

LIBRARY COOPERATION:- OR IF LIBRARIES CAN DO IT THEY CAN DO IT TOGETHER

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The subject I was given for this talk was: rationalization: practical or possible? Rather than dealing with the narrow issue of rationalization I'll examine the question of library cooperation, of which rationalization is one part.

First we need to look at the meaning of the terms we'll be working with: library cooperation, resource sharing, networking, and cooperative collection building and rationalization.

'Library cooperation' is an all-encompassing term referring to collaboration between two or more libraries on any level, from the trivial, such as one librarian ringing another to ask for an address; to the working agreement, such as interlibrary loans; to the extreme, such as amalgamation - which is a form of cooperation many of our academic libraries are now experiencing.

'Resource sharing' means to jointly acquire, hold or make available library resources. Some examples of resource sharing are schemes for the acquisition of expensive items, cooperative storage and shared databases.

'Networking' is usually a more formal arrangement of combined operation, with commitments, a structured organization, perhaps a governing body and full time staff. Examples are the New Zealand Bibliographic Network and the Australian Bibliographic Network. But the term 'network' is also used, very casually, to refer to any group of libraries.

Both 'networking' and 'resource sharing' are forms of cooperation and there is a great deal of overlap between the three terms, so I'll use cooperation in this paper to refer to any form of cooperative effort.

'Cooperative collection building' is the term I'll use to refer to forms of cooperation which aim to add to the library's resources. An example of cooperative collection building is the *Australasian Religion Index*. Many of us have contributed to this index which now provides us (and others) with a resource we didn't have before.

I have deliberately used the term 'cooperative collection building' - I think I devised the term, I don't remember having seen it elsewhere - instead of 'collection development' because collection development is not simply a method of acquiring material, but too often it has been viewed in that way.

Lastly, rationalization: to reduce duplication of materials or time by working with other libraries. An example of rationalizing materials is to agree to not buy in areas which are being collected by other libraries. To rationalize time is to reduce time by sharing processes, for example, by copy cataloguing from a database such as NZBN or ABN. Time and materials are two of the chief forms of rationalization, but many forms of cooperation may save time and therefore may be seen to be forms of rationalization.

There can be cooperative collection building without rationalization, the *Australasian Religion Index* is a good example of that, and there can be rationalization plans which don't mention collection building. An example of both rationalization and collection building together is the subject specialization scheme: a group of librarians agree to buy and make available to each other, materials in a specified subject or of a specified type, for example, expensive or rare books, theses, post-graduate subject areas (but rationalization should always be at least at post-graduate level in academic libraries because undergraduate needs should be provided for). This means that the duplication of materials is avoided and the collection level is raised in the agreed area.

Now we've defined our terms we need to examine the benefits and difficulties of cooperation. Firstly, the benefits: access to a wider range of resources: as one writer put it 'library walls fall'¹; improved collections;

¹ Kennedy, Robert A. 'Bell Laboratories library network' in Gibson,

better service to users; better utilization of resources, technology, and time; maybe cost saving (more about that when we discuss difficulties); there are benefits in meeting with other librarians (especially for those who work alone); and individual types of cooperation bring particular benefits, such as the benefits of cooperative collection building and rationalization. And libraries can do more together than they can do alone, with team work opening doors to better librarianship.

I won't dwell on the benefits of cooperation, partly because they are obvious and to some degree unquantifiable, and also because they are often peculiar to particular schemes. Don't imagine that I'm against cooperation just because I spend more time discussing the difficulties, I certainly favour cooperation, but the requirements, pitfalls and problems must be aired and dealt with in detail when considering cooperation, and they can be used to help planning.

These pitfalls and problems have been widely documented, a good cautionary article being Richard Dougherty's². I found that the critics don't try to dissuade participation in cooperative schemes, they just warn us to be wary. The criticism usually wasn't of the trivial or working level of cooperation - after all these people were cooperating by sharing their thoughts on cooperation - they were criticizing more sophisticated or newer schemes, sometimes I think as a reaction against what they saw as poor collection development, abuse of the system, or sometimes, I suspect, they were unnecessarily defensive through lack of understanding. First, the requirements. Cooperation is a way of supplementing collections, it is not a substitute for good collection development. Our text for cooperation is not John 2:1-12, the Marriage at Cana. What we must avoid is thinking that we can turn water into wine: cooperation will not turn a poor collection into a good one - you need divine intervention to turn water into wine, and hard work to turn a poor collection into a good one. When we cooperate, we need to have a

Robert W. Jr, ed. *The special library role in networks. A conference held at General Motors Research Laboratories Warren, Michigan, May 5-6, 1980*. New York: Special Libraries Association, 1980. pp 17-36.

