must). It is in all such settings where informed theology lives. Theology of this kind is vital for both church and society.

Second, we have to ask how both churches and universities can help people make sense of life in a media age. We shall not help people in their task, of meaning-making just by stocking libraries up with DVDs as well as books. Some expansion and diversification of stock will

be necessary - it already is necessary - but that will not of itself be enough. Nor will it be enough simply to remind academies to be more inter-disciplinary in their work (and despite much talk of interdisciplinarity, too little actually goes on). Cultural studies people will need to talk more to theologians, educationalists will need to talk more with religion scholars; and so on. Inter-disciplinary work is demanding, and time-consuming work. And grant-awarding bodies often don't know how to handle it. But even that will not be enough, because with all the best will in the world, inter-disciplinary work remains largely amongst the academics, even if us effects may be felt beyond academic circles.

No, what I talking about here is how we can respect the importance of churches through where they are socially focussed i.e. as, at their best, real life, local communities of people already engaged in the business of meaning-making: theological meaning-making. And if that's what they are, then the purpose of a theology library is to resource churches, and those who lead them, in that task, with as much critical awareness as is possible, and in as informed and as contemporary a way as we can. That will not just mean finding Christian meanings embedded in *The Simpsons* or *Harry Potter* - though it may mean that too. It means knowing what to do with *Big Brother*, and *I a Celebrity, Get Me Out of Here*, or the contemporary significance of pre-match anthems at football matches, illuminated by reference to Luther and Luther King. Christian theology is, after all, about gaining a glimpse into who God is, through Christ, and about discovering who we are, given all that we do and experience, before God, as creatures made in God's image. Respecting that task in the midst of real-life communities called churches, with a clear view of the complex, cultural world in which we are all located, cannot but mean working in as accessible a way as we can. We discover and explore

our identities through all sorts circuitous routes, and by all manner of intriguing means. What we need, then, in communal terms, are places, safe places, where we can process, before God, all that stuff, and be resourced in the process. That means there is an urgent task for churches to be engaged in. Academic institutions run by the church will have an important future in this light. The theologians and ministers of the future have to be astute, resourced interpreters of wider culture, as well as Christian culture. And for them to be able to undertake both tasks, they will need well and appropriately, stocked libraries. But as an enthusiastic ecclesiastical anorak I would say that.

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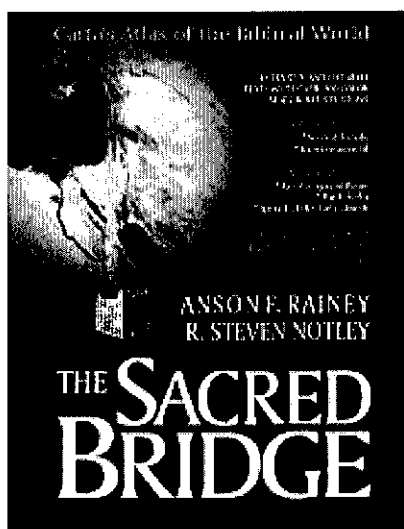

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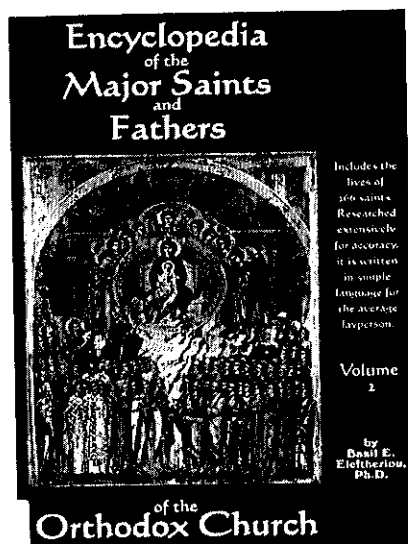
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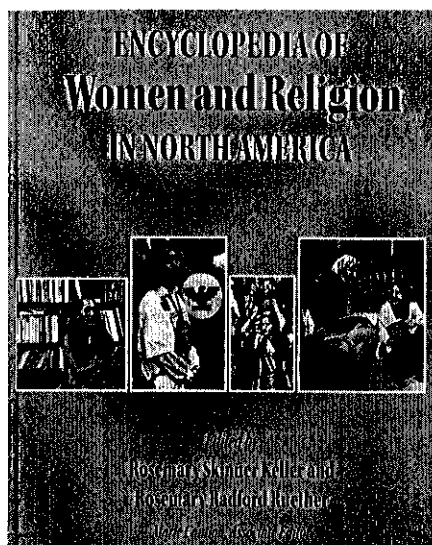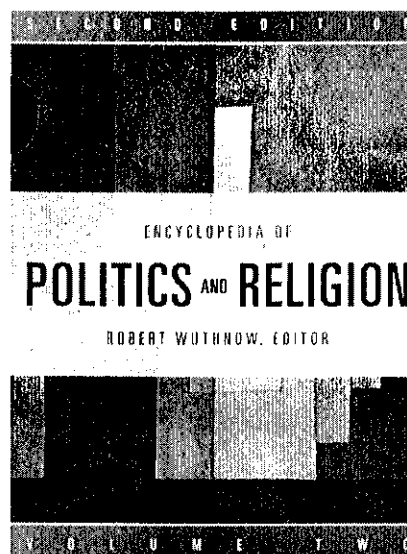
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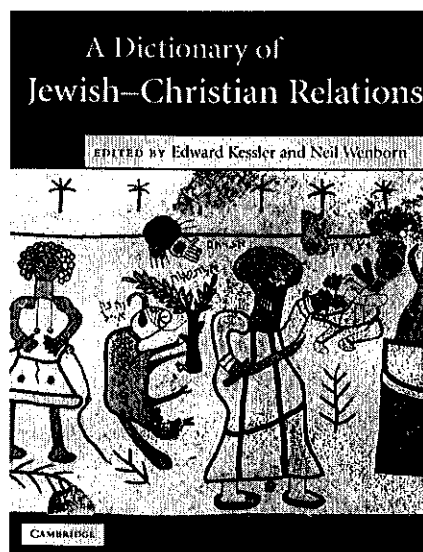
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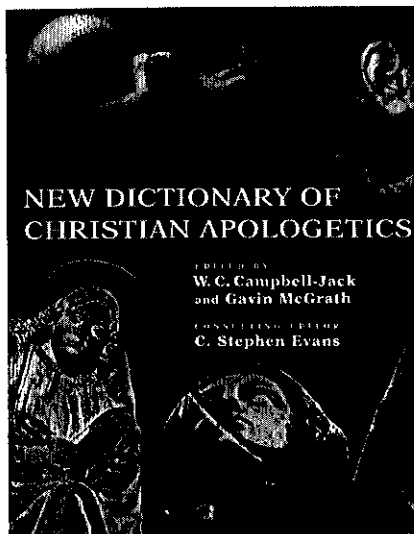
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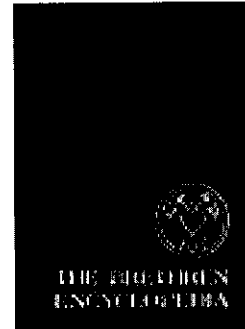
Library ministry

