

LIBRARY CO-OPERATION: THE EXPERIENCE OF CHICAGO AND TORONTO

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As part of a three month sabbatical leave in 1993, I visited libraries in Chicago and Toronto to look at library co-operation. Both are cities where there are a number of seminaries of various denominations, and where ways have been found to co-ordinate access to the available resources. In planning these visits, I found the Librarians at the chosen libraries very helpful and interested in what I was doing, and I was grateful to them for the time that they made available to me.

The Association of Chicago Theological Schools

The Association of Chicago Theological Schools, known as ACTS was formed in 1983. It has ten seminary libraries within the Schools, several of them being merged libraries of more than one seminary. The combined collection numbers over 1.3 million volumes, and jointly they have more than 5000 currently received periodical titles. They are spread over a wide geographic area, and transport is needed to travel between them. Co-operative collection building has been in place for quite some time, with various libraries making an on-going commitment to purchases in particular subject areas; one library that I visited was in fact purchasing in an area that was not presently taught within the parent institution. The cost of a three times weekly courier service around all libraries is shared, enabling transfer of requested items between

libraries. All students and faculty are able to register as borrowers at any of the libraries. ACTS is at present focusing on the possibility of a joint computerised catalogue of all library holdings, but this is an enormous project, as few of the libraries are yet fully automated. A retrospective conversion project in each library is seen as essential for this project, and they are looking at ways of getting joint funding for such a project. Many of the libraries involved have yet to make decisions about fully automating their collections, although most catalogue using OCLC.

I was able to visit two of the libraries within ACTS, both giving a different perspective on co-operation within individual libraries in ACTS.

The United Library of Garrett-Evangelical and Seabury-Western Theological Seminaries

The United library of Garrett-Evangelical and Seabury-Western Theological Seminaries is situated in Evanston, about 30 minutes by public transport from the centre of Chicago. The Seabury-Western Theological Seminary and the Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary are separate institutions (one Episcopal Church, the other United Methodist Church) situated across the road from one another and adjacent to the Northwestern University Campus. A number of years ago, the two libraries amalgamated their technical services, and eventually, after some reluctance on the part of the parent institutions, merged all library services, and amalgamated books and periodicals into one sequence. The sequence starts in the Garrett-Evangelical library building, and continues across the road at Seabury-Western. Providentially, the part of

the classification including the Anglican Church material ended up at Seabury-Western. Special collections remained with the institution that they belonged to. All purchasing is now done as if for one library, with the library budget being apportioned between the two institutions. Circulation staff are maintained on both sites, but the majority of staff are together on the Garrett-Evangelical site. A legal agreement between the two institutions is reviewed annually.

The merger has had enormous benefits for the two seminaries. By eliminating duplication of book titles from purchases, more money has been available to extend the collection. The book stock was an impressive 315,000 volumes (234,000 titles).

The Jesuit-Kraus-McCormick Library

The other ACTS library that I was able to visit was the Jesuit-Kraus-McCormick Library, situated on the Lutheran School of Theology at the north edge of the University of Chicago campus in the Hyde Park section of the city. It is a merged library of Lutheran, Jesuit and Presbyterian origins, housed in a modern multi-level building. It is an amalgam of a number of original libraries, and work is still continuing on rationalising the collection. The library collection is 380,000 volumes (300,000 titles), and has recently put in place a formal agreement as to ownership of library materials. Items purchased since the merger now belong to a Trust, which will guard against one partner leaving the merger, and the subsequent damage to the balance of the library collection.

Within ACTS there have also been other amalgamations of smaller collections to form viable libraries. Once denominational and ownership arrangements have been sorted out, they appeared to be an effective way of maximising resources. In most cases, negotiations and discussions to enable mergers to happen have been drawn out over a period of time, and advice given to me by a number of librarians counselled very careful working through of arrangements, and watertight legal agreements before proceeding.

