LIBRARIES AND LIBRARIANS; AN UNDERVALUED ASSET

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I am delighted to present the keynote address to the Inaugural Conference of the Australian and New Zealand Theological Library Association. This is an important meeting, marking as it does the first formal conference of a group of people dedicated to the promotion of librarians working in theological institutions in Australia and New Zealand, to the promotion of libraries within those institutions and to the promotion of theological libraries as an entity within the total network of libraries in Australia and New Zealand. I am honoured by your invitation and hope that I may be able to contribute usefully to your deliberations.

My paper today is called <u>Libraries and Librarians: an undervalued asset</u>. That is one of the reasons for this conference and is a theme I wish to take and embroider for you. I will speak of the value of libraries, of the resources needed to carry out their functions - staff and funds, then look at the role of standards and technology in carrying out those functions, value and role of professional associations in raising the profile of libraries, the role of networking and the need for theological college libraries to become more widely automated and finally to discuss some of the means of convincing administrators not to starve but to feed the library.

The value of libraries is recognised by the fact that most theological institutions have a library - in some way it is considered that a library contributes to the work of such institutions. If it is felt that libraries are useful, in fact necessary, why are they generally so ill supported and underfunded? Why have a child if you cannot feed and nourish it properly?

Within an institution the library acts as an extension of the teaching program, and becomes another tool in the process of education. In that educational process the library provides information, enlargement, enlightenment and background to the teaching program. The Library can also provide necessary recreational reading of all kinds for staff and

students. Libraries provide material to support courses taught by the theological colleges. Most certainly an established library is essential for any theological college which wishes to offer post-graduate programs. The wide reading and research and resources essential to such programs cannot take place without a library and one which is properly funded and professionally run. The value of a library is a concept to be inculcated into the students because in order to undertake their job properly in the future they must know how to use a library. It is important for the maintenance of their skills and knowledge in later life that the students learn how to use a library and to exploit its collections and to learn to use the technology of information resources. This is essential preparation for a lifetime use. In this day and age with rapid change and increasing amounts of information available it is essential that theological college students are familiar with a professionally run and organised library, as these are skills which are transferable and are part of their essential equipment for their task in life. A theological college graduate who does not understand how to use a library is handicapped for life.

Libraries serve not only the students at a theological college but also the faculty, providing the same enrichment to them. Some theological colleges serve an outside audience of clergy undertaking Continuing Education programs of a formal or informal nature and of the interested laity. A professionally developed and maintained collection is essential in such tasks. Eric Wainwright in 'The university, its library and the information age' in *Australian Academic and Research Libraries* June 1985, speaks of the value of the library, other than a crammer's haven. "Most importantly, the library must remain and further develop as a place, as Von Foerster has suggested, to "enlarge the range of each person's competence", and in the terms of Ivan Illich, the library remains a "convivial tool", ie. one which gives every person who uses it the greatest opportunity to enrich the environment with the fruits of his or her vision. In the headlong rush into the arms of technology, we should not forget the library as a place of serious contemplation in which previously unassociated ideas may be brought together in a student or researcher's head."

It is necessary to stress that the nature of the library lies not only in the fact that this is a necessary tool for study whilst at college but also that it is a preparation for a life time of study and personal development. Students need to know how to keep themselves aware of current developments and to continue to use a library as another tool in their kit.

Libraries serve another group of clientele - other libraries. Theological libraries do not exist in a vacuum: they form part of the nation's library resources. Some theological college libraries have for many years been

contributors, to the *Australasian Union List of Serials in Theological Collections*, to the National Union Catalogue of Monographs and to the serials union catalogue, *Serials in Australian Libraries: Social Science and Humanities* (SALSSAH) now National Union Catalogue of Serials (NUCOS). Their holdings have been listed and are available to the nation's libraries and they form an important resource of specialist material, often not available elsewhere.

If theological college libraries are to perform the functions I have outlined adequately they must be adequately funded. Why is it that when cuts come, it is often the library which is cut first - surely this is false economy.A better, larger library is some substitute if staff are cut or courses are reduced. Library cuts can only make less information available to staff and students and impoverish the whole teaching program. There is evidence that in areas of staffing, collections and services theological college libraries are woefully inadequate. In a revealing article, 'Australian and New Zealand theological library statistics' in *Colloquium: The Australian and New Zealand Theological Review* Vol. 18 No 2 1986.,Trevor Zweck, the librarian at Luther Seminary, North Adelaide provides the first results of a statistical survey of Australian and New Zealand theological college libraries. Zweck comments on the small overall size of theological colleges' collections, their slow rate of growth, the small numbers of current subscriptions, very meagre financial expenditure, extremely low staffing levels, little automation, numbers of part time staff and libraries without a professionally qualified person in charge. It is a depressing picture. "Another obvious observation is that theological libraries generally could benefit from massive increases in funding and that in many cases such increases are desperately needed! In general, collections are modest in size, staffing levels are either minimal or totally inadequate, and most libraries have hardly been touched by the information technology revolution.

