

## Notes from the MCD

The libraries of the Melbourne College of Divinity are jointly undertaking a Conspectus of their collections. The project started in September 1998. By the end of April, most libraries will have completed the bulk of the work they will have to do.

There are a total of fifteen libraries belonging or connected to the four Associated Teaching Institutions of the MCD : Queen's College Library, Trinity College's Mollison Library, and the Joint Theological Library at the United Faculty of Theology; Whitley College Library and the Churches of Christ Theological College Library at the Evangelical Theological Association; the libraries of the nine member colleges and seminaries of the Yarra Theological Union: the Holy Cross Retreat, the Redemptorist Seminary, the Carmelite Theological College, the Discalced Carmelite Monastery, St Dominic's Priory, St Vincent Pallotti College, Eymard College, Dorish Maru College and St Paschal's College; and the library of Corpus Christi College at the Catholic Theological College. Eleven of these libraries are involved in the present exercise.

We are undertaking an evaluation of our collections in order to make important information about our collections available to the students and staff of the MCD, and to one another. We are using Conspectus methodology because doing so will enable us to publish our results more widely. It is possible that new forms of co-operation among us will arise from the exercise, but we are not undertaking the Conspectus for this reason. We are doing it now, because we obtained a grant from the MCD to help us to organise it, and to cover the expenses of the poorer libraries. We are grateful to the MCD for this support.

The first stage was the holding a workshop to which we invited representatives of each MCD library. The aims of this workshop were to explain what Conspectus was all about, and how it could benefit individual libraries and their users; to provide libraries considering whether to take part with a realistic idea of what would be involved; and to explain the techniques of doing a Conspectus. We also wanted to provide a forum for discussion of some of the guidelines that would have to be laid down on such matters as choice of checklists. And we felt that a forum was necessary to launch the project and attract the commitment of members of the group to participate in it.

In the second stage, which is presently underway, each library is struggling to complete a two part report on its collections and list its periodicals and standing orders. The first part of the report is an overview of the library's collection based on a cluster of subheadings decided at the workshop. In the second part the collection is assessed, subject by subject, using the objective techniques of evaluation and description endorsed by Conspectus methodology. The deadline for our individual work is the end of April. We are hopeful at this stage that most of us will be able to meet this deadline.

The group is fortunate in having attracted Dr Lawrence McIntosh to accept appointment as Consultant to the project. To date this role has involved Lawrence in organising and leading the workshop, and in giving a day of his time to each of many libraries to help

them with problems or support them through the next steps. His contribution has been highly valued by every member of the group.

Later, in the third stage of the exercise, we will be working on the publication of our results. We are hopeful we will be able to produce a book which can be sold to anyone interested. We will also consider use of the Australian Libraries Gateway.

*Stephen Connelly*



## **ANZTLA-forum**

ANZTLA-forum is an email discussion list which aims to bring ANZTLA members closer together. If you are a personal member of ANZTLA or an employee of an ANZTLA member institution you are able to become a member of the list.

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Stephen Connelly  
Joint Theological Library

