The theological college library: an investigation into its role in ministerial education and training

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The theological college library: an investigation into its role in ministerial education and training

by

Carol Susan Reekie

Doctoral Thesis

Submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of Doctor of Philosophy of Loughborough University

September 2010

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## GLOSSARY OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

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<th>Full Form</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ABTAPL</td>
<td>The Association of British Theological and Philosophical Libraries.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ALA</td>
<td>American Library Association. The professional body for library professionals in the USA.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ATLA</td>
<td>American Theological Library Association.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CIBER</td>
<td>Centre for Information Behaviour and Evaluation Research.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CILIP</td>
<td>Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals. The professional body for library professionals in the UK.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CME</td>
<td>Continuing Ministerial Education.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CPD</td>
<td>Continuing Professional Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CYM</td>
<td>Centre for Youth Ministry.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EBSCO</td>
<td>Information service provider of e-journals, e-books and e-journal packages.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HEFC</td>
<td>Higher Education Funding Council.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ICT</td>
<td>Information and Communications Technologies. This term is generally applied to all forms of technology that communicates information and is sometimes referred to as IT.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IT</td>
<td>Information Technology. Also known as ICT.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JISC</td>
<td>Joint Information Systems Council.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LA</td>
<td>Library Association. Joined with the Institute of Information Scientist in 2002 to form CILIP.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>QAA</td>
<td>Quality Assurance Agency. The body responsible for monitoring the quality and standards of higher education provision in the UK.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>URC</td>
<td>The United Reformed Church.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VLE</td>
<td>Virtual Learning Environment.</td>
</tr>
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</table>
ABSTRACT

Theological libraries have tended to be treated as a homogeneous group with no distinction being made between the different types. Little has been written about the libraries of UK Christian theological colleges that train men and women for ministry. The purpose of this research was to provide some understanding of the context in which they operate. In addition it sought to establish their effectiveness in meeting the ongoing needs of their user communities.

Using three college libraries, a multi-method approach was employed in order to reveal the environment in which these libraries functioned. The study comprised reviewing college documentation, using a questionnaire survey and undertaking semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions. An analysis of the interview findings is presented, together with the data obtained from the questionnaire survey and focus groups.

The main issues that emerged were those concerning the changes in the delivery of theological education and the implications of these for resource provision. The need of the denominational churches to increase their recruitment for ministry whilst simultaneously reducing costs was found to have been the main driving force for change within theological education. The research found that the introduction of flexible training pathways and the diverse range of students that were now recruited for training had little effect on the way in which the traditional library service was provided by the colleges.

It was concluded that since academic learning is only one aspect of ministerial training, resource provision had been given insufficient consideration and funding. This had inhibited the growth and development of the library service and prevented the college libraries from satisfying the needs of their part-time users in particular.

This study makes an important contribution to the knowledge of theological college librarianship by providing an understanding of the prevailing issues and concerns. Further areas of research have been identified and conclusions drawn which are of relevance to the theological college library sector.
1.1 Introduction

The theological library sector is not a new phenomenon; it is one of the oldest sectors of librarianship and yet little is known about it. In the twentieth and twenty-first centuries the phrase ‘theological library’ has become a blanket term given to a diverse range of libraries that have collections within the subject area of theology. For the purpose of this research the term theological library refers to Christian theological libraries rather than libraries of other faiths, as Christian libraries have a long established tradition within the UK.

1.2 Theological libraries: historical context

Theological libraries have a long history and were originally termed ecclesiastical which Hingley (2003, p.157) defines as being “libraries that are part of, or associated with, the Christian churches and their institutions and activities”. Hingley suggests that ecclesiastical libraries date back to the first century A.D. and have their roots in Christianity’s reliance “on the written word for its survival and transmission” thus establishing the practice of collecting and storing items for posterity. This may be true in the Western world for as Leedham-Green & Webber (2006, p.1) note, by the early fifth century, after the fall of the Roman Empire, collections in the United Kingdom (UK) “were exclusively ecclesiastical”. These collections were usually located within cathedrals or monasteries in either a “book-chest or small closet” (Harris, 1995, p.99). Books were not only necessary for Bible study and liturgical services, the copying and reading of books was seen, by the Benedictine monks in particular, as being a “spiritual rather than an intellectual task” and part of monastic daily life (Ibid, p.92). It also ensured the survival of classical works.

Ecclesiastical libraries continued to dominate as centres for learning until the founding of universities in the thirteenth century. Unlike ecclesiastical libraries the main purpose of the university library was to support the teaching, learning and
research activities of the parent institution. Hoare (2003, p.3) defines university or academic libraries as those libraries that are “attached to institutions above secondary or high school level, serving the teaching and research needs of staff and students”. University libraries were not involved in the reproduction of classical works and allowed greater access to their collections (Harris 1995, p.107). The demand for books created by the universities eventually led to the establishment of the secular book trade (Hingley 2003, p.157). Although theological libraries and their collections retained their importance university library and private collections began to emerge.

According to Hingley (2003, p.157) the invention of the printing press, the dissolution of the monasteries and the subsequent dispersal of their collections during the reign of Henry VIII marked the decline of the established ecclesiastical libraries. The advent of the printing press had a direct effect upon university libraries as it enabled more copies of books to be produced within a shorter period of time. The increased availability of books on the open market lessened the previous reliance on the monastic scriptoria and signalled the decline of this skilled aspect of book production. Although many cathedral collections were re-established after the Reformation, theological libraries never regained their former prominence. Their numbers, however, did continue to increase with the advent of non-conformist religions such as the Society of Friends, their library being established in 1673 (Quakers in Britain [n.d.]).

1.3 Types of theological libraries

Theological libraries themselves are not a homogeneous group; they vary in terms of size, mission and communities. For example cathedral libraries tend to house collections that are used for scholarly historical research although many have now made their collections accessible to the public through such initiatives as INSPIRE (2005). This is a scheme that involves cathedrals, private collections, public, higher education, further education, national and health sector libraries that are committed to supporting learning in its widest sense and whose collections are open to all. For
example Norwich Cathedral Library\(^1\) and Queens College, Cambridge\(^2\) are two libraries that have historic theological collections that were not previously open to the public but are now.

Furthermore, some cathedral libraries also provide current library collections and facilities for the education and training of part-time ordinands\(^3\) and lay ministers, for example Norwich, Peterborough and St. Albans (Norwich Cathedral Library [n.d.]). This is often in collaboration with the local Diocese (Dioceses & Parishes [n.d.]). Other types of theological libraries include those of theological colleges that train men and women for ordination, as well as theological faculty or department libraries within a university. For example, Nottingham University. There are also research libraries such as Dr Williams’s Library in London, founded in 1729 that offer facilities to ministers, students and others for theology, religion and ecclesiastical studies.

Within the Anglican Church each regional Diocesan Centre\(^4\) has a small library in order to provide resources for the local clergy as part of their professional development, more commonly called Continuing Ministerial Education (CME). Many Diocesan Centres offer part-time training courses for ordained and lay ministry and lay readers. In addition there are small parish collections that provide reading material for their parishioners such as the Muniment Room, Dedham Parish Church, Essex.

In addition theological collections can also be found in public libraries as well as religious institutions. Birmingham Central Library is a good example of this having received several large, important donations of theological resources. Their collection is considered to be of sufficient importance for it to become a member of

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\(^1\) Email from Gudrun Warren to Carol Reekie, 05/03/07.
\(^2\) Email from Karen Begg to Carol Reekie, 09/04/06.
\(^3\) Those training for ministry.
\(^4\) Within the Anglican Church, the Church of England is comprised of two Provinces, Canterbury and York. Each province is broken down into dioceses. There are 44 in England (including the Diocese in Europe). Each of the English dioceses has a structure of boards and councils responsible for different aspects of the Church's work, e.g. Ministry, Mission, Education, Social Responsibility. [http://www.cofe.anglican.org/about/dioceseparishes/](http://www.cofe.anglican.org/about/dioceseparishes/), [accessed 15.08.10].
the Birmingham Theological Libraries Group (Birmingham Theological Libraries Group [n.d.]).

As the theological library sector is very broad, it was decided that the research would focus on one branch of the diverse group rather than on the sector as a whole as this would enable it to be researched to a greater depth. It was considered that investigating the libraries of UK Christian residential theological colleges that train men and women for ministry would be worthy of study as relatively little was known about the environment in which these libraries operate or their effectiveness in meeting their user’s needs. This study documents the issues currently prevalent in theological college libraries in order to provide an understanding of this branch of librarianship.

1.4 Aim and objectives

In order to achieve some understanding of theological college libraries, the research aim was as follows:

- To investigate the role of the modern theological college library within theological education and to establish the extent to which theological libraries are meeting the perceived and unperceived needs of their user communities.

The objectives were:

- To investigate the nature and delivery of theological education in order to ascertain the implications for library provision.
- To assess the current provision of library and information services within theological colleges.
- To examine the effectiveness of theological college libraries in meeting the ongoing needs of their community.
- Make recommendations, if appropriate, that would enhance the provision of information resources in the support of theological teaching and learning.
1.5 Structure of the thesis

This thesis comprises of eight chapters and provides a background to the research, a review of the available literature, the methods employed, a discussion of the data collected and finally conclusions and recommendations. Chapter One provides an outline of the different types of theological libraries and the general background to the development of theological colleges and libraries. It also presents the aims and objectives of the research. Chapter Two contains a review of the available literature that has contributed to this area of study and aims to provide further context and background to the aims and objectives of the research. It also highlights the prevailing issues and concerns that can be found within ministerial training colleges that forms the basis of the study’s investigations.

Chapter Three describes the research methods adopted, the rationale for their use, and the study’s theoretical framework. It also summaries the data gathering techniques employed as well as the methods of analysis. The research data is presented in Chapters Four, Five and Six. Chapter Four explores the nature of ministerial education and formational training as provided by the theological colleges investigated. Chapter Five presents the findings of the investigation into the college’s libraries and establishes the context in which they operate and the role of the library in supporting the curriculum. The results of the questionnaire survey, designed to examine the user’s experience of the library services, are presented in Chapter Six along with the data that indicates the effectiveness of the college libraries in satisfying the ongoing needs of their user communities.

Chapter Seven discusses the research findings and highlights the major issues that emerged in regard to the changes within theological education and its delivery and the implications of these for ministerial training and resource provision. The research conclusions are presented in Chapter Eight along with the main findings, and recommendations. Any limitations found with the methods adopted are discussed in this chapter together with the areas for future research.
CHAPTER 2: REVIEW OF LITERATURE

2.1 Introduction

This chapter provides a review of the available published literature regarding theological college libraries and helps to establish the context in which they operate. The initial literature search revealed that the majority of the published literature relating to theological colleges and theological librarianship was American in origin and did not reflect the situation within the UK\(^5\). Moreover the published concerns of American theological seminaries were centred on library developments, particularly in regard to expensive IT software and databases and their use within user education (Ammerman 2004; Gragg 2004; Vorp 2004). As the operational environment and the issues and concerns affecting UK theological college libraries remain largely unknown it can be concluded that theological librarianship is a neglected sector. This study attempts to address the situation by filling the identified knowledge gap and raising the profile of the libraries of theological colleges that train men and women for ministry in the UK.

2.1.1 Institutions of higher education

Since theological colleges are higher education institutions it was felt that the lack of published literature on theological librarianship could be overcome by providing an overview of the higher education library sector. As both seek to support the teaching and research needs of their communities (see section 1.2) it was initially felt that a comparison of the developments in these two academic library sectors would help to establish a context in which to assess theological library resource provision. However it was found that whilst there are many commonalities, the two sectors are different in terms of funding, accountability and ethos.

\(^5\) Data regarding the size, funding and student numbers of US theological seminaries was derived from the 2008 ATLA membership database.
The literature revealed that the funding for theological colleges and other institutions of higher education are substantially different. Although autonomous, higher education institutions are generally dependent on the government for the bulk of their funding. This dependence and the subsequent accountability implications, has meant that they are subject to continual policy changes from the government (Brophy 2005). For example, the changes in employment and work patterns and the government’s commitment to lifelong learning that resulted in the expansion of the student body (Brophy, Craven & Fisher 1998). For a comprehensive overview of all the government reports that affected university and higher education, see Brophy, *The Academic Library* (2005).

Theological colleges are largely dependent upon their denominational churches for funding. Although each theological college is independent, the programmes offered must reflect the training needs of the churches. As the colleges do not, on the whole, receive funding from the Higher Education Funding Councils (HEFC), they have not been directly influenced by government reports such as Follett (Joint Funding Councils’ Library Review Group 1993) that focused on libraries and developments in Information Technology (IT). Thus theological college libraries have not been affected by these requirements to change and develop.

Furthermore, it was found that the ethos of higher education institutions is quite different from that of theological colleges. Le Cornu (2003) suggests that higher education institutions have a different learning culture from that of a theological college which is based on the monastic model of community. She believes that the community model is important for the development of future church leaders as it enables continuous interaction between students and lecturers within a closed community setting (p.21). Overend (2007) agrees with this view and suggests that higher education institutions place a greater emphasis on individualism and competition through individual performance which is in contrast to the monastic model that is more in keeping with the ethos of the churches (p.142-143).

These fundamental differences make it impossible for a comparison of the two library sectors to be undertaken. However, because of the lack of literature available regarding theological library users, some general literature that relates to the library
needs of higher education students was consulted as it was found that it reflected the situation in both sectors.

2.2 Establishing the theological college context

In order to provide some understanding of theological colleges it is necessary to establish the context in which they operate. Theological colleges in the UK tend to be places of spiritual and intellectual formation rather than institutions devoted entirely to education. The purpose of a higher education theological college is to train men and women for both ordained and lay ministry. The Church of England defines an ordained minister as someone who is called to do God’s work “in the world through the celebration of the sacraments, teaching, preaching and pastoral care” (Church of England n.d.). All protestant denominations have lay ministers or preachers. The Church of England defines lay ministry as being for those “who feel called to enable the Christian community to exercise its ministry in the world but who do not believe that they are called to ordination” (Church of England n.d.).