However, the survey also revealed that theological librarians generally are aware of their responsibilities, are keen to provide an adequate service to users, and are endeavouring within the limits of the means at their disposal to do so. Such an attitude augers well for the future of theological libraries." (p.45)

Whilst this picture is true, I cannot share his optimism for the future: it needs more than hard work and optimism on the part of librarians. How then can the picture be changed?

As librarians we have to convince the administrators that starving libraries of funds is false economy: to underfund a library is to waste the collection and the investment already made. It will be necessary for

librarians to be more entrepreneurial - to go out and make a loud noise about what is necessary to provide good service. To rely on the provision of good service is not enough to convince administrators of the value of the library. A more active program of public relations will be needed, to convince users and administrators that their library can do more and could do so if better funded. Be more active in providing services - survey the market and tailor services to specific needs. Show them what resources you need and what positive effects these will have on the operation of the library.

What do theological college libraries need to fulfil their functions?

First and foremost they need staff. Zweck's article shows that 16 out of 40 theological college libraries do not have a professionally trained librarian and 10 more have less than 1. A collection of books without a professionally trained librarian is not a library by definition. No theological college library which has only part-time staff can be said to be offering adequate service: if students are there full-time, the librarian needs to be there full-time. The numbers of library staff need to be assessed in proportion to the size of the faculty and the student population. With increasing emphasis on self directed study and independent research the need for adequate numbers of professionally qualified staff to assist students and to select a suitable collection is vital. The appropriate number of clerical and professional staff to students is given in various published standards. These should be checked and deficiencies pointed out to faculty and administrations very clearly.

The training of staff is an important issue. Many staff in theological college libraries are not trained at either the professional, paraprofessional or clerical level. While no one would wish to decry the dedicated service offered by such staff, the fact remains that the full range and level of services which can be offered by a trained librarian is superior to that of the untrained. The latter's experience is often limited to the one institution. Untrained staff have no theoretical background, no core of knowledge, do not have access to continuing education and little knowledge of what could or should be offered. Therefore, a limited service is all that can be provided.

Efforts must be made to allow staff time off to attend training courses. Graduate and postgraduate training in librarianship is offered in every capital city and in some regional centres. It must be seen as a common practice to allow time off to attend lectures. If this is not possible, full and active encouragement must be given to staff to undertake correspondence courses in librarianship such as the course offered by Riverina-Murray Institute of Higher Education. Time off to attend continuing education courses or conferences run by tertiary institutions

or professional organisations such as the Library Association of Australia should be considered normal practice and the time missed at work viewed as the overall gain to the institution it is. Well trained and aware staff give better and more efficient service.

The introduction of professional staff to theological college libraries means higher salaries - but better services, more effective and efficient development of libraries. This cannot be undertaken cheaply and the benefits in long term will be obvious. Good quality comes at a fair price. If theological colleges offer appropriate salaries they will attract good staff. Appropriate salary structures will do much to encourage good staff to undertake training. In the larger theological colleges in the USA the librarian is given faculty status in recognition of the contribution made by the librarian to the institution. The librarian at universities in Australia is given faculty status. The librarian should be deeply involved in the educational process of a theological college's library and because of this should be included in discussions on courses and curriculum planning. Fearful stories in academic institutions abound of the consequences of starting a new course without informing the library, which without notice or funds has suddenly to provide appropriate research materials for students in that new course. The advice of the librarian should be considered as the professional expert on what informational materials are appropriate and, more importantly, available - are there any at all or will they take 6 months to import?

Theological college libraries should consider the training of other categories of staff - the library technician and the clerical assistant. Smaller libraries may only need a librarian and clerical help, larger ones should engage middle level technically trained staff. Courses exist in most capitals for library technicians. These latter are not a cheap version of a librarian but are a separate group trained to carry out technical and supervisory tasks. It is important to be aware of the needs of the clerical staff to be trained in supervision, in use of the new technology or in specific aspects of their work. It is a cost that is repaid in more efficient operation.