² Dougherty, Richard M. 'Resource sharing among research libraries: how it ought to work' *Collection Management* 9 (2/3) 1987, 79-88.

good collection to share. The extreme misuse of cooperation is referred to as 'the sharing of poverty'³ where everyone relies on other collections and doesn't build their own. Another misuse is to rely heavily on other libraries rather than building up our own, so that some libraries are overused.

Other requirements of cooperating libraries include high quality standards and standardized practices, which may entail recataloguing, training for librarians, documenting and changing procedures, and keeping statistics.

My neighbour, Reza, is an Iranian. Because he lived in the United States for some years before coming to live in Australia he has a good grasp of the English language. The first time he went into an Australian pub (to try Australian beer) he walked up to the bar and the barmaid asked him 'Are you alright?' Reza replied that yes, he was fine. She said 'Are you sure you're alright?' And Reza said that yes, he was sure he was alright. So the barmaid walked away and Reza didn't have a beer. Another man walked up to the bar the barmaid asked 'are you alright' and the man ordered a beer. This story reminds us that we should standardize practices, that is, we should all speak the same 'language'.

Another requirement is to know our own collection and the needs of our constituency. We should have a collection development policy, so that we and the users of our collections, know what is in the library and what we plan to do, even if the collection development policy is just a rough draft rather than being part of a conspectus. And this will help to avoid the first of the pitfalls and problems, which is politics.

'The ideals of cooperation are supported by economic necessity but challenged by political reality'. We need to persuade our councils and users that the joint effort has benefits. Especially when someone wants books on Saint Ignatius which are held in a library on the other side of town (isn't it sensible that the Jesuits should have a good stock of books

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid.

on St Ig) while recently no-one has looked at our wonderful pile on St Christopher (perhaps they had problems travelling to the library). In other words, we must do our homework before we team up, find out what our users need and our governing bodies expect, write that collection development policy, and persuade the people who count of the benefits of working with other libraries.

And counting leads into our second difficulty - the budget. If you want to save money by cooperating you're going into it for the wrong reason. Although there may be savings it is wrong to have cost cutting as the major goal. The goal should be improved collection, improved access to other collections, better cataloguing, or whatever, in other words the first goal of cooperation is to improve the library, not to save money. There may be savings, but although there are many benefits of cooperation, they don't always include budget cuts. In fact, many cooperative schemes mean spending more money, because many of these projects are cooperative collection building. Even projects to rationalize collections, copy catalogue, etc., take time and materials, often involving expensive technology. And there will be costs to a good library which becomes a net supplier of resources to other libraries. Dougherty wrote that the greatest threat to the exchange of materials is volume: he quoted a study which showed the impact of OCLC was an increased interlibrary lending rate of up to 1,437% for small libraries, while even the largest had an increase of 85.6%⁵. On the other hand... look at the better use of the resources!

But in the end the budget is the real cause of difficulty in cooperation. Cooperation is easier when there is less pressure on the budget, because in times of tighter economic control our first responsibility is to our own users, and this makes some types of cooperation, such as rationalization through allocating collecting areas, beyond the budget in difficult times.

Cooperative ventures, especially networking, will take a higher percentage of the budget of a small library than a large, but with similar returns for both.

⁵ Ibid

The third problem is access. Although libraries can't expect to own everything their users need, ergo cooperation, access to an item is thought not to be as good as ownership of the item - although ownership may mean that the book is out on loan, or lost, or perhaps has not been bought and access may mean that the book is available immediately at a nearby location. But we can't deny the fact that users would prefer an item to be available where and when they want it, and that it is more likely to be available if the library owns a copy.

Access also includes means of access, now often through new forms of technology, the shared database being the obvious successor to the union catalogue. Technology affords speedy access: it may be quicker to have a document faxed than to look for it in the stack, especially if stack isn't catalogued! Technology is expensive - the computer, the FAX machine, database fees, training to use the technology, etc. - but the cost of this technology can be shared because it can be used by other parts of the organization and also for in-house library use. This means the cost of technology shouldn't be entirely in the cooperation budget, and certainly the cost saving of the technology should be taken into account.

The fourth problem is that special libraries - and here we'll count theological libraries as special libraries - have special needs. Special classifications are best for special libraries but these classifications may lessen the advantages of cooperation. Special libraries may also have more extensive requirements of cooperative schemes, such as specialist staff support, fast response by the system, and access to a wide range of reference material.