The actual process of becoming an ordained minister as defined by the Methodist Church is one “by which you and the church test your call” (Methodist Church n.d.). Thus the training is professional in nature and is concerned with the formation of the person as a whole in order to fulfil the needs and requirements of the denominational churches. The Church of England defines the term formation as being the “personal, liturgical and spiritual development” of a person in preparation for ordained ministry (Archbishops’ Council 2003, p.2). The Church also attaches to this term the idea of continual development, growth and learning that is pursued once ordination has been achieved. The Church views formation as a process that establishes “patterns of learning, piety and competence” that is continued throughout a person’s ministry (Ibid, p.29). In the context of a theological college it is defined as being a training programme that “aims to prepare the whole person for mission and ministry in the contemporary world” (Ripon College n.d.).
2.2.1 Historical development

Anglican theological training colleges came into being during the nineteenth century with the first training college being established in 1833 by Durham University. Prior to this a Church of England minister was usually an Oxbridge graduate “who prepared himself for ministry by reading and tuition for the Deacons examination” in his home Diocese (Woollcombe 1966, p.70). The clergy at this time were considered an “occupational group rather than a profession” (Gay & Wyatt 1988, p.253). Further small colleges that reflected the different traditions within the Church of England were established in Cathedral towns during the nineteenth-century. For example, Evangelical, Anglo-Catholic and Liberal (Woollcombe 1966, p.71). At this time ministry was considered to be a gentleman’s occupation and it was not until after the First World War that the Church of England expected their ordination candidates to undertake specific ministerial training of “at least a year” at one of the twenty-eight training colleges (Gay & Wyatt 1988, p.253). According to Buchanan (1980, p.33) early Anglican ministerial training was based on the idea of a “monastic retreat” whereby forty single white middle class male students lived, worked and prayed together on a full-time basis under the guidance of a principal and three curates. Thus the professional status of the priesthood began to emerge.

The establishment of non-conformist theological colleges occurred much earlier than their Anglican counterparts (Jesson 2006, p.473) because non-conformist ministerial students were not able to study at the established universities, as they were the preserve of men who were members of the Church of England (University College London n.d.). This situation continued until the founding of secular universities such as University College London in 1826; they admitted students regardless of religious persuasion.

2.2.2 Recruitment for ministry

The literature review indicated that the denominational churches had a two-fold problem; recruiting sufficient candidates for ministry and reducing their financial
costs. For the Churches, the twenty-first century has presented many challenges and the recruitment of suitable people for ministerial training has been amongst them. As it is now generally accepted that the West is a Post-Christian society fewer men and women are offering themselves for ministry and service (Frost & Hirsch 2003; Hunt 2003; Jackson 2005). Although this term has caused much debate amongst sociologists, it is generally recognised that Christianity, the dominant faith in the West, is now facing demise due to the socio-cultural transformation that Western countries have undergone. Jackson’s research leads him to suggest that the rise of other competing religions and the decline of Christian belief have contributed to the view of a Post-Christian society.

As a result of this, there has been a decline in church attendance, the traditional recruiting pool for ministerial candidates. The problem of recruiting is one that has exercised all denominations for sometime. In the 1960s the churches recognised the need to address the problem of falling numbers of those offering ministry and the viability of their training colleges (Packer 1968). The 1968 *Theological colleges for tomorrow* report also known as the Bunsen Report (Church of England) sought to address the problem by proposing a reduction in the number of theological colleges, introducing flexible training and allowing wives and families to live with their husbands during the training period. It also recommended closer links with universities and a greater use of their facilities in an effort to raise theological standards. It did not however address the concerns felt by some theological colleges regarding the potential loss of autonomy should closer links be established (Packer 1968).

Further reports by the Church of England (Church of England Assessment Group 1993; Archbishops’ Council 2005) revealed the extent of the recruitment decline. In 1993 there were 1017 candidates in training (Church of England Assessment Group 1993, p.22), whilst in 2004 it was reported that this had fallen to 501 (Archbishops’ Council 2005, p.11). Concern for the low recruitment levels led the churches to re-examine their ministerial training methods in order to encourage more people to offer themselves for service, a move that McMurtrie (2000) suggests has led to many candidates who do not have an established religious background being accepted for ministry.
The 2003 Hind Report (Archbishops’ Council 2003) sought to address the problem of recruitment by introducing flexible training pathways whereby part-time, non-residential courses were offered to those already working or with family commitments or ties that prevented them undertaking full-time courses. Furthermore, the report encouraged those from non-traditional backgrounds who had the right skills set but without a theological degree to offer themselves for ministry. Although the Hind Report did encourage more people to come forward, the numbers are still not sufficient to replace those who are due to retire (Research & Statistical Department of the Archbishops’ Council 2009).

The rise in the average age of those accepted for ordained ministry can be seen as evidence of the recruitment difficulties faced by the churches. In 2009 the Church of England noted that the largest number of people recommended for training was in the 40-49 age range (Research & Statistical Department of the Archbishops’ Council 2009). A subsequent analysis of the average age of the existing Anglican clergy undertaken by the Church of England records it to be 51 and that this was likely to remain until at least 2018 (Brierley 2010). The issues surrounding rising costs and recruitment difficulties is not limited to the Church of England. The Methodist Church, for example, recorded the average recruitment age as being 42 years (Methodist Training Cluster 2004).

### 2.2.3 Funding

It was established in section 2.1.1, that the denominational churches provide the funding for the training of ministerial candidates. The funding received by the colleges is dependent on student numbers and the inspection of standards undertaken by the denominational church (Gay & Wyatt 1988). Since the 1968 Bunsen Report (see section 2.2.2), rising costs and a decline in church attendance has forced the denominational churches to reassess their training colleges. Further consolidation was undertaken after the failure of financial investments during 1989-91 when financial losses totalling nine hundred thousand pounds forced the Church of England to close two further Anglican colleges and assess the residential training capacity of the remaining eight training centres (Church of England Assessment
Moreover these factors, together with the ever increasing costs of residential training, clergy pensions and the expense of the upkeep of parish churches have forced the churches to re-examine their financial commitments and explore ways in which they could be reduced.

To this end the 2003 Hind Report (see section 2.2.2) sought to reduce costs by reducing the training period for those with a theology degree over the age of 30 from three years to two years. Further cost reductions were achieved by introducing non-residential part-time flexible training that enabled many students to remain in their own community whilst studying.

Furthermore, the Hind Report actively encouraged theological colleges to explore ways in which colleges could benefit from Higher Education Funding Council (HEFC) funding by forming partnership with higher education institutions as the churches do not have degree awarding powers. The churches were not, however, able to insist upon this course of action due to the independent nature of each theological college (Archbishops’ Council 2003). As a result of government cutbacks, those colleges that pursued this avenue now face financial uncertainty as the government has applied a hundred million pound cut in support for those students who already have a first degree (Attwood 2007). Although theological colleges petitioned the government they have not been exempted like other professions that provide a social service such as social workers and counsellors. New HEFC for England co-funding arrangements now apply, whereby the HEFCE pays a proportion of the training costs and the employer the remainder (Higher Education Funding Council for England [n.d.]).

Other denominational churches such the Methodist and United Reformed churches have followed the Church of England’s lead in an effort to reduce costs by introducing more non-residential courses (Methodist Church 2006; United Reformed Church [n.d.] ). For example, within the Methodist Church, less than 20% of ministerial students now receive residential training (Methodist Church 2006). In 2010 the Methodist Church attempted to further reduce their costs by announcing the closure of one of their colleges, Wesley College, Bristol (Wesley College 2010).
2.2.4 Ministerial education and training

Theological education has two distinct areas: theological teaching and research undertaken by universities and the education and training for ministry provided by theological colleges. The focus, for the purpose of this research, is on the latter as theological colleges provide the necessary professional training for ordained ministry within a denominational church. The education and training required for ministry encompasses academic, spiritual and practical learning that is stipulated by each denominational church (see section 2.2). It should be noted that academic learning is just one element of the ministerial training and that practical training and spiritual development are equally important. Harrington (1960, p.162) views the colleges as being places of “spiritual and intellectual formation” rather than institutions “devoted entirely to education”. This assessment and the outline of the selection process for Church of England candidates provided by Gay & Wyatt has changed little during the last century and is still relevant today (1988, p.250-252).

All the major Protestant denominational churches require men and women to have a theology degree and to undertake ministerial training prior to ordination. One important aspect of ministerial training is the emphasis placed on self-discipline and routine. The colleges try to instil a sense of a sharing community regardless of the educational pathway taken. Daily life is tightly structured, consisting of compulsory common worship, shared meals, study, college organised pastoral programmes, community work and tutor group meetings. Most theological colleges have either a ‘College Rule’ or institutional manual that stipulates the structured routine of college daily life (Welland 2001, p.121). For as Buchanan (1980), a past Principal of Ridley Hall, Cambridge asserts, “to discipline one’s day, whatever the temptations” is part of the training of a spiritual leader (p.37). The colleges are organised and maintained by both the staff and students, living together as part of a community of faith. Harrison (2004) suggests that the regular meetings between staff and students and the community events, which encourage bonding, provide many of the practical elements of ministerial training. He also maintains that regular and extended placements are also vital as they enable students to “connect their studies with everyday life” (p.320).
Sociological research undertaken by Welland (2001) provides an insight to the lives of those undertaking ministerial training and how they are ‘shaped’ for ministry. The research was based on Foucault’s theories that the body can be shaped to produce a specific type of person. It focused on the ‘control of the body’ within a residential training college for ordained ministry, examining the ‘shaping’ of the person through physical, intellectual and spiritual discipline as they progressed through ministerial formation (p.117). Welland found that the students were subject to continual “exposure” or “gaze” from the staff in an effort to prepare them for ministerial life and noted that the students often found this very difficult and intensive during their first few days of term (p.123).

Furthermore, Welland found that the students were often under considerable pressure because they had to balance academic work with the college daily structure (p.126). Using an ethnographic approach to the study and undertaking two years of participant observation plus interviews and focus group meetings, Welland was able to conclude that it was possible to “coerce” and “shape” a person but that many of the practices that were designed to prepare ordinands for ministry were often resented and sometimes meet with resistance (p.133). Welland’s study provided a valuable insight into the community life experienced by ministerial candidates. However he failed to appreciate that, for those students, ministerial training was a ‘means to an end’, that of ordained ministry and that they may have willingly subjected themselves to this coercion. Nor did he fully realise that ministerial training not only instilled the necessary spiritual discipline, it also helped to develop a structure of personal support and networks for future ministry.

This type of rigorous training, incorporating both the spiritual and intellectual development of the student, has attracted some criticism. Graham 2002; Thompson 2004; Cartledge 2005; Houlden 2008 suggest that too much emphasis is placed on producing a specific type of person to meet the needs of the church rather than focusing on individual training needs. However, it could be inferred that the reason for this type of ‘one size fits all’ training is to ensure that the men and women who are going to become the public representatives of their faith and church are fully acquainted with all aspects of their respective churches. It is Cartledge’s opinion that although the training is often seen as a means to an end, too much emphasis is
placed on “the task to be accomplished” rather than considering the individual needs of a student. Cartledge suggests that a more holistic approach might be of a greater benefit to the individual (p.38) and lessen the “factory” system approach as reported by Packer (1968). This is a valid point but one that would be difficult to achieve particularly for Anglican students as the length of training required for some mature students has been reduced. Assessing student’s individual needs and focusing on these during training could provide long-term benefits to both the student and the church.

Some evidence to support this was found during the research period that suggests the Church of England is reconsidering the training period required and that new draft proposals have been drawn up recommending the length of training required be depended upon the candidates prior educational background (Church of England 2006). However, there is no evidence to suggest that the proposals have been adopted.

It should be noted that whilst the churches stipulate specific training requirements that students are expected to fulfil in order to become ordained, programme development is the responsibility of theological colleges (Buchanan 1980; Archbishops’ Council 2003). This provides the colleges with both autonomy and flexibility that enables them to develop programmes that are consistent with the ethos of each individual college. Evidence relating to specific theological colleges is limited although Buchanan’s candid article of 1980 provides some useful insights into the pastoral nature of the college and the sense of community that it instils.

### 2.2.5 Curriculum design

Research undertaken by Edgar (2005) suggests that little has changed in the methodical approaches to teaching theological education for ministerial formation. He recognises four major types; classical, vocational, missional and confessional (p.209). The classical model is concerned with personal development through the

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6 Buchanan was principal of St. Johns College, Nottingham at the time of writing.
study of the sacred texts and learning from past theologians, whilst the vocational method provides a broader and more analytical range of study. It also places an emphasis on the practical aspects of ministerial training and leadership. The missional approach focuses on the evangelistic mission of the church and tends to advocate a more fundamentalist approach. The final model is that of the confessional. This approach seeks to provide ministerial formation through the understanding of the traditions of the denominational community and tends to be introspective. Most theological colleges teach a mixture of all four approaches to varying degrees rather than just applying one method.

Whilst a degree in theology is a requirement of ministry for all denominational churches the length and type of course undertaken is usually dependent upon educational qualifications or, increasingly, on prior experience. Although Edgar’s research indicates that the methodical approaches to theological education have not changed, Le Cornu (2003, p.15) suggests that the training colleges have tailored their programmes to reflect the changing needs of the churches and that this has forced some colleges to shift from “pure education to that of training”. Morgan (2008) agrees with this view, noting that theological education must change as most ordained ministry is practiced within a parish setting and requires a different set of skills from that being taught such as community building.

However, Le Cornu highlights a concern in the design of the new flexible training pathways. She suggests that some courses, particularly those delivered by distance learning, are unlikely to produce effective leaders because the training is shifting from producing leaders to producing “disciples”. She contends that the residential monastic model is designed to form leaders whereas few distance learning programmes “are appropriate to train leaders” as they cannot replicate the sense of community that the monastic model provides (2003, p.16).
2.2.6 Curriculum delivery

Although programmes delivered within theological colleges use similar methods to those provided within a university setting, there is a substantial difference between theology as taught within a university and that taught in a theological college. In the mid 1960s religious studies emerged as a subject discipline and has according to Ballard (2004, p.337), “dominated the scene” within universities. It is possible to speculate that focusing less on a specific religious faith has broadened the subject’s appeal. Theology in contrast, as offered within a theological college, is taught from a faith perspective and is part of the “professional training” (Ballard 2004, p.338). In addition it should be noted that the objectives and expectations of each group is different. Unlike university students, ministerial students undertake study and training as a result of their vocation rather than just from interest. Moreover the theological college is concerned with the pastoral oversight of each individual student and their spiritual development as they progress through their training (Buchanan 1980; Ballard 2004).