I cannot stress strongly enough the importance of trained staff to the effective operation of a library. They are the key to it and provide a means to raise standards within theological college libraries and to enable such libraries to participate in the wider library community. Untrained staff, though cheaper, are more likely to be expensive in the long run, to develop non standard insufficient systems and to not have the necessary professional contacts.

Allan Veanor, a prominent North American librarian in an article '1985-95: the next decade in academic librarianship' in *College and Research*

Libraries, May 1985 says that academic libraries in the coming decade cannot afford the severe financial penalties imposed by failure to observe standards. It is better to have uniform records and systems, which are cheaper, than to have perfect systems which require expensive adaptation to suit extremely local conditions. Veanor maintains that, especially with the advent of new technology and its application in libraries, standardisation, always a matter of economic necessity, will now become a keystone of effective library administration and an important fiscal control device.

It is after all cheaper to use standardised cataloguing and to use a standardised classification and subject heading system. It allows for cheaper processing, involving less staff time spent performing local changes. It allows easier exchange of data and/or information with other libraries to mutual benefit. The use of national and international standards for cataloguing is a basic requirement for participation into ABN and for active entry into the network of the Australian library community. As well as in cataloguing standards are the basis of the inter-library loans network. The Australian ILL network uses a standard ILL form developed by consultation amongst the library community and standard ILL vouchers to cover the cost of photocopies of journal articles.

Local systems may have had their place in a time when library services were neither highly integrated nor based on technology - they have no place in today's library world.

Formal standards for libraries exist in Australia, Europe, SE Asia and in North America. They are usually published by a professional association and offer both quantitative and qualitative measures. The standards for special libraries in Australia were last published in 1981 and are currently being revised by a diverse group of Australian librarians for publication at the end of 1986. Standards cover matters such as appropriate numbers of staff, size of collection, services, size of the building, growth rates, expenditure, furniture and equipment. Librarians should obtain copies of these standards and measure their own libraries against them. These are objective standards developed by professionals and can be used as a powerful argument with administrators as the precise deficiencies of their operation can be pointed to and it can be seen how far in a number of areas their library falls short.

Trevor Zweck in 'Standards for ANZATS theological libraries' in *Colloquium: the Australian and New Zealand Theological Review.* Vol. 16 1984 writes at length on the need for standards specifically for theological libraries. Their contribution, once adopted, to the

improvement in size and stature of theological college libraries in the USA has been clear. Zweck discusses the sorts of items which should be included under 3 headings : services, resources and administration. He concludes with a series of 6 recommendations for implementation of a schedule of standards. These include formation of task group of librarians to develop the standards, their circulation for discussion, development of a set of guidelines for using the standards and development of means of gathering relevant statistical data. It is an article I would commend to you all.

The formation of a professional Association is an important step. It marks a degree of maturity which has been reached by theological libraries. A professional association can do much to assist development and can be critical in supporting efforts to upgrade staff, services and collections in libraries. Amongst these benefits are the following -

- a strong unified voice on theological college library matters
- a lobbying force - both internally and externally
- achievement of goals not possible by an individual
- mutual support of members
- communication - an exchange of information of both knowledge and experience
- development of a professional college
- a vehicle for training
- a vehicle for continuing education, monitoring needs, developing and providing courses.
- control of and contribution to education for librarianship
- conduct of conferences and seminars, both national and local
- production and circulation of newsletters and of professional publications and trade tools i.e. directories
- promotion of theological college libraries and librarians
- encouragement of professional knowledge, of research and development
- improvement of standards by development and promulgation of formal standards, regularly revised
- greater status and visibility for the theological college libraries
- membership services
- development of policy positions and statements
- development of a code of ethics
- establishment of formal structure of relationships nationally/internationally.

In other words, the development of a professional association will promote and professionalise theological college libraries and librarians and raise overall recognition of them as a separate and specific group. Don't forget that there are other groups which can help as well. The