Now, taking account of the difficulties of cooperation, what options are there for theological libraries? There are many cooperative schemes and the list is still growing. Some examples are acquisitions, circulation systems, cataloguing, library promotion, reader education, cooperative storage, library associations, problem solving, staff expertise, computers, and conspectus. There are too many types of cooperation and too many schemes to list them here, but I have included a variety of examples in this paper. I quickly came to the conclusion that: if libraries can do it they can do it together. And they can do more together than they can do alone.

One of the men I work with, Larry, was driving to work one day last week, and as usual, stopped at the local newsagent so that his wife, Pat, could buy the newspaper. While Pat was in the newsagency the traffic lights in front of Larry's car changed to green, and the drivers of the cars behind his blew their car horns. So Larry drove his car around the corner to wait there for Pat. Pat walked out of the newsagency, got into the car at the kerb (where Larry's had been) and said to the driver 'come on, let's go'. Then she turned around and realized that she was in the wrong car.

It's a good idea to know about the libraries you're planning to cooperate with and where you plan to go together before you set off.

I would like to consider options for cooperation not by type of cooperation but by type of library or cooperative group, perhaps opening up new horizons for working together, for the list of types of cooperation is endless:

1. Theological library cooperating with other theological libraries or libraries with similar subject interests. Cooperation based on subject seems obvious and there is already a basis for this through ANZTLA. The British equivalent of ANZTLA is the Association of British Theological and Philosophical Libraries, although there has been little evidence of the philosophical libraries for some time. Cooperation based on subject may be cooperation with other libraries on a regional or a denominational basis (similar to the cooperation of libraries within an organization, for example, the CSIRO network of libraries, although perhaps without sharing a budget).
2. Theological library cooperating with other libraries requiring a specific type of publication. There is an example of this in Cynthia A. Steinke's article⁶ where she describes cooperation based on the common need for government publications.

⁶ Steinke, Cynthia A. 'Standards, specifications and codes: a union list approach to resource sharing in the Chicago metropolitan area. *Science and Technology Libraries* 1 Winter 1980, 75-88.

3 Theological library cooperating with special libraries, perhaps through the Special Library Association. Special libraries have more in common with each other than they have with large academic libraries.

4 Theological library and academic libraries. I read an article years ago in which the author referred to the sharing of the resources of their theological library with the resources of non-theological libraries as being analogous to sharing his savings account with the funds of the national bank. I think that is a fitting analogy here. Were some of our theological libraries to share their resources with those of a nearby university it would be akin to sharing your bank balance with the funds of the National Australia Bank or the National Bank of New Zealand. You would certainly have access to enormous resources, but there could be some difficulties when they call on you to put in your share (especially if you chose to partner the Pyramid Building Society). But there is partnership with academic libraries, as we see through the Flinders and Murdoch University schemes, where theological students who study at the university use the resources of the university library. Resources of academic libraries may be enormous, but they often lack specialist materials. It could be possible to enter into a reciprocal borrowing arrangement with an academic library to give your users access to materials you don't hold.

5 Theological library and groups of libraries using the same technology, for example, through CODIANZ (for Dynix users) or the Inmagic Users Group. This is a good way to learn to exploit the technology.

6 Theological library and other local libraries. There is a good example of this in Rachel F. Berry's article 'The Insiders - a cooperative network of special libraries'⁷ This article describes the activity of a group of special libraries in Minneapolis, Minnesota, which are housed in

⁷ Berry, Rachel F. 'The Insiders - a cooperative network of special libraries' in Gibson, Robert W. Jr, ed. *The special library role in networks. A conference held at General Motors Research Laboratories Warren, Michigan, May 5-6, 1980*. New York: Special Libraries Association, 1980. pp 83-109.

skyscrapers linked by pedestrian overpasses used extensively in the cold Minnesota winters, hence the name 'Insiders' (it sounds like a great idea for the cold winter we're suffering in Melbourne at the moment). This group developed from a weekly meeting of librarians, and is based on location, all the libraries are of different types, and the scheme developed various forms of cooperation and gave tremendous advantages to each participating library. In Victoria we have a unique example of regional library cooperation - the library tram. It is colourful and interesting and it bears the logo 'libraries are for everyone'.