An aspect of theological education that is a concern for some is that the competing demands of the academic studies and formational training allows little time for the personal reflection necessary to enable students to relate their learning to their own experiences of ministry (Thompson 2004; Lynch & Pattison 2005; Cartledge 2005). The importance of personal reflection was first mooted in 1987 in a Church of England report recommending that a greater emphasis should be placed on practical experience and pastoral reflection (Advisory Council for the Church’s Ministry Report). This idea has since been criticised by educators such as Thompson for creating an imbalance between the demands of academic learning and those of professional practice. This has led to insufficient time being spent on critical reflection and has placed additional time pressures upon students. Thompson’s personal experiences have led him to suggest that many students see academic study as a “series of painful and rather arbitrary challenges undergone to establish worthiness” for ministry (p.268).
Thompson’s views have been substantiated by research undertaken by Lynch & Pattison (2005) into the positive learning experiences of practical theological education. They found that there were often “tensions” between the academic learning and the professional practices undertaken (p.153). Moreover, they found that students valued learning more when they could directly relate it to their own experiences. This led Lynch & Pattison to conclude that contemplative reflection was important because it enabled students to make the connection between their personal experience, ministry and theology (p.149). Although both Thompson and Lynch & Pattison have highlighted the conflict that has arisen between the time allocated for academic learning and professional practice, there is no published evidence to suggest that additional time has been found for contemplative reflection.

2.2.7 Course validation

The courses offered by theological colleges have to fulfil two sets of criteria. Firstly those stipulated by the degree awarding body and secondly those required for professional accreditation by the denominational church. The Hind Report (Archbishops’ Council 2003) recommended that Anglican theological colleges looked to local higher education institutions for course validation (see section 2.2.3) and this has led to a number of questionable pairings with universities. Many have little or no experience of providing religious education. For example the courses offered by the London Bible College, Northwood, Middlesex are validated by Brunel University, an institution without a theology department (Ballard 2001). As a result of his survey of postgraduate practical theology courses Ballard (2004) expressed his concern for the inappropriateness of some university and theological college partnerships, particularly as the aims and approach of each partner towards the task of theological education might be very different.

These concerns are not new. Packer first voiced concerns for such partnerships in 1968. Although he welcomed the attempt to raise educational standards he believed that the university teaching might be too narrow and academic to fully appreciate the nuances of the Bible. Even though the theological college staff, rather than those from the partner university, undertook the majority of the teaching, further
concerns were raised regarding the universities’ ethos (see section 2.1.1). It is therefore possible to question whether the degrees offered by the theological colleges are driven by ecclesiastical considerations or by the demands of the university.

At present there is little published evidence as to how these partnerships are evolving although Cartledge (2005) does question how the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) standards imposed by the validating universities, relate to Christian ministerial courses. She questions how vocation motivated by faith and the development of the person as an individual fits into a secular framework (p.36). This is a valid point as the experiences and personal development though prayer and worship is difficult to quantify. These expressed concerns do not appear to have influenced the Anglican Church, which, since the publication of the Hind Report, has actively encouraged such affiliations (Archbishops’ Council 2005). It can be inferred that, at the time, there was an ulterior motive for this such as the prospect of attracting funding from HEFCE via the validating university, thus reducing their costs. Perhaps a weakness of Hind, as suggested by Ballard (2004) is that not enough attention has been given to the appropriateness of university connections particularly in regard to compatibility and peer support.

The motives of the validating institutions are more difficult to identify. The franchising of courses is not new, having been in operation since the 1980s (Jordan 1998; Brophy 2005). Students are usually enrolled as students of the franchising institution and both partners share the income this generates. Institutions have not allowed distance to prevent such associations being formed. For example, Bangor University validates courses at Spurgeon’s College, London (Spurgeon’s College 2007). Both Ballard (2004) and Cartledge (2005) suggest that the franchising institutions are often driven by market forces, a desire to increase student numbers and even by some to enhance their standing in the local community. Perhaps it is a combination of all of these, plus the sharing of the risk inherent in starting up new courses.

The extent to which the validating university’s library supports the courses offered by their institution often varies; often the partner college bears the full cost of
teaching and resource provision to support the curriculum (Jordan 1998; Brophy 2005). Although there is little published evidence that can provide accurate information regarding the library rights extended to the students of partnership colleges, an unpublished survey undertaken by the Association of British Theological & Philosophical Libraries in 2007 of its theological college membership does provide an indication of the current situation. The survey revealed that 67% of respondents stated that their students had been given reading rights, a total of 25% received borrowing rights, 56% had access to electronic resources, whilst 8% did not have any form of library access. This suggests that the assessments of both Jordan and Brophy are also applicable to theological colleges.

2.2.8 Continuing Ministerial Education

The importance of Continuing Ministerial Education (CME) for ordained ministers has been recognised by all the denominational churches. Sabbatical leave, for example, has always been an important aspect of a minister’s development as it provides the minister with an opportunity to engage in resident study in the company of other scholars (Gamble 1960). Although the amount of sabbatical entitlement varies from denomination to denomination, it enables the minister to keep abreast of new ideas and thinking and is seen to have positive effects on their “preaching, teaching, pastoral and administrative roles” (Ibid, p. 279).

Within the Anglican Church, CME was recognised in 1987 with the publication of the report Education for the Church’s Ministry (Advisory Council for the Church’s Ministry). The report advocated that theological education should be a lifelong process, thus elevating the importance of sabbatical leave even higher. This was further emphasised by the Hind Report (Archbishops’ Council 2003). The report also recommended the providing of continuing professional development of its clergy by way of local CME programmes and the placing of resources within the local diocese for working ministers to draw upon. Not all denominations have this

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7 Unpublished survey conducted during June 2007 by Carol Reekie for the Association of British Theological and Philosophical Libraries. 73 colleges took part and a response rate of 51% was achieved.
type of arrangement. The United Reformed Church, for example, is in the process of organising its college libraries to become resource centres for the whole church rather than just for its own ministerial students (United Reformed Church [n.d.]). The Methodist Church is also exploring a similar arrangement for its ministers. This will have implications for theological college libraries in terms of providing sufficient resources and support.

2.3 Theological college libraries

It has been established that theological colleges, although higher education institutions, have not been subjected to the changes brought about by government legislation (see section 2.1.1). The consequence of this is that the pace of change in theological college libraries has been much slower because, on the whole, they have only had to respond to the needs and requirements of their denominational churches. Thus, unlike other higher education institutions, they have not been obliged to keep abreast of modern developments such as those in IT, for example.

2.3.1 Historical development

Although no generic history of theological colleges has been produced, histories of specific colleges that provide an indication of their development have been published (Gay & Wyatt 1988, p.250). However in regard to the libraries of theological colleges and their environment, very little is known unless they have a historical collection of some significance. For example Westminster College, Cambridge has a number of important collections that are well used by researchers (Houston 1982).

With regard to theological college libraries in other countries there is little available literature. What is known however is that in 1924, Robert L. Kelly published a major report on theological education in America. He argued that the libraries were hardly used because they were locked, unheated and poorly administered (p.55). Whether this reflects the situation in the UK during this period is unknown.
The publication of general literature began to increase in the aftermath of World War II due to the improvements in printing techniques. This produced an explosion in the volume of material published with large numbers of new and specialised journals appearing. The consequences of which, librarians in all sectors of librarianship were faced with the challenges of expanding collections. Literature relating to theological libraries gradually began to appear. It highlighted the fact that few theological libraries at this time had a trained librarian and that this had resulted in a poor standard of library catalogues and book classification (Whybury 1960, p.191). Harrington (1960) also voiced his concern at the lack of standards or guidelines within theological librarianship that “adequately meet the needs of the highly specialised work of preparing men for priesthood” (p.162). His underlying concern being that theological institutions were responsible for the spiritual and intellectual formation of students as well as their education. This provides recognition that academic learning was only one aspect of ministerial formation.

Although Harrington believed that the value of professionally trained librarians was beginning to be recognised (p.163), subsequent published UK literature did not confirm this optimistic assessment. Duckett (1973) provides an insight into some of the issues facing theological libraries when, as a librarian new to the subject area, he commented on their poor state. He speculated that the reason for this was a dearth of full-time, professionally qualified librarians (p.21). In his 1977 review of theological and philosophical libraries and librarianship, he was quite scathing in his comments in regard to bibliographic control. He found it to be, in his view, “primitive, and verging on the non-existent” (Druckett 1977, p.252). He cited the lack of British bibliographical guides, general guides, subject guides and publishers lists as evidence of this and concluded that library provision in theological libraries was “rudimentary and haphazard” (p.252). He attributed the lack of resources to the funding models used; “endowment, subscription or church income” (p. 252).

Furthermore, both Bridges (2001) and Vorp (2004) believe that, since theological libraries are shaped by the history and culture of their institution, change is slow to occur. This is probably true of UK theological college libraries as no evidence could be found that indicated that the churches provided guidelines for the management of the theological college library. For example, the influential Hind Report
(Archbishops’ Council 2003) that was detailed in regards to ministerial training, only referred to library provision once and in the context of theological college libraries providing regional students with “positive opportunities” to access their libraries (p.119-120). This suggests that resource provision is the responsibility of each theological college and provides some understanding to why each library has developed differently.

2.3.2 The US theological seminary library experience

The availability of published literature relating to US theological librarianship affords a greater understanding of their college libraries than those of their UK counterparts. Data obtained from the Association of American Theological Libraries (ATLA) suggests that American theological libraries tend to be large institutions that are well funded and technologically better developed. This view was also supported by the published literature (Ammerman 2004; Beldan 2004; Crawford, Limpitlaw & Hook 2004; Vorp 2004).

Our understanding of the American theological library situation is largely due to Project 2000, commissioned in 1980 by the Association of Theological Schools and ATLA. The subsequent report was seen by many as pivotal for theological college libraries around the world (McIntosh 1989; Jordahl 1990; Vorp 2004). The project provided a comprehensive survey of all members and associate members of ATLA (American Theological Library Association 2010) and was commissioned to identify the special needs of theological libraries, to assess the impact of computer technology and to analyse the options available for the future development of these libraries.

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8 American theological institutions, or seminaries, are generally large, well funded institutions. For example the ATLA Statistics for 2007 show that in 2006-7 Princeton Theological Seminary had 634 students and a library materials fund of over one million dollars. In addition, a smaller seminary, the Wesley Theological Seminary with 440 students, had a library materials fund of just under $170,000. The ATLA Statistics for 2007 were provided by Sara Corkery, the ATLA Communications Specialist, 07/07/08.
The Project (subsequently known as the Peterson Report) was able to draw credible conclusions relating to the situation within US theological college libraries due to the large number of responding colleges (Peterson 1984). Peterson found that although theological institutions were not immune to the general influences felt by academic institutions, both local and the larger environmental factors had a great influence upon their development (p.92). The report also placed great emphasis on national cooperation and the sharing of resources. Although the report was American in origin it was considered to be “one of the most important empirically based projects” because Peterson sought to identify library issues of concern and offer solutions (Vorp 2004, p.32). Peterson (1984) saw the library as an important physical place and central to the delivery of education and argued that the librarian should be professionally qualified if the library was to operate efficiently (p.54).

In 1990 Peterson revisited his report and predicted that the rapid growth of communication technology would create major changes in the delivery of teaching and therefore increase user expectations. He also believed that the demands placed on the library service would force libraries to re-evaluate their role and services (p.140). Although these predictions did not have the impact of the earlier report, they have proved to be accurate.

2.4 Implications for UK theological college library provision

The situation in UK theological libraries in the 21st century is, however, unclear. No major survey has been undertaken and the literature on theological libraries is limited. Although theological colleges are not directly affected by government policies they are indirectly influenced by them because local university or other higher education institution validate their courses. These institutions stipulate the standards of teaching and delivery as well as the student support required in order to receive validation. The HEF Councils through the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) sets these standards. Thus the resource provision of the theological college library is reviewed as part of the institutional review undertaken by their degree awarding body (Quality Assurance Agency [n.d.]).
Furthermore, the church’s emphasis on CME has created a demand for flexible learning through distance learning and part-time courses, provided by theological colleges that have clear implications for library provision. As with many other higher education institutions, the introduction of flexible part-time courses, modular teaching and the move to independent learning, has affected the way that libraries are used. Thus librarians have had to adapt their services to accommodate a variety of different courses and teaching modes (Brophy 2005). How this has been accomplished within theological college libraries, is largely undocumented.

Published evidence was found that suggested theological college libraries were not as well funded as universities and other higher education institutions (Downing 1988; Van Heck 1993; Ammerman 2004; Lincoln 2004). Thus keeping pace with library developments, in areas such as IT, was difficult. Lincoln suggested that institutions were often reluctant to provide adequate financial support because the library already represented “a significant cost to the college” (p.1). A factor not explored in the published literature is that ministerial training colleges are concerned with formation for ministry rather than being primarily education institutions. Whilst libraries are important for theological learning, they are just one of the resources required for ministerial formation and have to compete for funding.

Since budgets are limited in small theological colleges, resource provision has often been problematic (Downing 1988; Lincoln 2004; Ammerman 2004). The situation has been made more difficult by an increase in the number and complexity of courses that theological colleges now offer. Furthermore, the selection of appropriate resources has become more difficult because of the transformations in publishing that have altered the way that information is accessed and used. Thus the selection of appropriate resources to ensure equal provision for all students has become more difficult.

Ammerman (2004) believes that theology is a very knowledge intensive subject like law and medicine and therefore requires a wide range of materials. He suggests that the increases in the prices of both print and electronic resources has meant that librarians have had to make difficult choices regarding which formats to purchase. He also comments that there are few guidelines to help librarians make the right
choices. Whilst this problem is not unique to theological colleges having a small budget exacerbates it.

It should be noted however, that the available resources for theology are still largely print based. Vorp (2004) attributes the slowness of theological literature to become electronically available to the fact that print based theological scholarly communication still dominates (p.37). Whilst it is true that many of the ‘classic’ works are now available online, they often tend to be the “less-than-definitive translations” (Stewart 2001, p.18). In 2002 Graham’s research into theological education on the Web found that many of the resources required for ministerial training still tended to be print based. No published literature could be found that assesses the current situation regarding theological resources in electronic format.

2.4.1 Resources

The theological college library encompasses a diverse community of users with differing needs and abilities. These users now have a choice in the way that they access the library services provided. Like other higher education institutions, some theological library users have a choice of format in which to access information and they can now either visit the library in person or obtain it remotely from home, place of work or study. As there is no up to date published literature on theological college library users, their experiences of theological libraries is largely unknown (Van Heck 1993; Lincoln 2003).