John Kimbrough

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Last month, the University of Chicago Library, where I work, sent me to Minneapolis for a meeting of the Committee on Institutional Cooperation. The title of the conference was "Getting into the Flow" and it dealt with how libraries might facilitate the "flow" of information to students. Readers not acquainted with the behind-the-scenes action of libraries might wonder how such concerns fit into *Sightings*. But I think "information literacy" has serious implications for the study -- and perhaps even the experience -- of religion. As a librarian of faith (I'm a Christian) I approach these issues through what I think of as "library ministry."

Like librarians elsewhere, we at the University of Chicago face a sobering reality: entering undergraduates often do not know how to use our collections effectively. For instance, a recent discussion with the Library's student advisory group found that many students are unaware that the catalog allows for browsing books by call number. Other studies have revealed that our students often experience difficulty searching for multiple authors, or distinguishing between our reference collections and the main book stacks. And most librarians (and professors) can tell stories of students who committed basic research errors, such as treating *Newsweek* and the *Journal of Religion* as if they presented the same type of information.

Acquiring information literacy -- the skills of locating information, evaluating it for currency and accuracy, using it properly, and citing it appropriately -- is crucial to good modern scholarship. Until recently, this happened as a matter of course: Since information was centralized in a library collection, faculty could assume that students would become information-literate simply through use of a library, while librarians could assume students would seek them out in order to complete their assignments.

Today, however, the library is just another website among

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thousands that students have at their disposal. There is thus a growing recognition that instructing students in information literacy requires more than simply sending them to the library. And this does not apply only to undergraduates; many seminaries, for instance, now offer courses on information literacy to equip emerging ministers with the skills for sound research.

Student scholars destined for the ministry present another dimension of the need for information literacy, for such people of faith often have a vested interest in ensuring that their evangelical work -- whether in the form of scholarship or other reflections grounded in that scholarship -- is readily "heard" (or in today's context, findable on the Web).

Viewing information literacy through a theological lens makes salient further issues that might otherwise be overlooked. For instance, libraries have traditionally been collection-centric. Ranked and compared on the basis of the richness and size of their collections, librarians have focused on acquiring materials and compiling bibliographies -- leaving direct interaction with patrons a distant third priority. In this respect, some of us have not gone much beyond the days of monastic reading rooms, with books chained to the desks.

In contrast, theological librarians (after eliminating the book chains) have viewed their job as a kind of ministry to library users. Although collection-building remains important, the true business of a theological library is the people who walk through the doors. As the requirements of information literacy have grown, emphasis on the librarian as minister has provided a useful paradigm for testing the quality of service. How do librarians best serve students who will enter the pastorate or missions rather than remaining in the academy? And if students intend to minister in places without expansive

theological and seminary libraries, is it in their best interest to teach them to rely on expensive primary and secondary sources that may be inaccessible after graduation? Facilitating the use of other viable resources is, I believe, one task of library ministry.

A further aspect of library ministry would be the advocacy of deep and careful perusal of texts -- part of what philosopher of religion Paul J. Griffiths terms "religious reading." It is true that, when even very specific Google queries return thousands of hits, quick scanning and browsing are necessary to expedite scholarship. Nonetheless, this kind of approach, made necessary by the very conditions of online research, threatens to instill bad reading habits in library users.

But religion scholars and librarians alike know that texts, if approached with care, can change lives. Perhaps part of the ministry of the librarian -- and not only the theological librarian -- is to teach users a kind of information literacy that includes making the time and space for genuine textual encounters, whether in print or online.

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