7. Theological library and local networks, for example CAVAL and CLANN. As an example, CAVAL in Victoria has organised a reciprocal borrowing scheme; training and support for libraries using ABN; research on the needs of member libraries; continuing education for professional staff; consultancy services, etc. Although this scheme is particularly for academic libraries, there are advantages in participating in or learning from these schemes. A quote from CAVAL's 1988 Annual Report: 'Over ten years of cooperation by Victorian academic libraries have brought many benefits to users of Victoria's major research libraries. Many of these are obvious and include the direct financial savings realised by our university and college libraries and the State Library. There are also many which are intangible. These include the immeasurable benefits to library users through the extension of library services beyond single institutions ...'⁸

8. Theological library and a repository library, that is, a library which is set up to serve other libraries. James C. Schmidt⁹ argues for the need for a national periodicals centre (in the United States) to acquire and make available periodicals. Ian Douglas of Swinburne Library is an advocate of an Australian centralized serials collection, which could also

⁸ *Annual Report. 1988. CAVAL Limited* [Melbourne]: CAVAL, 1988.

⁹ Schmidt, C. James 'A national periodicals center: history and current status'. In Gibson, Robert W. Jr., ed. *The special library role in networks. A conference held at General Motors Research Laboratories Warren, Michigan, May 5-6, 1980*. New York: Special Libraries Association, 1980, 259-275.

extend to the collection of 'grey literature', a collection made available to other libraries through interlibrary loan.

9. Theological library and other libraries through commercial enterprise. I think we are just seeing the beginnings of this. By commercial enterprise I mean organizations formed by librarians which sell a product. One example is Auslib Press which has been involved in publishing, mainly library directories, and indexing library materials.

10. Theological library and all cooperating libraries in Australia or New Zealand, via interlibrary loans. ABN, NZBN, ALIA, NZLA, etc. and through these schemes we have access to the resources of the national and state libraries.

11. Theological library and ... why not the world? Perhaps libraries in New Zealand should think first of theological libraries in Australia, and vice versa. Another good source of information is the British Lending Library.

Now, to our text for cooperation: John 6:3-14: this is the story of the loaves and the fish. Our question is: by cooperating can we make our resources sufficient for the multitudes: how do we put cooperation to work?

I favour the cooperative collection building direction: schemes which will directly increase our resources. Some examples of cooperative collection building are microfilm projects, cooperative acquisitions of rare, expensive, or little used items, access to databases, and a translating pool. Although there is a cost, I think it is better to put our money directly into improving our collections rather than putting our efforts into rationalization and hoping to build better collections alone in a more haphazard way. I think too that rationalization will come about with less organization and effort through common databases.

A scheme of cooperative collection building I read about which I think would be particularly good for theological libraries is a 'translating pool'¹⁰ Each participating library contributed one translated article

¹⁰ Rodeffer, Georgia H. 'Textile information users council and

each year and in return received a copy of the annual index of translations, and was able to receive a copy of any translation. I can see that this would be a good project for theological libraries because of the huge amount of material which needs to be translated into English. One person would coordinate the project, and each participating library would persuade a member of their academic staff to translate one article they're interested in. That shouldn't be too difficult given the amount of reading many academic staff do, and the languages many can speak. Once a year the coordinator receives the citation for one article from each participating library and creates an index which is distributed to each of the participating libraries. This would quickly build up a database of unique items which would be appreciated by many of our users, at very little cost to create the index and access the material. All it needs is someone to think it is worthwhile and with ANZTLA's blessing it could be done.

Just before concluding I would like to thank the people I interviewed: Max Borchardt, CAVAL; Ian Douglas, Swinburne; Lawrence McIntosh, Joint Theological Library; and Brian McMullin, Monash Graduate School of Librarianship.

To conclude: Our text was the five loaves and two fish, with these Jesus fed the 5,000 people. How can we together make our resources sufficient for our multitudes?

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THE FORM AND MANNER OF MAKING DEACONETWORK TERMINALS

This "liturgy" was received from the Library Staff of St John's College, Auckland. It was explained that it is "the work of one person's incredibly fertile imagination". It was further explained that the author "is a third year student by the name of Geoff Haworth (no relation to NZ's erstwhile cricket captain)."

A word of explanation:

"Potty Training" referred to in the "liturgy" is an irreverent term for post ordination training.

Bishop MS Dos, Primate of Bibliographical Networks Archdeacon IB Incompatible

Before he/she ordains a computer for deaconetwork service, the Bishop shall by careful enquiry satisfy her/himself as to her character, compatibility, and Kilobyterage; he shall by examination ascertain that she has adequate storage of the Bible, the Creeds, the Doctrine of Integrated Networks, and the Book of Common Repairs. When the day appointed by the Bishop is come, the Archdeacon shall present unto the Bishop (sitting in her/his chair, seated near the Holy Terminal) the apparatus upon whom ordination is desired.