One result of the Hind Report (see section 2.2.2) has been an increase in the number of part-time theological students. How the theological college libraries have adapted to accommodate an increase in student numbers and the flexible training pathways is unknown. Although both Van Heck (1993) and Lincoln (2003) advocated the employment of user studies and evaluation in order to provide an effective library service, there is no published evidence to suggest that these recommendations have been implemented. The general academic library literature provides plenty of evidence to suggest that part-time library users have a different set of needs to those of full-time users and has dispelled the idea that part-time students have fewer
requirements than those who are full-time (Pinder & Melling 1996; Gelfand 2005 and Brophy 2005). Work undertaken by researchers such as Pinder & Melling and Brophy provides a useful assessment of the needs of this group. They conclude that, in reality, part-time users often require more help and guidance because they are frequently off-site. Furthermore, a user survey undertaken by Ismail (2009) into the user needs of both traditional and non-traditional students concludes that each group has specific needs and that part-time and non-traditional users require more support than their traditional counterparts and are less likely to use online resources. These views are of particular relevance as more ministerial students are undertaking training by this mode of delivery.

Research undertaken by Graham (2002) suggests that book borrowing remains the most popular method of accessing information within theological colleges. The finding of Graham’s research into the use of IT in theological education attributes the preference for the printed format to the ‘least effort principle’. He suggests that the students find the printed format easier to read and work with because it requires little training or effort (p.233). This was found to be particularly true of part-time and distance learners who have other competing demands on their time. Furthermore, like other higher education institutions, the reading list was seen to be an important tool that allowed students to access resources. Research undertaken by Secker (2005) into online reading lists noted the heavy reliance placed on the reading list and stressed the importance of close co-operation between library staff and academics in producing lists that supported teaching and learning. Secker argued that the reading list should be considered an important resource in its own right because it acts as a “signpost” to direct library users (p.40).

2.4.1.1 Information Technology

Since there is a lack of published literature regarding IT within the theological college library sector, the study consulted the available literature that charted the developments of IT in the academic library sector to provide some understanding of its importance in relation to the development of the library service. It was found that the introduction of automated library information systems was seen by many to
have revolutionised the way that libraries are administered, managed and used (Moran 1989; Corrall 1995; Budd 1998 and Atkinson 2003). Corrall, in particular, cites the introduction of “self-service and remote access” as two important additions to the library service that have proven to be an effective service for part-time, off-site users. (p.36). Remote access has enabled users to renew borrowed items online, request required resources and access the library catalogue at the time of their choosing.

The growing sophistication of library services has enabled libraries to offer a range of resources, such as those in electronic format. This has however created a need for the appropriate skills training for users so they are able to access and evaluate these resources. Accessing information electronically has many advantages, particularly for off-site users who do not have daily access to the library. Not only does it provide a choice in the way that information is accessed, it also provides flexibility in that information can be obtained at the time of need, twenty-four hours a day.

Despite the printed format being the preferred choice of students because they disliked reading long documents from a screen, the Internet, as with many higher education institutions, has become an important resource within theological college libraries (Graham 2002; Gragg 2004). However, concerns have arisen regarding the volume of information available on the Internet and its quality and reliability. Goodwin (2007) identified the acceptance of information without evaluating the contents or authorship as being a cause for concern. There is much published literature to suggest that librarians have often expressed their disquiet regarding the users’ belief that all electronic information found on the Internet is correct (Breivik 1999; Warnken 2004; Boden & Holloway 2005). These papers outline the problems encountered and stress the importance of students being able to evaluate a site effectively if they are to continue to learn.

Furthermore, the development of a ‘just-in-time’ or ‘least effort’ attitude towards information seeking by students, was also found to be a cause for concern amongst both educators and librarians (Graham 2002; Gragg 2004; Gelfand 2005). Stewart (2001) suggested that if information was readily presented, students could be discouraged from browsing and discovering and less likely to use the library (p.18).
In an effort to overcome this, Gragg (2004) stressed the importance of contextualized information literacy skills training, believing that it was more “successful when embedded in the curriculum” (p.104).

Little evidence could be found to suggest that, within theological colleges, IT was used in curriculum delivery or that IT skills training had been embedded into the curriculum. In fact the literature suggests that information technology was not highly regarded in some theological institutions and that many have been reluctant to commit resources to this area (Le Cornu 2008). Both Stewart (2001) and Delamarter (2005; 2006) suggested that the reluctance to incorporate IT into theological education was because some of the academic staff were either not comfortable with the technology or they were concerned that it would stop students from using the library. The results of a survey produced by Delamarter (2005) recorded that some academics were reluctant “to revise their approach to teaching” (p.134) and saw the usage of electronic resources as a threat to the students’ experience of the library and the joy of discovery. He also suggested that few initiatives to incorporate IT into teaching are instigated by academic staff, most being introduced by the Principal or Dean of the college (2006, p.13).

With regard to the theological library user, the available literature suggests that the diverse age range of theological library users often means that the range of technological skills are equally diverse and that some students are “technologically challenged” (Harmeyer 2001, p.71). Graham’s research (2002) into theological education on the web identified the importance of the availability of technical assistance with computers and printers if students were not to be deterred from using the available resources. He found that this was particularly important for part-time or distance learning students. Graham found that some students needed to acquire basic skills, such as downloading course materials, before they could confidently move onto accessing electronic resources (p.234). Graham also found that providing the necessary training could be problematic for a small theological institution that did not have the facilities for group training. Koontz (2007), in her assessment of the use of technology in theological education, also expressed her concern for the lack of skills training generally available for both education and future ministry (p.8).
Published literature regarding the information literacy skills of theological library users was also found to be scant. The only study identified was that conducted by Lincoln in 2003. He concluded that the provision of library computers and electronic resources alone were insufficient and that appropriate skills training needed to be provided otherwise the resources would not be used. Although Lincoln based his research on only one case study, he suggested that user expectations of library training in theological colleges were usually quite modest and suggested that library orientation was often the only training users received (p.17). He also noted that theological library users were reluctant to complain, displaying a willingness to accept what was given.

2.5 Theological college librarians

The published literature suggests that the traditional role of the theological college librarian, as in many higher education libraries, had for many years been that of a keeper of books as well as an educator (Holley 1976, p.15). However, this role, as in other library sectors, has undergone a metamorphosis since the Second World War when, due to the explosion of information, the need for professionally qualified librarians was recognised (Moran 1989). However, during the 1960s, the evidence suggests that few theological college libraries had professionally qualified librarians (see section 2.3.1). The reason being that in the past, theological librarians had been thought of as gentleman scholars with a love of books. It was Harrington (1960, p.163) personal view that there had been opposition to employing professional librarians in theological colleges because of the belief that they “had little to offer which was specifically different or better than what had always been done”. Although changing methods of curriculum delivery and the proliferation of information since the 1960s had forced academic library managers to rethink the way in which their services were provided, theological college libraries have remained immune from many of these changes (see section 2.1.1). The lack of published literature has made it difficult to trace the more recent developments within ministerial training colleges and their libraries.
Within the academic library sector, however, the changes in the way that information can be accessed and the changing role of the librarian have been well documented (Moran 1989; Corrall 1995; Pinfield 2001; Secker 2005). Librarians are no longer just keepers of books; they have become information creators and facilitators (Hoadley, Creth & White 1985; Rice-Lively & Racine 1997; Burge 2002; Penner 2006). Moreover the increasing availability of information in a variety of formats has given librarians an opportunity to develop a teaching role in the provision of information literacy and research skills training (Biddiscombe 2002; Feldmann 2006; Hardy & Corrall 2007).

2.5.1 Christian stewardship

The theory that theological librarianship is often seen as a vocation is one that has been advocated by some librarians as a reason for the lack of professional librarians within the sector. In 1993 Van Heck bemoaned the lack of published literature on theological user education. He suggested that this was either due to many theological librarians being unmotivated or because they were “theologians, educators and pastoral ministers first, librarians second” (p.106). Van Heck was not the first to comment on the vocational nature of theological librarianship. It was Turner’s belief (1960) that a strong sense of vocation could often be found in theological librarianship because many librarians were either ordained or lay ministers (p. 282). Similarly in 1996, Karp & Keck noted that the results of their survey for the American Theological Library Association found that many theological librarians were ordained rather than professionally trained. They suggested that one of the reasons for the slow pace of change within theological college libraries was that many theological librarians tended to view their work as a “calling rather than a profession”. They also speculated that theological librarianship was a ministry in its own right (p.41). This may explain why the role of the librarian is often bound up with Christian stewardship.

The principle of Christian stewardship is defined in the *New Dictionary of Theology* by Ferguson & Wright (1988, p.661) as being “closely linked to the concept of grace: everything comes from God as a gift and is to be administered faithfully on
His behalf”. Lincoln (2004) provided a more pragmatic definition; he believed that the role of the librarian was to look after the churches resources and that seminaries were “accountable to accrediting bodies, boards of trustees, donors and ultimately to God to be good stewards of the resources entrusted to them” (p.3). The view that theological librarianship is linked to a sense of vocation has generated much literature, particularly from the US. If some librarians are also theologians, it might account for the lack of theological bibliographical tools, as mentioned by Duckett (1973) and to why there is so little published literature.

2.5.2 Status of the theological librarian

The faculty status of the theological librarian was found to be a topic that occupied many American theological librarians (Crocco & Myers 1995; Lincoln 2004). The situation within UK theological institutions is relatively unknown as there is little published literature to be found on the subject. The denominational churches do not provide guidelines for the post of theological college librarian; this is left to the individual institutions, as are the salary scales. With regard to the salaries paid to librarians, theological colleges are not bound by national agreements or guidelines such as the National Framework Agreement of 20049. It is not known whether theological colleges are aware of the Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals (CILIP), the professional body for librarians and information specialists (CILIP 2010a) and the guidance that the organisation is able to offer with regard to job descriptions (CILIP 2010b) and salaries (CILIP 2010c).

As a result of a lack of guidelines, the status and salary scale of the theological librarians differs even between colleges of the same denomination. Whilst there is no published evidence to confirm the librarian’s status within theological colleges, guidelines produced by ABTAPL (Gale & Reekie 2008) recommends that the librarian is a member of the academic board to ensure that the library services, resource provision and the teaching curriculum are properly coordinated. The fact

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9 This provided a framework for determining pay and conditions for those within the higher education sector.
that there is a need for such guidelines suggests that the status of the librarian varies within each institution.

### 2.5.3 Continuing Professional Development

The training provision for librarians in theological colleges tends to be problematic. Despite the published literature stressing the importance of CPD (Biddiscombe 1999; Dougherty 2006), many theological college librarians are unable to pursue this due to limited funding or time constraints. The majority of theological college librarians in the UK are ‘one man bands’\(^{10}\), thus making it difficult to attend training sessions. In order to overcome the problem of isolation, theological librarians in some areas have set up a system of local support. Duckett (1977) found that theological librarians traditionally relied on local self-help or “personal contacts along denominational lines” (p.253). Examples of local support are the Birmingham Theological Library Group and the Oxford Theological Group. For most, however, this is not possible due to their geographical location. Support and inexpensive training, however, can be obtained through ABTAPL.

ABTAPL is an association that offers membership and support to libraries of all faiths (Association of British Theological and Philosophical Libraries 2009). Formed in 1954, the association’s aim was to bring together theological and philosophical libraries in Great Britain to ‘improve bibliographical information’ and to help ‘smaller libraries that lacked professional expertise’ (Howard 1974, p12-15). Since that date it has grown to over three hundred members, institutional and personal and both national and international\(^{11}\).

Since there is little current published literature on the training and support available for theological librarians it is difficult to obtain an accurate assessment of the situation. Although CILIP is the natural support organisation for librarians the ABTAPL database records that only 27% of its membership are also members of

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\(^{10}\) The ABTAPL Directory provides information regarding the number of library staff within each institution.

\(^{11}\) ABTAPL subscription database for 2009.
CILIP (see section 2.6). This suggests that many librarians do not have access to professional support and training. This problem was recognised by ABTAPL, when in 1990 they published guidelines to aid its membership. This was aimed at members who found it difficult to update their skills and keep abreast of developments and changes within librarianship. It was also an attempt to provide guidance to theological institutions in regard to the management of their libraries, particularly where the cost of a professional librarian could not be justified (Gibson, Lambe & Powles). The fact that the guidelines have been expanded and updated (Gale & Reekie 2008) is perhaps a testament to the continuing need to provide support and training for this sector of librarianship.

2.6 Conclusion

This chapter has highlighted the limited amount of published literature relating to theological colleges and theological librarianship. Whilst there is a growing body of literature regarding theological education, information on theological college libraries remains scant. The study revealed that the differences of funding, accountability and ethos has meant that theological libraries could not be fairly compared to other higher educational institutions.

The literature revealed the extent of the changes that had occurred within ministerial education and training as a result of the church’s need to increase recruitment and reduce training costs. Although the changes had implications for library resource provision, little published literature was found to be available that recorded the impact that this had on theological college libraries. It is therefore difficult to assess fully the environment in which they operate, their user’s needs and the role of the theological college librarian. In order to fill the identified knowledge gap in this area of theological librarianship, the discussions arising from the review of literature and the identified issues, form the basis of the subsequent research into ministerial training college libraries.
Chapter Three outlines the research methods employed the rational and theoretical framework of the research and the scope and the ethical considerations of the research. The research data is presented in Chapters, Four, Five and Six.
CHAPTER 3: METHODS

3.1 Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to consider the rationale for the study, the theoretical framework employed, the research design and the reasoning for the research methods adopted. The aim was:

- To investigate the role of the modern theological college library within theological education and to establish the extent to which theological libraries are meeting the perceived and unperceived needs of their user communities.

And the objectives were:

- To investigate the nature and delivery of theological education in order to ascertain the implications for library provision.
- Assess the current provision of library information services within theological colleges.
- To examine the effectiveness of theological college libraries in meeting the ongoing needs of their community.
- Make recommendations, if appropriate, that would enhance the provision of information resources in the support of theological teaching and learning.

In addition this chapter also describes the data analysis methods used and sets out the scope of the study and the ethical considerations relevant to the research strategy.
3.2 Rationale and theoretical framework

From the examination of the published literature available it was possible to conclude that the situation within UK theological libraries that trained men and women for ministry was, to a large extent, unknown. Moreover, no research could be found that could provide insight into this branch of theological librarianship. In order to provide some understanding of the environment in which theological colleges operated and to interpret the findings of the study, consideration was given to the theoretical framework or paradigm in which to set the research. Bryman (2008) suggests that this helps to inform the study design.