Library Association of Australia is an association dedicated to the advancement of libraries and librarianship. With over 7000 members spread throughout Australia it is developing a strong profile as a lobbyist and as a voice for library matters. I urge you to establish contact with the LAA - its strength and experience would be of considerable help to you. The Headquarters are in Sydney and has a full time staff of 11. There is an active branch in the ACT of just under 400 members, many of them special librarians, many in academic and educational institutions. The LAA has meetings with guest speakers on topics of relevance to you. Regular continuing education programs are offered as well as Conferences and Seminars. Non-members are welcome to attend at modest costs but at rates higher than for non-members. Membership of both Associations would be worthwhile for theological college librarians. Formal contact should be made with the LAA through the Executive Director, Ms J. Adams, 376 Jones Street, Ultimo, 2007. The local ACT contact is through the Secretary ACT Branch Mr. K. Webb, c/- National Library of Australia. It would be worth your while to see if your meetings could be announced in local Branch newsletters or an advertisement placed in *InCite* the LAA's fortnightly newsletter. I strongly suggest development of a close relationship with the LAA, as I believe that there would be benefit to both parties. You should investigate the possibility of theological librarians forming a special interest group (SIG). Some theological college librarians are already members of the LAA and would be in a position to propose such a SIG. These are informal bodies, not part of the formal structure of the LAA but have to be sponsored by either a section or a division (ie a local Branch). Membership is open to any member of the Association but more importantly is also open to non-members who may be invited to participate in activities in their area of interest. The SIG nominates a sponsor and discusses with them the aims and membership of the group and a convenor is then appointed. A brief report of activities is required annually. There is no membership fee for non members - LAA members get one SIG free. Special project funds are available from the LAA.

The Association has a number of useful publications - standards for various kinds of libraries, formal Statements such as those on volunteer workers, on professional ethics, on free library service to all, on continuing education for library personnel, on library services for the disabled and on copyright in non-book materials. It has also published salary scales across Australia for workers in libraries, and work level guidelines for librarians and library technicians. The latter is a useful tool designed to assist library staff and managers in the establishment of a hierarchy of library positions and to determine the kind and level of duties appropriate to particular positions.

One of the most important activities for libraries in Australia both now and in the future is that of networking. Because of its sparse population poised uncomfortably on the edge of the continent, and its always scarce resources, Australian libraries have highly developed co-operative systems. These are operated in areas such as collection development, interlibrary loan, reference services, cataloguing, union catalogues for serials and monographs. Given that Australian libraries operate in a highly integrated climate, advances in technology have given libraries tremendous opportunities to develop these co-operative activities and to develop resource sharing on a scale and to a degree little envisaged thirty years ago. Theological college libraries are part of this wider network - they are an important and highly specialised part of that network. At present they form a network within a network: theological college libraries network amongst themselves as well as amongst other libraries. Theological college libraries are probably less well developed than many other groups within the network because they have been starved for staff, collections and services, their contribution is smaller and less than it should and could be. Theological college libraries participate in the network, and are nett borrowers because of the paucity of their resources.

The basis of the ILL Network is reciprocity - if I lend, will you lend? and the basis for that sharing has been well set out in the Australian Advisory Council on Bibliographical Services (AACOBS) ILL code.

Some attempts have been made to develop a rationalised collection development program for Australian libraries which would allow for better expenditure of resources. Some libraries have developed well known areas of specialisation in collection development, but these are not formally recognised and such strengths may change according to the whim of the faculty or the institution's researchers. Warren Horton, Director-General of the National Library of Australia, has said recently that resources are now so restrained and likely to be so for some considerable time that libraries must make greater efforts to rationalise collection development. He suggested more formal agreements between libraries as to areas and extent of collections - a difficult proposal but not an impossible one. In times of such budgetary restraint it may be critical for libraries to take this road. Theological college libraries would, as part of the wider library network, benefit from such a scheme.

In his address to the LAA's Biennial Conference in Darwin in July 1986, Horton said -

"Central to the thrust of my proposal is the belief that bad times and emerging technology gives us the opportunity to make the next leap

forward in terms of clearer national understandings and formal agreement on the co-operative development of library and information services in a range of areas, including the building of the Australian library collection and ensuring the most effective possible delivery of information to users throughout the nation. Difficulties such as declining resources and devaluation, and opportunities for more effective resource sharing through technology and developments such as the growth of the national bibliographic database, in my view make it imperative that we seek national solutions in a much more structured and thorough way that I believe we are yet doing."

He has proposed that a series of consultations be held Australia-wide to identify issues and decide on action to better co-ordinate and develop library resources in Australia. These regional meetings would culminate in a White House style conference in late 1987 at which libraries of all types would help formulate a strategic plan for Australian libraries. Theological college libraries should ensure that they become involved in these discussions in their region and state and be represented at the final conference. More details will be forthcoming from the National Library shortly.

