

# AUSTRALIAN AND NEW ZEALAND THEOLOGICAL LIBRARY ASSOCIATION

## PRESIDENT'S REPORT FOR THE YEAR 1990/91

The year under review has been an unusual one, in that both the President and Editor of the Newsletter were absent overseas for six months; nevertheless, the work of the Association continued unabated. Our thanks are due to those who made this possible, especially Philip Harvey (who took care of the Newsletter) and Val Canty (who took care of administrative matters).

It is particularly gratifying to note that the *Australasian Religion Index*, now into its third year of publication, appears to have achieved financial stability, as it increasingly becomes appreciated and used, both here and overseas. It is obviously meeting a very big need among academic and research libraries in Australia and New Zealand, as reflected in the pattern of subscriptions from this sector of the library community. It represents a significant contribution which our librarians are making to the information needs of the wider community. It is also entirely appropriate that local theologians are becoming better known and more widely read through improved access to their writings.

Another publication of great importance to not only theological libraries, but also the wider library community is the *Australasian Union List of Serials in Theological Collection (AULOTS)*. The appearance of the second edition in 1990 meets a very real need for up-to-date information in this vital area. As we thank Hans Arns for this compilation, we note also his stated desire to hand the responsibility for any future edition over to others. We also note with appreciation the contributions of Father Michael Mason and dozens of librarians around Australia and New Zealand to the project.

Another cause for great rejoicing is the formation of the Western Australian chapter of ANZTLA. It follows the attendance of the first contingent of Western Australians at an ANZTLA Conference and the election of the first Western Australian as an officebearer of ANZTLA (Marcia Harrison as a member of the ARI Editorial Board). The small group brings together some very experienced librarians and we welcome their contribution to the work of the Association.

Within the individual libraries, there has been a dramatic upsurge of activity in the introduction and planning of automated library systems. This would seem an appropriate occasion therefore to emphasise the potential which automation offers for greater interlibrary cooperation. In the wider library community in Australia, the concept of the Distributed National Collection is being vigorously promoted; it is a concept which I believe has even greater relevance to the theological libraries of our two nations. Essentially, it is a matter of seeing our libraries as constituting, not one hundred or so collections, but as one collection distributed in one hundred or so locations. The kind of cooperation activity which must emanate from the DNC concept is vital for an area which does not have any really major theological research library (like a Yale or a Harvard or a Princeton) to fall back on. It has some obvious implications for resource sharing (e.g. through interlibrary loan) and for cooperative collection building.

It is particularly in the area of cooperative collection development that automation offers so much potential. In the Australian Bibliographic Network (and presumably also the New Zealand Bibliographic Network), we have a marvellous tool to assist us in our cooperative endeavours, if we only have the will to use it. The advent of full screen access to ABN for dial-up users offers an unprecedented opportunity for small libraries to get involved, for both their individual and their mutual benefit.

In the area of cooperative collection development, a project which is worthy of emulation is that of the libraries in the Sydney area in working on a cooperative collection development policy. If this idea could be replicated right across Australia and New Zealand it would be a very important step forward in the realisation of the DNC concept.

Looking beyond our own shores, let us also be mindful of appeals that have come in recent times for assistance to theological libraries in Asia and the Pacific. The big needs appear to be resources and expertise. While we may be acutely aware that our own libraries could also do with more of both, there may also be ways in which we can both render assistance in these areas and be enriched by it.

*Respectfully submitted, (Rev) Trevor Zweck, President.  
July 1991.*

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## INFORMATION LITERACY AND USER EDUCATION

*Joyce Kirk*

Increasingly, attention is being given to information literacy by both information professionals and educators. The information literate person is one who has the knowledge, skills and attitudes appropriate to living in a society which places a high value on information and its use by individuals as well as by groups of people. The information literate person is also an independent and autonomous learner who has the confidence to set his or her own learning and information goals and to pursue them. Information literacy is fundamental to continuous life-long learning.

Information literacy, or the ability to access and evaluate information linked to several levels of access that affect the use or non-use of information: societal, institutional, physical, psychological and intellectual. Dervin (1973) describes these levels of accessibility as follows:

1. **Societal accessibility.** Society must perceive the need to provide certain types of information and must allocate the resources necessary to satisfy these needs.