Patton (2002, p.79) suggests that there is “no definitive way to categorize the various philosophical and theoretical perspectives” that underpin social research. Qualitative research for example has undergone many changes during the different periods of its history. Denzin & Lincoln (2005, p.13-20) provide a comprehensive outline of the developments in qualitative research and identify the changes that have occurred. From this it can be inferred that nothing is static and that it is only possible to select an approach that is appropriate at the time of the research.

Researchers Robson (2002) and Denzin & Lincoln (2005) suggest that there are four major interpretive paradigms: positivism and post-positivism, constructivism, critical theory and feminist-post constructual. As the research was investigating the real world of theological colleges and their libraries it was felt that it would be most appropriate to employ a paradigm that sought to present the reality and truth of their situation from an objective stand point. Critical theory and feminist-post-constructual were disregarded as it was felt that these paradigms were more suited to historical, class or gender studies where it is important to view the results from a particular perspective. For example feminist research is concerned with providing an understanding of a particular issue from a women’s point of view (Robson 2002, p.28).

Constructivism, also known as social constructionism, is defined by Robson (2002, p.552) as being a belief that reality is constructed by human interaction. This
paradigm tends to be used in investigations that explore the ways in which the perceived reality, or social world, has been created by groups or individuals. The constructivism framework was considered but it was felt that it did not allow for sufficient linkage between cause and effect to be made, instead relying on the reconstructing of events or situations. In addition the framework did not lend itself to the developing of generalisations because this paradigm advocates that the ‘truth’ of an individual environment is a matter of consensus and only has meaning within its community (Patton 2002, p.96). Thus it would not be possible to make objective generalisations of the theological college library sector and the aim of the study would remain unfulfilled.

The use of either positivism or post-positivism was also considered. Positivism itself is an inquiry that searches for truth or knowledge by employing such methods that can produce insights into the real world (Patton 2002; Guba & Lincoln 2005). This reality based paradigm was advocated by the nineteenth century French philosopher August Comte who suggested that only claims that are directly based on experience should be considered genuine knowledge and that the procedures employed should reflect those of the natural sciences (Robson 2002). It is an approach that helps to explain the patterns, regularities, causes and affects that impact upon a phenomenon, thus improving our understanding of it. The testing of explanations derived from the data collected also enables generalisations to be produced (Guba & Lincoln 2005; Denscombe 2007). Furthermore, positivism is concerned with providing an objective account of the real world (Denzin & Lincoln 2005), thus advocating the collection of data that is value free and not influenced by pre-existing theories.

This theoretical framework was, however, discredited and criticised because it was seen to be too narrow and rigid (Patton 2002; Robson 2002; Teddlie & Tashakkori 2003). With the decline of positivism after World War II, post-positivism began to be widely used. Post-positivism, whilst having the same basic set of beliefs as positivism, takes the view that “only partially objective accounts of the world” can be produced because all methods are imperfect as each person’s perception of reality is different (Denzin & Lincoln 2005, p.27). This paradigm therefore advocates the use of both qualitative and quantitative methods to produce and test
theory. Whilst reality and truth are worth striving for, the post-positive paradigm accepts that these values can be difficult to establish and may never be fully understood or explained. It also recognises that the researchers’ own background and beliefs could introduce an element of bias (Robson 2002, p.27) and advocates rigorous fieldwork in order ‘minimize bias and maximize accuracy’ (Patton 2002, p.93). It was therefore felt that the most suitable theoretical framework to apply in this study was that of post-positivism, as it would help to establish with some degree of certainty what was happening in the real world.

Since the post-positivism stance advocates a multi-method approach to the study of the phenomenon it was felt that using a variety of sources to produce mutually supporting evidence that allowed the findings to be corroborated, would be appropriate. It was therefore anticipated that each method used in the study would provide data, collected from a variety of sources, which would improve the quality and reliability of the research findings. To this end a mixed methods approach was incorporated into the research design.

### 3.3 Research design

One of the objectives of the study was to investigate the effectiveness of the theological college library. To this end it was decided that a small sample of theological colleges that train men and women for ministry rather than all theological colleges should be investigated. This would allow for a greater depth of study and provide a better understanding of the phenomenon.

At the beginning of the research several approaches, such as ethnographical, experimental and phenomenological were investigated to determine whether they would be appropriate. All three were considered but dismissed for the following reasons. An experimental strategy was not deemed to be suitable for although it is often used to assess the impact of a new policy, it is dependent on being able to manipulate or intervene in a situation in order “determine, which of two or more things happen to subjects” (Bryman 2008, p.36). It was felt that neither manipulation nor intervention would be compatible with the post-positive search for
truth and insights into the world inhabited by the theological colleges. The ethnographical approach, although a flexible design method was rejected on the grounds that it relied on description and direct observation, an undertaking that could not be performed by the researcher as it would be time consuming and could not be accommodated within the timeframe of the study.

The phenomenological approach was not undertaken because of its emphasis on subjectivity and description (Lincoln 2005; Denscombe 2007), rather than the objectivity required by post-positivism (Robson 2002). Grounded theory was initially contemplated because of its inductive approach that derives theory out of the data collected (Bryman 2008). It was however discounted because the technique often tends to concentrate on the data and overlook the context of the phenomenon under study (Denscombe 2007). For example, it is the aim of grounded theory to “generate a theory to explain what is central in the data” (Robson 2002, p.493). It was felt that the data should not be seen in isolation and to ignore the factors that influenced theological colleges such as religion, history and economics, would affect the understanding of the research findings. The researcher felt that applying a more holistic approach through the exploration of issues within their natural setting rather than just dealing with isolated facts, would help to explain why situations occurred and it was therefore decided to adopt an approach that was similar to the case study strategy.

3.3.1 Case study approach

Although theological colleges have developed independently, many similarities in their organisational structures were found. This indicated that a case study strategy would be the most appropriate approach to use, as it would provide a better understanding of the environment in which they functioned. However the researcher felt that there would be value in highlighting the diversity found amongst theological colleges, as it would provide some insights into the complexities involved. To this end three different types of colleges were investigated. Although case study techniques were employed they cannot be considered true case studies because of their differences. Whilst one college represented a single denomination
the two other colleges represented multiple denominations. Of these two colleges, one is organised on a single site whilst the other is part of a consortium within a small geographical area. They are therefore examples of the diversity found in the theological college library sector.

The reason for adopting a case study type strategy was that it is often used when an investigation is concerned with either a location or community (Robson 2002; Bryman 2008). Gillham (2000) defines a case study as an investigation into a “unit of human activity embedded in the real world” that “can only be studied or understood in context” (p.1). This is particularly relevant as the research sought to provide an in-depth investigation into issues affecting theological college libraries by focusing on the relationships and processes within the social setting, with the aim to “illuminate the general by looking at the particular” (Denscombe 2007, p.36). This strategy can be especially useful when exploring situations that are largely unknown.

The case study approach encompasses three types of study: intrinsic, instrumental and multiple case studies. The intrinsic case study is concerned with the investigation of a specific or unique case, whilst the instrumental case study examines a particular issue with the actual case having a supporting role. The multiple case study is basically an instrumental approach that uses several cases (Stake 2005). Since the aim of the research was to provide an understanding of the theological college libraries, it was felt that that the multiple case studies approach was the most appropriate, as the findings provided by a single case study might not be applicable to other theological institutions. For, as suggested by Stake (2005), more than one case should be investigated if some understanding of the phenomenon is to be achieved.

A multiple case study strategy was considered to be the most relevant approach for the study as it focused the research on particular situations and helped to identify the various influences and reasons for specific outcomes. The decision to investigate three colleges was influenced by the fact that the context of two colleges would only differ slightly and that by using an additional college it would be possible to highlight the similarities and differences found and strengthen any common
conclusions derived from the data. The argument for using more than two case studies is supported by both Yin (2003) and Bryman (2008) who suggest that the investigating of two or more case studies make the resulting data comparable and improves the theory building. Although it was recognised that the small number of college libraries studied could not offer a high degree of generality, it was felt that the findings would provide some valuable insights into an understanding of the parent organisations of the theological college libraries under study which could be further tested in any future research.

It was also felt that an understanding of the past of these independent institutions would allow for a greater understanding of the present and that this would facilitate an investigation into the relationship between the library, the parent institution and its users. Bell (1999) considers this method appropriate when the aim is to identify the features of the phenomenon under investigation and to show how they affect and influence the ways that an organisation functions. It also enables the “why” and “how” questions to be answered (Yin 2003, p.7).

Furthermore, the case study approach is considered to be a well-established research strategy that uses both qualitative and quantitative data (Robson 2002; Stake 2005). Since the study would draw from people’s experiences, practices and opinions through the use of different sources such as interviews, a questionnaire and documentary analysis, it was felt that it would be possible to relate the research to the real world.

There are, however, several concerns with using case studies that relate to the validity and reliability of the data collected. Yin (2003) contends that such concerns can be overcome if the quality of the research is tested and suggests four key tests. These are: construct validity, internal validity, external validity and reliability. Construct validity, refers to the operational measures used in the research that ensures that the concepts to be evaluated are actually measured. One way of ensuring that the correct research instruments are used is to collect data from multiple sources as this can provide corroboration (triangulation) thus increasing the credibility of the data gathered. Stake (2005, p.443) agrees with this view, stating
that researchers often use case studies because credibility is achieved through “thoroughly triangulating the descriptions and interpretations”.

Internal validity is an issue that relates to the establishing of “casual relationships”, in explanatory studies, where the researcher seeks to establish whether the relationship between two or more variables is sound (Bryman 2008, p.32). For example where it can be demonstrated that the outcome is a direct result of a particular policy (Robson 2002, p.103). External validity is a form of validity that is concerned with demonstrating the generalisation of a study’s findings. Concerns have often been expressed regarding generalisations made from single case studies, as the results may not be applicable to other cases (Yin 2003; Bryman 2008). For example the single case may be unique or effected by “artificial conditions” (Yin 2003, p.54). Therefore the use of additional case studies, or representative samples, will ensure that it is possible to generalise the findings.

Finally, the fourth test is that of reliability. This can be achieved by reducing the possibility of errors and biasness and ensuring that the procedures followed can be repeated and the same findings and conclusions reached. Although it should be noted that a social study could never be completely replicated because of the people interviewed, detailed documentation and accounting can establish a “chain of evidence”. This technique ensures that there are “explicit links between the questions asked, the data collected, and the conclusions drawn” (Yin 2003, p.83). By providing detailed evidence that traces the procedures used from the original research question through to the conclusions reached any concerns regarding the rigour of the study can be minimised and the overall quality increased.

Furthermore, this strategy facilitated the use of a mixed methods data gathering technique advocated by post-positivism. The study therefore employed qualitative methods such as documentary analysis, interviews and focus group discussions and a quantitative questionnaire survey to gather data. The results of the questionnaire survey formed the basis for the interviews and focus group discussions. Moreover these methods were also used to test the data generated by the questionnaire survey.
3.3.1.1 Research sample

When selecting a case for study it is important to ensure that they are chosen because they are representative of a particular phenomenon, with each case having a specific purpose within the study. Yin (2003, p.47) suggests that cases should be selected in order to provide similar (or replicated) results or contrasting results obtained for “predictable reasons”. The three college libraries were chosen because they represented the diversity found amongst Christian theological college libraries that train men and women for ministry.

The three colleges, henceforth referred to as colleges A, B and C, are established colleges located either in or on the edge of a city. All three colleges are comparable in size, age, student numbers and the educational programmes offered. Moreover the libraries were found to be of a similar size in terms of their collections, their accountability, ethos and their position within the structure of the college. Thus it was felt that a degree of generalisation regarding library provision could be achieved.

The first college chosen, College A, is an ecumenical college and an example of three different denominational traditions forming a partnership, living and working on one site with one library and a separate research centre. The second college, College B, is a single denominational college that has not formed a partnership with any other theological institution and remains independent. College C, the third college to be chosen, is part of an ecumenical grouping of nine member institutions and libraries, located on five sites. All member institutions shared resources, facilities and teaching.\[12\]

Despite the diverse nature of the colleges, all three colleges share a number of common features such as being residential, having similar funding arrangements and the common goal of training men and women for ministry. In addition, they all have well established libraries on site. Each of the colleges provided the researcher with a base that facilitated easy access to both staff and students. Even though the

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\[12\] Since 2006 two further regional institutions have become members of the group, taking the membership total to eleven.
three colleges have formed partnerships with other higher educational institutions for course validation purposes, they are all managed independently of their denominational churches and are autonomous. Although they have developed their own distinct styles and practices, the denomination tradition of each of the colleges was found to have strongly shaped their ethos, their teaching and their library. For example, at College B, the college ethos was strongly influenced by their commitment to the evangelical tradition. This confirms Van Heck’s view (1993, p.106) that attributes the differences found amongst theological libraries to the ‘confessional and intellectual heritage of the institutions’. All three colleges agreed to take part in the study, and gave the researcher permission to consult their archives and to interview some of their academic staff and students.

An additional factor that influenced the choice of College C was the researcher’s personal knowledge of the institution and its library. Whilst this could be considered a disadvantage because of any potential bias, either conscious or unconscious, the researcher felt that it would provide valuable insights and a thorough understanding of the beliefs and values involved that would ensure that significant factors are not overlooked (Denscombe 2007). In an attempt to avoid any element of bias, the research at both colleges A and B was undertaken prior to that of College C to ensure that the issues found in College C did not influence the investigations at the other two colleges. Moreover the researcher only used data that could be substantiated for, as Robson (2002, p.106) states, evidence makes invalidity threats “implausible”.

3.4 Research strategy: the mixed methods approach

The mixed method approach advocated by post-positivism tends to employ both qualitative and quantitative research methods. Qualitative methods are often used when little is known about the phenomena. It uses an inductive approach that develops both theories and hypotheses during the investigation rather than prior to it (Denscombe 2007; Gibbs 2007). Blaxter, Hughes & Tight (2008, p.64) suggest that qualitative research aims to “achieve depth” rather than “breadth”. In contrast to this method, quantitative research seeks to “emphasizes quantification in the collection
and analysis of data” (Bryman 2008, p.697). Although quantitative research tends to be deductive with theory preceding the research, it is a useful strategy to employ when using a mixed method approach to test theories generated by other data collection methods (Robson 2002, p.372).