The Toronto School of Theology

The theological schools in the Toronto area have taken a different approach to co-operation. The Toronto School of Theology which was formed in 1970, is a consortium of seven schools, all of which have their own College libraries. In addition, all students have access to the other libraries within the University of Toronto. All libraries have their current library holdings on a shared computer database. Retrospective work has not yet been completed in most libraries. Although there are obvious benefits of having the holdings of all libraries immediately available, there was some frustration expressed about trying to find their own holdings amongst all the data, and one library expressed the wish to also have a database of only their own library's holdings.

In contrast to Chicago, where amalgamated libraries were prevalent, the Toronto theological libraries saw the need to retain their individuality, but at the same time

appreciating the opportunities for resource sharing afforded by the University computer link, and the TST Librarians' regular meetings. All the colleges maintain their collections at a largely undergraduate level. An interesting feature was the theology collection in the Robarts Library which is the research library for the University of Toronto. All Theological schools contribute financially to this research level collection, which is maintained by a "dealer selection profile", by which a dealer supplies all monograph publications within specified criteria and languages. A large percentage of the collection was foreign language material, including a reasonable number of Spanish items. There was comment however, from more than one librarian, that although the Robarts collection ensured adequate coverage of research level theological material, it did not get the use it deserved, as students tended to rely on what was available within their own institutions, rather than going to the trouble of getting access to the Robarts collection. A readers card was required for access to the bookstacks which were part of a huge multi-level building. It was a little daunting to find one's way around such a large collection.

Within the TST I was able to visit the libraries of Trinity College (Anglican); St Michael's University (Catholic), and Emmanuel College (Uniting Church). I also spent some time at the Robarts Library where a general tour of the Library had been organised for me, followed by some time in the bookstacks of the theological collection. All these libraries are within easy walking distance of one another in the general University of Toronto area, making it relatively easy for library users to move between the libraries. St Michael's University Library, with a book stock of 242,000 volumes is the largest of the theological school libraries,

although the theological component of the library is around 100,000 volumes. The library is housed in an impressive modern building, together with the Institute of Medieval Studies Library. This specialised collection has 88,000 volumes of materials on medieval philosophy, theology and church history. The Library also houses a collection of artifacts from early Christianity to the Middle Ages.

The issues that other libraries have already faced and are facing, have given a valuable perspective to dimensions in library co-operation that are particularly relevant at this time. The Auckland Consortium for Theological Education is starting to look at the future of theological library resources in Auckland, as they move to the teaching of masters level courses, and acknowledge the need to have access to a wider range of resources.

Although the co-operation issues were the main focus of the sabbatical leave, I also found time to visit a number of other libraries as I travelled through England and North America. Of particular note were the Lambeth Palace Library in London, (which has been reported on in a previous issue of this Bulletin), the libraries of the Cambridge Theological Federation in Cambridge, England, and the Flora Lamson Library, Graduate Theological Union, Berkeley, California. Lambeth Palace Library is the historic library of the Archbishops of Canterbury, and is not to be missed by anyone from an Anglican College. The book collection focuses on the Anglican Communion; the manuscript collection is bound into guard books, a method of storing manuscript material which is not often seen.

The Cambridge Theological Federation libraries (Westcott House, Ridley College, Westminster College and Wesley College) are small collections, but like the Toronto School of Theology, were listed on the University library computerised catalogue.

Cambridge also offered me the opportunity to explore places connected with the history of my own institution, St John's College, as St John's College Cambridge had been the College of our founder and other early staff.

The Graduate Theological Union Library, Berkeley, California, was visited at the recommendation several other librarians in North America: the exciting architecture of the building together with the very comprehensive collection formed by the amalgamation of nine theological libraries made for a most interesting visit.

I returned to New Zealand, very grateful for a chance to have gained a wider perspective on theological libraries, but also very heartened by the standard of resources here. Although we cannot compete with the larger research libraries, our collections are more than capable of standing alongside many of the more moderate sized collections. Generally, theological libraries in Australia and New Zealand have made greater advances in in-house automation, and this together with current technological advances should in time offer us access to a greater range of resources.

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