Other networks in which theological college libraries are involved are cataloguing networks. Two, Avondale and St Marks, have become members of on-line cataloguing networks, CLANN and ABN respectively. Let me say a few words in support of membership of these networks. The network I am most familiar with is, naturally, the Australian Bibliographic Network (ABN) which operates at the NLA. It is an online shared bibliographic facility. Major files of data from several national libraries including the Library of Congress and British Library and the US Government Printing Office are mounted, giving immediate access to 4 million records. ABN lists largely books and serials but has begun to list pictures, manuscripts, music and other formats. Later speakers from ABN will talk about further aspects of the system. Participants use this data instead of cataloguing an item themselves. If no data is present the participant catalogues it. Participants can take off this data to develop their own catalogues on microfiche, cards or magnetic tape. When making a record or taking a copy of a record the library creates a holding record on the database, which shows which libraries hold what material. This union catalogue function is an important one as it shows searchers the location of material. The record is created within 24 hours of entry into the base - not weeks or months as in card based union catalogues. ABN can be used in this way to locate works for ILL. A separate ILL module is being currently reviewed for implementation on ABN which would allow libraries to identify the work wanted and send an immediate online message by electronic mail to the

the holding library asking for the book. Such a module will greatly speed ILLs and end dependence on the postal system.

Information on the system includes items which are "on order" in some particular libraries - essential information when deciding whether to order a book or serial title. ABN has in fact developed into a powerful tool for collection rationalisation, reducing unnecessary duplication and allowing better use of scarce financial resources.

Libraries can become participants as St Mark's has and can contribute cataloguing data (in standard format, of course) or can access the database as a casual client i.e. on a dial-up basis using a terminal and a telephone line. There are 108 full members and over 300 clients using ABN on a dial-up basis from their terminal through AUSTPAC.

The advantages of ABN are that it makes known quickly what materials are held by what libraries, provides cataloguing procedures, saves time and cuts costs, makes it easier for libraries to control costs, raises productivity and reduces unnecessary duplication. Cataloguing an item is done once and once only and then shared by all members, and catalogues are tailor made for each participating library. Training and help in use are provided by the Network Office. It is hoped that in addition to the ILL system module, an acquisition system to enable ordering of books from booksellers, library suppliers and publishers will be added in the future. Access to other information systems such as CLIRS (Computerized Legal Information System) will be available. The benefits I have outlined apply to all online automated networks not just to ABN: there may be systems and networks which may be more appropriate for your library.

The point to be considered is that the benefits of access to the resource in ABN are enormous and must be seen to balance the costs. Immediacy of access to such a large database; copy cataloguing, and production of cataloguing products save much staff time and processing and enables better use of resources. Other libraries are aware of the particular strengths of your library and its research resources which can then be more widely used. Collection development information is invaluable - you can see who already has this title, where, how many copies (or none) and these are basic factors in decisions on acquisitions. It may seem to administrators a lot of money but the benefits are equally great. Online networks are the way of the future - unless theological college libraries join in, they will be left behind to flounder in an increasingly small backwater with ever decreasing resources.

Trevor Zweck in his article on statistics in *Colloquium: the Australian and New Zealand Theological Review.* Vol 18 No 2 1986 deplores the fact

that by the end of 1984, no theological library had automated its technical processing. None had an online catalogue, though several have indefinite plans for some sort of automation. Theological college libraries must become involved in the information technology evolution - its benefits are direct and great. Automation while demanding initial outlays, results in significant cost savings in the technical processing areas of libraries. It enables better quality and faster reference services to be provided for clients. The facts must be presented to faculty and administrators so that they can see for themselves the savings in time, in costs and the significant improvements in services. Assembly your facts, outline the costs - and the savings. There are possibilities for several theological college libraries to group together to share the cost of and access to dial-up facilities on ABN and these should be explored. It is quite easy to arrange for demonstrations of online systems - vendors are happy to show off the latest in their inventory to you, the faculty and the administration and to discuss costs and benefits. Discuss with vendors exactly what is required for installation and discuss the needs you have for cataloguing, acquisition and reference. Use the evidence available in the standards to show how lagging are theological college libraries. Students and staff are getting a poor deal in comparison with other tertiary institutions. Better quality training and education of theological students will be one of the direct benefits of additional expenditure on libraries and their resources and on automation of their activities.

My sampler is complete. My theme of libraries and librarians an undervalued asset has been developed and enlarged, the outline of the design presented and the background filled in. Libraries and librarians are essential to the aims of theological institutions - without them adequate training and development of clergy and laity would not be possible. Present libraries are underfunded, under-automated and underutilised. Administrators must be convinced of the need for more resources to allow libraries to develop properly in an age of increasing availability of information and in increasing information technology. Staffing of theological college libraries must be placed on a professional basis and with adequate numbers of qualified librarians and adequate qualified support staff, both library technicians and clerical assistants. Just as the training of theological students has changed to keep pace with modern theories and contemporary needs so too must the operation of theological college libraries. The penalty for not doing so is steady decline, until a once valuable asset is worthless, having been starved to death.

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