Teddlie & Tashakkori (2003, p.5-8) provide an historical outline of development of the mixed method approach and note the changing views in regard to the compatibility of the methods used. The multi method approach has several advantages. Firstly the employment of several methods can ensure that the investigation is more comprehensive. The use of multiple methods is, according to Robson (2002) an approach that uses two or more data collection methods to enhance the validity (triangulation) of the research. Triangulation is a process that views things from more than one perspective in order to obtain an “accurate (or more accurate) view of the subject” (Gibbs 2007, p.94). Not only can triangulation corroborate and enhance the validity of the data, it can also help to provide a greater understanding of the phenomenon under investigation by incorporating data from a wider range of sources (Denscombe 2007). Although triangulation can also highlight discrepancies amongst the different sources, it can be a useful aid that may help to reveal any bias of a respondent.

Secondly as both qualitative and quantitative methods have inherent weaknesses when they are combined they can be offset to “draw on the strengths of both” (Bryman 2008, p.609). Thus increasing the reliability of the research.

There are however two concerns with the mixed method approach, the first was that the methods used may produce conflicting results and the second being the time needed to undertake the data collection and analysis. Whilst these are valid concerns it was felt that the advantages of using this approach outweighed the disadvantages and that it was the most appropriate technique to use for the research.
3.4.1 Documentary evidence

Documentary analysis was thought to be an appropriate method to use for this study as documents are according to Denscombe (2007, p.227), a source of data “in their own right” and would provide some insight into the workings of the institutions under study. The documentary evidence obtained from the colleges provided the official version of the events and situations. Bryman (2008, p.526) suggests that the documents produced by organisations act as a “window onto social and organizational realities”. Although such sources may not be impartial and may only offer a biased version of events they can nevertheless provide a rich source of data and an insight to the values and priorities of the institution under study if a critical approach is adopted. In addition documentary evidence is seen by Yin (2003) as being valuable when corroborating other relevant data collected using different research techniques.

However, some concerns have been expressed with regard to the use of this method. The researcher must therefore carefully consider the accuracy, credibility and representative nature of the data and be aware of possible subtexts (Robson 2002; Yin 2003; Bryman 2008). For example, committee reports may have some social filtering to reflect the institution’s view, as they are the recollection and interpretation of the meeting by one person even though all those present agree to them.

Furthermore, Rapley (2007) suggests that there is often the difficulty of knowing what documents exist. Documents such as personal papers may not be fully accessible or they may be restricted in some way. Patton (2002) suggests that problems such as incomplete or inaccurate records can limit the value of the documents because it could impede the full understanding of a specific event or issue. He did, however, suggest that documents used in conjunction with other methods such as interviews, could help to provide a better understanding of the phenomenon under study.
According to Denscombe (2007, p.230) an advantage of using documentary analysis, as a research method, can often be that much of the data is generally accessible and incurs few associated costs. For this study however, whilst some documents such as websites, prospectuses, some annual reports and mission statements were in the public domain, internal policy documents, reports and committee minutes were not. The researcher had to apply to the institutions for permission to consult their archives.

The volume of documentary evidence available in the three institutions under study varied considerably but as it was not excessive, it was consulted in its entirety. College C had the most comprehensive records. Some restrictions were initially placed on access to the documents at both colleges B and C but were later removed. At College C the archives of the college committee from 1999 onwards were not immediately made available as some members of staff were still employed by the college and were known to the researcher. The Principal’s secretary, the keeper of the college records, took this decision which was reversed at a later date. Similarly at College B, the Librarian initially refused access to the college council minutes on the grounds that they were not for public consumption and that library matters were not discussed at that level. However, minutes pertaining to relevant council discussions that directly affected the library were subsequently made available. In practice few restrictions were applied at College B and all relevant papers referred to in the library committee minutes were consulted.

The Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) and Church Inspector’s reports were also examined where possible. Each of the three colleges under investigation is audited by their validating university. This is to ensure that the standards set by the QAA are complied with. These reports are freely available via the QAA website (Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education n.d.). In addition, the denominational churches inspect each college every five years and internal reports are produced. Although full access to the reports was only possible at College C due to their sensitive and often critical nature, it was possible to deduce the basic recommendations made by the Church Inspectors’ reports that pertained to resource

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13 Church Inspectors reports are not normally in the public domain.
provision via the management committee and academic board minutes of both colleges A and B.

Drawing on the themes identified in the analysis of published literature, such as user satisfaction, library usage, library management and funding, the library and college archives were studied to see if evidence of the documented issues found in the literature analysis could be found at the three case study colleges. In addition the documents were scrutinised to determine whether other recurring themes could be revealed. The documents in all three colleges were read and detailed notes and extracts for illustrative purposes were recorded. For example finance (see Appendix Nine). The researcher was able to photocopy College C papers that contained significant detail, such as library reports, as they were in the public domain. Permission was not received to copy material at the other two colleges. It should be noted that access to the financial accounts of each college was not permitted. All the available documents were then re-read and the notes checked to ensure that other issues were not missed. The themes that emerged from the documents were used as a basis for the interviews.

3.4.1.1 College A

The college and library archives at College A were not extensive. The official documents consulted included the library committee minutes 1997 to 2005 (records only kept since 1997) and the annual library report 1988 to 2005 (the first annual library report was produced in 1988); both of these were in separate folders. The college council minutes 1966-2005 were also consulted; these consisted of six large bound volumes. No personal papers were available.

3.4.1.2 College B

As with College A, the college and library archives at College B were not well developed with the library committee minutes having been retained only since 1990. The documents consulted were contained within three large folders. One contained
the library committee minutes 1990-2005, another contained those of the academic board minutes pertaining to library discussions and the third contained a selection of college papers and memos dealing with specific issues collected by the present Librarian. The latter two directly related to the library committee minutes and could be cross-referenced.

3.4.1.3 College C

The archives at College C contained documentary materials relating to the founding and development of the college and its library. Using the college archives it was possible to explore the changing nature of the library and the librarian’s role within the college library from 1898 to 2005. As it was the only training college of the Presbyterian Church of England it was felt that such documents should be preserved, as they were an important part of the church’s history. All the records had been carefully documented and a complete catalogue had been produced. Access was given to all the documents that took the form of official authenticated records such as the college minute books, minutes of the library committee, college and library correspondence and annual reports. The archives also contained the personal papers. It was not known if the college received the complete papers of these people or just a selection as information regarding the donations could not be found. The use of the archives enabled events to be traced chronologically and the expressed opinions and concerns relating to particular issues to be examined.

The archives examined included the library committee minutes 1898-2005 and the college council minutes 1898-2005. The minutes of each committee consisted of six large leather bound volumes and one loose-leaf folder. Other materials consulted were the minutes of the Annual General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of England 1898-1964 (67 volumes), annual college calendars (1898-1960), annual prospectuses (1899-1980) and the private papers of past principals and college librarians (six archive boxes). The annual library reports ceased to be presented to the General Assembly in 1964. Whilst the library minutes tended to be concise and only provided basic information, the college council minutes proved to be very informative as important library matters were reported to this committee.
3.4.2 Questionnaire survey

The document analysis provided an insight into the policy formation of the libraries and the impact of these policies on the library and the academic staff. The effect of these policies and practices on the library users was unknown. In order to obtain an indication of some of the needs of the users and ascertain the current level of user satisfaction, the employment of a questionnaire survey was considered to be the best approach. Although it would not be possible to identify all the needs and views of all the users, the gathered data would be able to provide a general overview of their views and their usage of the library on a given occasion. This would enable some generalisations to be made that could be explored further in the subsequent interviews and focus group discussions.

In their research into the ways of assessing users’ satisfaction, Shi, Holahan & Jurkat (2004, p.124) defined users’ needs as “what the user wants or desires to receive from their research” and users’ expectations as “what library users believe they will receive from their information search”. With these definitions in mind, the researcher attempted to design a questionnaire survey that would reveal how far the library was satisfying their users’ needs during a specific period of time.

Questionnaire surveys are a useful method to employ when undertaking research as they provide both facts and the opinions of the respondents. Moore (2000) suggests that questionnaire surveys are very popular because they are cheap and easy to administer and respondents generally find them easy to complete. They also provide immediate answers to questions and assist in “building up a broad picture rather than exploring issues in depth” (Ibid, p.109). Questionnaire surveys are also suitable for measuring attitudes and opinions. The disadvantages of this quantitative method are the possibility of a low response rate, incomplete answers and the degree of reliability. As the questionnaires are anonymous it is not possible to challenge an answer if it appears to be inconsistent with those given previously. The answers have to be taken on trust unlike an interview or focus group discussion where clarification can be asked for and received.
Despite these disadvantages it was felt that this method would provide an indication of the users’ views of their college library provision that could be used as a basis for the focus group discussions. Moreover the views obtained from the questionnaire data could be triangulated with the data from the interviews and focus groups to test their validity. Every effort was made to design a straightforward questionnaire that would encourage a response. Equally it was hoped that the anonymity it afforded would encourage a high level of honesty. It was felt that the advantages outweighed the disadvantages, particularly if the results could be corroborated with other methods employed in the study.

The questionnaire survey contained a mixture of open and closed questions about the use of the library and the users’ perceptions of the library and its services. Different question constructions were used to hold the attention of the respondent in order to elicit the best data and to ensure that the questionnaires were completed and returned. For example tick boxes were used for the bulk of the questions, as these were quick and easy to complete. Open-ended questions were employed in order to encourage users to express their views more fully. The questions themselves followed a logical sequence, starting with the general and ending with the specific and included filter questions that excluded respondents from a particular group of questions that had no relevance to them. For example those who did not use the library computers were referred to the next set of questions (see Appendix Four). Care was also taken to ensure that the questions were clear, unambiguous and jargon free. Careful attention was paid to the wording to ensure leading questions were avoided. The anonymity of the user was guaranteed with the only identifying factor being that the questionnaire surveys used in each institution were produced on different coloured paper for the purpose of analysis.

It was decided to pilot the questionnaire, as advised by Oppenheim (1992); Johnson & Turner (2003) and Brace (2004). This would check the wording and use of language, assess the survey’s ease of use and identify any anomalies. A three-page questionnaire survey was prepared and offers to pilot the questionnaire were received from three colleges in Cambridge: Sidney Sussex College, Queens College and Ridley Hall. The pilot took place at the end of the first academic term in each college with each librarian distributing the questionnaire systematically to their
users as they entered the library. The anonymity of the respondents was guaranteed in order to maximise the response rate. It was decided that only a small number of questionnaires would be distributed, as this would be sufficient to check the phrasing of the questions and identify any ambiguities with the wording. A total of thirty-six questionnaires were distributed, twelve in each college. Thirty-six questionnaires were returned.

This exercise proved most useful especially with regard to the phrasing of some of the questions. It also afforded the opportunity to allocate a set of predetermined codes to the closed questions. Equally the pilot enabled the researcher to obtain a preview of the type of answers that would be received to the open questions and enabled the researcher to devise some preliminary codes. It also highlighted the fact that although the questionnaire had been designed to be general, specific factors relating to a particular college library would have to be considered when analysing the data. As a result of this the librarians of the colleges under investigation were contacted to ascertain specific local set ups. For example, clarification was needed regarding the location of the library computers, were they housed in the library or in a separate computer room?

The data that the questionnaire was designed to obtain is as follows:

- **Usage of the library (Q.1, 9, 10)**
  This information was sought to gauge how well the library was used.

- **Library Induction (Q.2, 3)**
  The data collected here related to the perceived usefulness of the library induction and to whether everyone received the same initial library information.

- **Use of specific services (Q. 4, 5, 7, 11)**
  These questions allowed the actual usage of the library to be identified and cross tabulated with regard to course, age, gender and prior library experience.
• User satisfaction (Q. 6, 8, 10, 12, 13)
  
The views and opinions expressed in these open-ended questions provided information regarding the users’ experience of the case study libraries, an insight into their perceived needs and levels of satisfaction.

• Personal user information (Q. 14, 15, 16, 17)
  
The final questions provided valuable information that allowed comparisons to be made and patterns identified regarding age, gender, course type and prior library experience. These variables also verified the comparability of each institution’s user group.

(see Appendix Four)

The questionnaire was designed to obtain one instance of library usage during a specific period in order to provide a ‘snapshot’ of the user’s views and opinions of the library service. As the colleges in question were small with a relatively small number of students, it was originally agreed that the questionnaire survey would be distributed at the same time, during the second term as it would ensure that new students had had some experience of using the library facilities. As a sizable proportion of students only attended college once per fortnight due to their teaching programmes, it was decided to distribute the questionnaires over a two-week period in order that all types of users were given the opportunity to participate.

The library staff agreed that during staffed times they would hand every user entering the library a questionnaire with a request to complete it. No distinction was made between academic staff, full or part time students. During non-staffed times, this related mainly to colleges A and C, the questionnaires would be left by the issue desk with a note requesting the users to complete a questionnaire. It should be noted that as with the pilot questionnaire different coloured paper was used for each college and the anonymity of the user was guaranteed.

The librarians agreed to distribute the questionnaire survey during the first two weeks of February 2005. 100 questionnaires were distributed which represented approximately one quarter of each community. Although the number of respondents
from each college was not sufficient to provide a high degree of generalisation, the questionnaire results did provide enough data to be statistically significant.

### 3.4.3 Interviews

Since it was felt that the college and library committee minutes of the institutions were not sufficient in themselves to provide a full understanding of key situations it was decided that the views and the opinions of those concerned with the affairs of the college library should be canvassed. To this end it was felt that individual interviews would facilitate a greater awareness of the issues identified within each institution by enabling those involved to explain and comment upon the actions taken. Gorman & Clayton (2005, p.125) argue that interviews afford an “immediate response to a question” and allow exploration into why particular incidents and events occurred and the response of individuals to these. There are two main types of interviews, group interviews and individual interviews and some research studies may use both. Group interviews can provide useful information when a collective view is sought but in order to obtain data regarding individual responses to a particular event, one–to-one interviews are more productive (Denscombe 2007). Individual interviews tend to be more personal and easier to arrange and control. It also allows personal observations and opinions to be expressed that can help to develop a detailed understanding of the events and issues, test the attitudes and depth of feeling of those involved and explore relationships.

An inherent weakness of this method is that there may be an element of unconscious bias on the part of the interviewer because of personal beliefs and values that may influence their probing of events and opinions. Yin (2003, p.10) stresses the importance of rigor and systematic procedures and the use of “multiple sources of evidence” for triangulation purposes rather than just relying on a single approach in order to limit any possible bias (p.99). Equally triangulation can confirm the honesty of the interviewees’ replies. Sometimes an interviewee may deliberately try to please the interviewer by providing a suitable rather than an honest response; the interviewer must therefore be aware of the ‘interviewer effect’ and try to verify the data gathered (Fontana & Frey 2005, p.702-3).
An advantage of the interview method is that it can be flexible thus allowing the researcher to follow up lines of enquiry. There are three basic interview models: the structured, the semi-structured and the unstructured (Robson 2002). Structured interviews tend to use predetermined questions in a specific order, whilst semi-structured interviews use predetermined questions that can be adapted and new questions added depending upon the depth of exploration required. An unstructured interview does not rely on a predetermined set of questions and because it is concerned with an area of interest, conversation is allowed to develop and issues are explored. Unstructured interviews are often known as “in-depth or intensive interviews” (Gorman & Clayton 2005, p.127). For this study it was decided to use individual semi-structured interviews, as these would provide the flexibility needed to ask supplementary questions or seek clarification (see Appendix Six for an example of the Interview Schedule).

It was decided that the interviews would be undertaken with both past and present librarians and also a member of the institutions’ academic staff with responsibility for the library within each institution, as they may be aware of issues that were not so easily identifiable (see Appendix One for a list of personnel interviewed). This type of sampling, known as ‘non-probability’ sampling, is, according to Denscombe (2007, p.189), used when people are specifically chosen because “they have some special contribution to make, because they have some unique insight or because of the position they hold”. It was felt that these three key individuals from each institution would be sufficient to obtain the required depth of study, as they would be fully conversant with issues pertaining to each individual library. The validity of the information obtained would be confirmed and any anomalies queried by checking the official college documentary evidence found in the college archives.

**3.4.3.1 Individual interviews**

Before the research was undertaken, permission for access to the college archives and the interviewing of the current librarians was sought from the Principal of each institution (see Appendix Two). This permission was readily granted. The promise of anonymity subsequently encouraged the past librarians to volunteer their
services. This would provide reassurance to those not wishing to be disloyal to past employer or colleagues although some have since agreed that their comments may be attributed. Nine interviews were arranged, three in each of the sample colleges. It was decided to record the interviews, as this would ensure that an accurate and complete record was obtained. However because some comments could have been sensitive, the interviewees were given a choice of having their answers recorded or notes taken. Seven interviews were recorded and one had notes taken, as the person concerned did not wish to be recorded. No reason was given for this. Another declined to be interviewed at the last moment but provided written answers to a list of questions. Again no reason was given for this decision.

In addition to the nine interviewees, a former Church Inspector and a well renowned theologian who had studied at College C and later taught at a theological college and a Welsh university agreed to be interviewed. It was felt that he would be able to offer insights from many different perspectives with regard to theological education and provide an overview of the changes within it. Moreover his expressed views could be corroborated in the published literature.

All the interviewees elected to be interviewed within their own institutions. The interviews were conducted in a relaxed atmosphere within the safe, secure environment of either the interviewee’s own office or in a seminar room, the location being suggested by each interviewee. The researcher had met all interviewees prior to the interview, in order to establish a rapport that was non-threatening and non-judgemental. The researcher was fully aware of the dangers of too much empathy. Although Gorman & Clayton (2005, p.131) recommend being “supportive and understanding” as this might encourage the interviewee to be more forthcoming, they also suggest the use of “non-directive probes” to obtain information as these do not imply any evaluation of the information received. A week prior to their interview the interviewees were sent an interview schedule to enable them to prepare and ensure detailed responses to questions (see Appendix Six for a sample interview schedule).

The interview questions used were a mixture of open and closed questions that would enable the interviewee to voice both their own opinions and recollections.
whilst at the same time keeping the interview moving. For example, ice-breaking, non-threatening questions such as “how long have you been at the college?” and “where did you teach before?” These questions were designed to help settle the interviewee and provide the interviewer with information regarding the interviewees’ background and experience. The college’s documentary evidence had been consulted prior to the interviews in order that specific targeted questions could be asked. The questions pursued the themes of library management, funding, user satisfaction and library usage (see section 3.3.2). The interviews lasted between forty-five and sixty minutes and ample opportunity was given for the interviewees to express their views and to bring up topics that they felt to be important. All interviewees appeared to answer the questions frankly and openly and verbatim transcripts were produced. Only one face-to-face interview was not recorded. In this instance the notes taken were immediately written up to ensure that the information was documented as accurately as possible.

3.4.4 Focus groups

Whilst undertaking exploratory work it was realised that the questionnaire survey, although providing some valuable insights into current library provision from the user’s perspective, was not sufficient in itself to fulfil the research objectives and that some questions would need to be explored more fully. It was therefore felt that the Focus Groups method would provide a greater depth of understanding of the views, opinions and experiences of the academic staff and the student body as well as providing additional triangulation with the data already gathered. Gorman & Clayton (2005, p.144) believe that focus groups are useful in obtaining the “an understanding of participants’ attitudes and perceptions” and as Fagerheim & Weingart (2005, p.529) found that in their research, focus groups do not necessarily provide all the answers to specific issues or questions. They do however “provide insight into the needs and interests” of the group.

There are several advantages in using this pragmatic approach. Firstly a focus group only requires a moderate amount of commitment from the participants. Secondly group discussions encourage a range of opinions, attitudes and shared experiences
to emerge that could provide useful information for the researcher. Thirdly unanticipated aspects of a particular issue can be usefully explored and immediate clarification or feedback obtained. In addition non-verbal communication can alert the researcher to the sensitivity of a particular topic and be used to probe and discover further useful data.

The disadvantages associated with using focus groups such as the difficulties in getting everyone together, one or more participants dominating the proceedings and overcoming the natural desire to please, was minimised by good organisation on the part of the researcher and the fact that the participants, by being members of the institution, were already a self selected group. Some basic ground rules were set at the beginning of the session in order that the researcher could maintain control. Only one person should speak at a time and the other participants should allow a person to finish speaking before entering the discussion. The researcher also ensured that everyone was given an opportunity to contribute by occasionally steering the conversation. Participants who remained quiet were asked their opinion of the issues under discussion.

The intention was to set up two focus groups at each college, one academic and one student. It was felt that organising one mixed group would not have the desired outcome, as some students might feel inhibited if the group contained both academics and students. It also ensured that the academic groups and the student groups were able to focus on a different number of small issues. The academic group, for example, has a major influence on the development of the curriculum, the purchase of resources and their manner of implementation. It was therefore important to obtain their views on these aspects of library provision for teaching and learning. Similarly, the experiences and opinions of the student group, as the ‘end users’, were sought.

3.4.4.1 Student focus groups

The student focus groups were the first to be arranged. The composition of the groups was felt to be crucial. In order to ensure that each mode of study was
represented, a sample was selected. Patton (2002, p.236) states that using sampling in focus group situations will bring together “people of similar backgrounds and experiences to participate in a group interview about major issues that affect them”. However it was important that there was some diversity in the composition of the group for a number of reasons. Firstly the information needs of a first year student might be different to that of a third year student. Secondly full-time students living on campus might use and perceive the library differently from part-time students. Therefore it was not possible to select the student sample randomly as it was important to ensure that each mode of study was represented, as this would enable some generalisations to be made. Denscombe (2007) suggests that in order to make some generalisations from the resulting discussions, the emphasis should be placed upon obtaining a representative sample and that the participants need not be selected randomly. Bryman (2008, p.415) refers to this method of selection as purposive sampling whereby participants are selected on the basis of their relevance to the research. It was therefore decided that purposive sampling would be the most appropriate process to employ.

It was judged that between six and eight people would be sufficient to explore the attitudes and views about a small number of issues since less than five would not provide a sufficient range of views and that more than eight might be difficult to control (Moore 2000). The librarians of all three case study colleges were, therefore, asked to provide the college list of student names arranged by course, mode of study and year. As some of the groups were small, the third name from each list was selected and the student invited to attend. The students were contacted two weeks prior to the meeting and then again three days before. Not all of those contacted were able to participate in the focus group discussions either due to the nature of their course or because of prior commitments. Two additional people were also selected and were asked to act as reserves in case a chosen participant was unable to attend the meeting (Stewart, Shamdasani & Rook). Ultimately each college focus group consisted of six students and the reserves were used in all three colleges.

One of the limitations of the focus group method is that there is a restriction on the number of related issues that can be asked in a group setting if the depth is to be retained (Moore 2000). Therefore each of the groups was limited to four topics. A
list of topics and a few relevant questions were prepared prior to the meeting (see Appendix Eight). The questions were prepared as a starting point and served as a check list to ensure that all relevant topics were covered and to make certain that the group remained focused and did not deviate too far from the topic under discussion. Through the interactive conversation, the research issues were explored in as much length as was necessary.

Every attempt was made to put the participants at their ease. Each group met in a small familiar meeting room within their college and were offered light refreshments. The chairs were arranged around a small table. Permission to record the sessions using a tape recorder was obtained from all of the participants; each session lasted about an hour. In recognition that the quality of the recording could vary, especially if several of the participants spoke at once, notes were taken. These notes were written up immediately after the sessions. The note taking also provided an opportunity to record non-verbal communication.

3.4.4.2 Academic interviews

Unfortunately the organisation of an academic focus group at College B proved impossible due to a large amount of long-term staff sickness. They did, however, agree that two members of staff could be interviewed if convenient times could be arranged. Whilst the situation was disappointing, particularly as it was felt that some useful insights and shared experiences could have been gained from the discussions into the issues facing theological education, it was felt that information regarding the development of the college’s curriculum could still be obtained by using the interview method. It was felt that the views of key individuals might reveal some unexpected issues that may not have been highlighted in a group situation.

It was decided to select the academic staff members with a key role in the design and delivery of the curriculum, thus those responsible for the degree and postgraduate levels of study were approached as they would represent the range of courses offered at the college. It was also felt the academic staff members should be interviewed separately as this might allow them to be more forthcoming and provide
some valuable insights into the organisation. As a result of the situation at College B, it was decided not to convene academic focus groups at colleges A and C so that the method of data gathering would be consistent and their participation would be ensured. These two colleges gave permission for two members of staff involved in degree and postgraduate curriculum development, to be interviewed. As these were specific posts it was not possible to select the interviewees randomly. In all three colleges the Dean/Directors of Studies were approached and all agreed to be interviewed. A total of six academics, two from each college, were interviewed.

As with the previous interviews, a general interview guide was produced and sent to the interviewees prior to the interview (see Appendix Seven). The guide contained a set of issues to be explored and served as a checklist to ensure that all relevant topics were discussed (Patton 2002), thus providing the researcher with the freedom to explore and probe. The advantage of this method is that it keeps the interviews focused while allowing individual perspectives and experiences to emerge. Even though the interviews remained fairly conversational it was possible to determine how the interviewees viewed their world and the researcher gained some understanding of the terminology used and judgments made. According to Patton (2002, p.348) this method should enable the researcher “to capture the complexities of their individual perceptions and experiences”.

Each interview lasted between forty-five and sixty minutes and was recorded using a tape recorder in order to have a complete record of the process. As with the focus groups, notes were taken and written up immediately after each interview.

3.4.5 Unattributed information

The researcher has had extensive experience of working in the theological college library sector and has developed a large network of contacts including academic staff, librarians, administrative staff and students. The study contains some unattributed information that was obtained as a result of personal observations and discussions with other members of the academic staff from the three colleges under examination. On occasions additional views were sought in order to confirm or
clarify the gathered data. Furthermore, some comments were also received from the interviewees after the interview recording had ceased. This additional information further explained the issues under discussion and was felt to be of value by the researcher. For example one academic member of staff clarified some of the college’s library funding arrangements that explained the reasoning behind a particular action.

3.4.6 Transcribing

The transcription of the interview recordings was undertaken as soon as possible after the interview had taken place. Although the transcribing was time consuming, it was felt that a thorough transcription of the tape recordings was required to ensure the accuracy and completeness of the data. Each interview involved approximately six to eight hours of transcribing. Robson (2002) suggests the selecting of relevant passages as an alternative to fully transcribing an interview. This was dismissed as it was felt that significant data might be overlooked and crucial insights could be lost, particularly in regard to the focus group discussions where opinions might differ and the major view held sway. For as Bryman (2008) suggests understanding can often be gained by the way something is said rather than just from the words spoken.

The transcriptions of the focus group recordings were more complex than those of the individual interviews because of the number of voices on the recordings. As previously noted (see section 3.3.4.2) some basic ground rules were applied that ensured that several people did not talk at the same time. Furthermore, in order to aid voice recognition during the transcription, each participant was asked to state their name, course and any other information that they wanted to share at the beginning of the recording. This proved to be a useful reminder of the participant’s voices and was replayed at the beginning of each transcribing session. A seating plan was also drawn at the time of the interview and this helped to act as a visual aide memoire for the researcher. Within the plan each person was given a number and this was used during the note taking and later used to confirm voice recognition where necessary.
Every effort was made to transcribe all recorded speech as it occurred and some unidentified sounds were recorded as such. Non-verbal communication was marked when it occurred, for example head nodding and fidgeting. Once the transcription had been completed and checked for omissions the transcribed data was then prepared for analysis.

3.5 Data analysis methods

A number of themes were drawn from the examination of the literature that were considered during the investigation and the analysis of the research data. These included the changes in the delivery of theological education, the partnerships between the theological college and their validating university and the changing nature of library provision. As there was little published literature available, any recurring themes found in the colleges were noted and examined. For example the lack of underpinning theological knowledge of some students was identified in all three colleges through the interviews and focus group discussions. This was found to be a recurring theme although during the research period there was little available literature on the topic.

Since the amount of documentary evidence was small and the number of interviews and questionnaires were relatively few it was felt that employing computer aided analysis other than Microsoft Excel or Word was unnecessary. The analysis was undertaken manually and through a process of reflection, careful reading and constant checking of the data, a number of commonalities, patterns, processes and relationships were identified.

3.5.1 Document analysis

The documentary evidence was subject to qualitative content analysis whereby themes were searched for within each document and quotations were used for illustration (Bryman 2008). This type of analysis according to Robson (2002, p.350)
stresses “the relationship between content and context” that helps to provide some understanding of the purpose for the document.

Using the themes identified in the literature analysis, some predetermined codes were initially developed in order to manage the gathered data. Additional codes were devised as new issues were identified. All the records from the three colleges were examined (see section 3.3.2) and detailed notes made of the identified themes. Reoccurring issues, such as funding were highlighted as being significant. The notes were then read again and each highlighted section was given a code, for example staffing.

Once the data was coded a number of broad categories were formulated. For example issues and references relating to funding such as staffing were given a broad ‘Finance’ category. This enabled the data to be organised before it was placed into a thematic grid for analysis. The notes were then reviewed to ensure that nothing had been omitted. All coded data was then copied into a thematic grid using Microsoft Word, together with the exact references to the original data and document (see Appendix Nine). This allowed for key words to be quickly identified using a ‘word search’ and allowed for comparative analysis to be undertaken. Barbour (2007, p.130) advocates the use of either a matrix or thematic grid as it aids the identification of recurring patterns and “guards against impressionistic analysis, thus enhancing rigour”. Each category had a separate thematic grid that contained all the data from each of the colleges relating to it. By grouping the information together it was possible to identify the similarities as well as the differences.

The categories were reviewed and some were then subdivided as they represented different aspects of the same issue. For example, the documents revealed that funding was often quoted as being a reason for insufficient resource provision. As ‘resource provision’, in all three cases represented both books and IT, it was felt that the issues surrounding these resources were sufficiently different to warrant subdivision. The data within each thematic grid was then prioritised according to the frequency that the issue occurred within the documents so that recurring issues could be identified. Notes and comments were added next to relevant text.
3.5.2 Questionnaire analysis

The data from the tick box questions was entered into Microsoft Excel software under a number of preset codes and tables were subsequently generated (see Appendix Five). The open-ended questions were given codes so that the wealth of information gathered could be handled more easily (see Appendix Four). For example Qu.13 asked *Are there any comments about the library service that you would like to make?* The responses fell into definable categories and enabled codes to be generated such as more books, more online resources and increased opening hours. All the information was recorded thus enabling a comparison to be undertaken. Some categories, however, were broadened to accommodate all the information gathered. For example the previous occupations of the library users were categorised into professional and non-professional occupations to accommodate the large range recorded. It was felt that the two categories would provide an indication of the higher education library experience of the user and their familiarity with using libraries.

The questionnaire, by its distribution method, was designed to provide a ‘snapshot’ of a given library within a specific timeframe. The researcher acknowledges that despite having a two-week distribution period, some users may have not been reached. For example some users indicated they only used the libraries one a month or once a term, depending upon their course or need (see section 6.3, Table 6.6). The questionnaire, therefore, can only claim to represent a proportion of the library’s users.

The distribution of questionnaires created a problem at two of the institutions. At both colleges A and C the distribution proved to be slow because they were not continually staffed and many were not returned. The original pilot questionnaire took place in three small colleges, two of which had part-time staff. Distribution of a small number of questionnaires had not proved to be a problem and had worked well with a 100% return rate. The difficulty only surfaced when a larger survey was undertaken.
The response rates from colleges A and C were disappointing, being 38% and 50% respectively. At College B, however, the response rate was 70%. The pilot did not indicate that the questionnaire was too long or difficult to complete. Nor did the pilot distribution method indicate that the sample size should be increased in case of a low response rate (Sapsford & Jupp 1996, p.50). According to Denscombe (2007, p.23) the main problem with a low response rate is that the researcher has no way of knowing if the views of the non-respondents and the respondents differ and if they do, to what degree. The results should therefore be viewed only as an indication of the respondent’s opinions.

Two reasons can be suggested for the response rate anomaly. Firstly, College B had a part-time librarian and a full-time library assistant. The continuous staffing directly affected the distribution and the return of the questionnaires. Secondly, access to the main lecture room at College B was via stairs located within the library, this generated a lot of through traffic. Some of the answers to question 11 “What did you use the library for today” gave credence to this theory (see Appendix Four).

The results of the questionnaire survey are presented in Chapter Six along with some of the data from the interviews and focus group discussion. The questions and issues raised are discussed in Chapter Seven.

3.5.3 Interview and focus group analysis

As with the documentary data, the interview transcripts were also subjected to qualitative content analysis. As the experiences at each of the institutions would differ, the data did not have preset codes, the themes and issues were allowed to emerge. For, as Patton (2002, p. 236) points out case studies are “illustrative not definitive”. In order to organise the information received, each emerging theme was marked, highlighted and coded. Key categories were identified that recurred across the interviews and these were placed into a thematic grid, using Microsoft Word, under broad general headings in order to define some generalisations that could be used to explain the themes and relationships that had been detected in the material.
gathered (see Appendix Ten). As the richness of the data could be illustrated through direct quotations, important comments were also entered onto the thematic grid.

The thematic grids were reviewed in an effort to identify intersections, patterns, consistencies and inconsistencies. For example some coding categories whilst initially appearing to be distinctive were actually components of a larger category. Additionally some themes emerged as being important to a particular group, for example, professional issues were important to the librarians interviewed. Once the analysis had been completed all the themes were compared in order to identify relationships. Themes identified in the interview analysis were checked against the documentary analysis. For example, events reported by the interviewees were check in the college minutes and reports for corroboration in order to enhance the reliability of the data gathered.

All the academic staff interviewed and the focus group participants were guaranteed anonymity prior to their interviews. However as the findings of the study relied on the richness and depth of the data collected, the academics subsequently agreed to be directly quoted. Their consent was felt to be important in case the colleges were identified. The job titles of the interviewees have therefore been used but not their names. The students, however, remain anonymous and are referred to by an alphabetic letter when quoted.

3.6 Scope of the research

Some of the limitations of the research have already been highlighted and the reasons discussed. With regard to the number of Christian theological colleges investigated, the aim was to select some examples that reflected the diversity found within the sector. Whilst it was recognised that an investigation into three colleges would not be sufficient to draw wide ranging conclusions, it was felt that these colleges would provide sufficient insight into the policy making process of each institution and the impact upon their libraries. This would generate some theories that could be tested and enable some generalisations to be drawn.
Equally, in regard to the data gathered by the questionnaire survey, whilst not being completely representative of their library user community, it did provide a good illustration of the users experiences at a given period of time. Therefore any conclusions drawn must be seen as not being entirely representative of the entire library user group at a specific institution.

3.7 Ethical considerations

Issues of anonymity and confidentiality had to be addressed because of the involvement of the theological colleges, the interviewees and the questionnaire respondents in the research. In order to ensure the availability of the college documents, the researcher gave each college an assurance that their anonymity would be preserved. Equally the promise of confidentiality was provided to the interviewees and focus group participants in order to ensure that they would be more open with the researcher with regard to their views and opinions. With regard to the questionnaire survey, any concerns or reservations that the respondents may have had in relating their view of the library services were overcome by guaranteeing anonymity. This was essential if the respondents were to be encouraged to express their true opinions.

3.8 Conclusion

This chapter has presented the justification for selecting the research philosophy, design and methods employed in this study. The appropriateness of the strategies adopted and the techniques employed were also discussed. In addition the ethical issues and limitations of the research have also been explored.

The data collected is presented in the next three chapters; Chapter Four explores the nature of theological education within theological colleges, Chapter Five discusses theological college library resource provision and Chapter Six presents the data gathered from the questionnaire survey relating to the use of the library resources by
its users. Chapter Seven discusses the findings of the study whilst Chapter Eight provides the conclusions drawn from the research.
CHAPTER 4: THE NATURE OF THEOLOGICAL EDUCATION

4.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the nature of theological education for ordained ministry as offered in the three theological colleges under investigation and explains the differences between theology as taught by a university and that delivered within a theological college. This chapter also explores the changing profile of the theological student and discusses how far this has impacted on the design of the courses offered by theological institutions. The modes of curriculum delivery are outlined and the views of both staff and students of the three colleges are presented. The colleges under study represent the Christian denominations of the Church of England, the United Reformed Church and the Methodist Church. As the Church of England is the largest denomination represented in this study, it is therefore the main focus of the research.

4.2 Ministerial theological education

The training process for ordained ministry is called ministerial formation (see section 2.2). Ministerial formation incorporates both the spiritual and intellectual development of the student and comprises both academic study, for either a first or second degree in theology or a masters degree, and professional training. As for other professions, professional training is necessary in order to obtain a certificate of professional practice. A Certificate of Ministerial Training, allows the student to practice ministry within their denomination. The Certificate has to be undertaken either through a theological college or a regional training centre. These centres are usually based in the student’s local diocese (for Anglican students) and are specially designed for those who do not have easy access to a theological college or for those not wishing to undertake residential training.

An academic member of staff, from one of the theological colleges under investigation, explained that the theological education undertaken within a
theological college encompasses several elements. These include practical experience, reflection, assisted reflection on that experience and the study of theology (Director of Studies, College C). However, the Director of Studies of College A stated that a greater emphasis was now placed on practical experience and reflective practice at the expense of academic study. These views were confirmed by a retired Church Inspector\textsuperscript{14} and by an External Examiners Annual Report of College C organised by their degree awarding body, in regard to a new BA being offered. The report commented, “this new design underlines the vocational nature of the programme and its emphasis on reflective practice”\textsuperscript{15}.

Since ministerial students have a diverse range of experiences and training needs, the courses offered by the three colleges under study are tailored to some extent to meet the requirements of the student as well as those of the church. The Director of Studies, College A, explained that if the appropriate course choice and specific training needs had not already been discussed at the Assessment Panel\textsuperscript{16} then the Director of Studies would often steer a student onto a particular course at the college interview. The Directors of Studies at both colleges B and C confirmed this process.

The development of modular curricula has enabled the colleges to offer a wider choice of courses. As the programmes work by credit accumulation, they are flexible and allow the students to transfer to a similar course at another institution or take a break from their studies as circumstances dictate. One academic member of staff at College C noted that the profile of the ministerial student had changed as a result of the new curriculum method of delivery. He stated that in the 1960s, when he had trained, the typical ministerial candidate was a recent male theology graduate, who undertook four years of residential training. Now the students tend to be older, and both men and women, who have usually had another career and bring a variety of skills to the church (see section 2.2.2).

\textsuperscript{14} An informal interview with a visiting lecturer, who although now ‘retired’, was a respected theologian and a retired Church Inspector.


\textsuperscript{16} The student’s selection interview undertaken by the denominational church prior to embarking upon ministerial training.
4.2.1 Funding

Each denominational church provides the funding for their ministerial students, as the colleges do not generally receive HEF Council funding (see section 2.1.1). Thus training offered by each college reflects the specific training needs of the denominational church. However, recognition that English society has adopted a post Christian culture has impacted upon the recruitment of suitable candidates for ministry (see section 2.2.2). All Christian denominations have had to rethink their training methods in order to encourage more people to offer themselves for service. The introduction of a range of flexible training courses, such as part-time and non-residential programmes, suggests that societal changes and the work/life situations of ministerial candidates have been taken into consideration (see section 2.2.2). In addition such courses represent substantial cost savings for the churches as these students live at home, are usually employed or supported by their spouses and are not therefore in need of a maintenance grant. Thus the churches only have to pay the training fees of these students (see Archbishops’ Council 2003, p.101 for levels of support).

The ongoing financial burden of providing residential full-time ministerial training was a factor that influenced the church’s encouragement of flexible non-residential training and delivery programmes (see section 2.2.3). However, it should be noted that the drive to reduce costs has had an impact on the finances of theological colleges. The colleges only receive the training fees for non-residential students and aging buildings and facilities still have to be maintained. As theological colleges are dependent upon the funds provided by their denominational church, they have to generate additional funding for projects, additional staff (both teaching and support staff), building development or refurbishment themselves. A past Academic Librarian and Principal (College C) commented that the college had been obliged to explore ways of generating additional income through such initiatives as conference room lettings, running short courses for local clergy, chapel hiring and accommodation letting during the vacation periods.
It should be noted that the provision of both residential and non-residential programmes has enabled each college to train a larger number of students. This has led to the closure of some full-time residential courses. For example, Wesley College, Bristol (Methodist) ceased to offer full time residential training in 2006 and became a training centre. The future of the college is now in doubt as further consolidation by the church is leading to more closures.  

4.2.2 Academic study

Theological education designed to lead to ministerial formation was found by the researcher to be substantially different from that taught within a university setting. This is because of the former’s professional and practical nature and the equal weight given to spiritual direction and academic learning. Thus theological colleges are not concerned with learning for its own sake (see section 2.2.4). Although these colleges endeavour to maintain high academic standards, academic learning is just one aspect of ministerial formation. One academic member of staff explained that they were:

*primarily a worship and learning community and the way we structure our learning is by being a higher education institution*

(Dean of Studies, College B)

Since the theological colleges teach from a faith perspective the focus of their programmes and the ethos of their communities were found to be somewhat different from a secular higher education institution that offered a wide variety of subjects, including religious studies. An informal discussion with a retired Church Inspector revealed the different teaching methods. The Inspector stated that university students are taught theology from a more objective and value free standpoint with the emphasis being placed on the interdisciplinary nature of theology which provides:

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17 As stated on the college website. Wesley College, Bristol.
http://www.wesley-college-bristol.ac.uk/,[accessed 23.08.2010].

18 Text in italics here and subsequently indicates a quote from an interview, a focus group or a questionnaire response.
a critical, reflective analysis of both theory and practice

(Church Inspector, College C)

Theological college students however, receive theological teaching within a faith-based community and are therefore prepared, both intellectually and spiritually, for the mission of their denominational church. This view confirms those found in the publish literature (see section 2.2.6).

An academic member of staff from College C, who taught a mixed group of both university and theological college students, believed that the difference between the two groups was that many university students tended to study theology out of interest rather than from a faith commitment. His experience had taught him that although both groups are well read, the university students do not:

have any sense of engagement with the issues or how they impinge existentially on them

(Director of Studies, College C)

He also felt that they tended to express the views of a particular writer rather than having a view of their own, whereas a theological student always had a personal view. The academic staff of the other colleges confirmed his opinions.

Moreover the academic staff of all three colleges believed that because their students tended to be mature, they had different skills and expectations than university students. For example, both the Dean of Studies at College B and the Director of Postgraduate Studies, College A believed that many of their students considered their training to be a means to an end, that of ministerial formation. They further suggested that ministerial training was viewed by most theological college students as a necessary part of ‘God’s calling to ministry’ which made them well motivated.

It should be noted that although some university students share theology lectures with theological college students, university students do not receive formational training, as it is not part of their course.
4.2.3 Formational training

The formational training of ministerial students is usually pursued in parallel with academic study (see section 4.2). It was found that the Certificate of Ministry could be studied either on its own, if a candidate already has a degree in theology or alongside a degree in theology for those whose first degree is in a different subject. The academic staff reported that students with a degree in theology often opt to study for a Masters degree in a particular aspect of theology, for example, an MTh in Christian Doctrine (Spurgeon’s College 2007). Thus the students undertake a very intensive period of study and training before proceeding to the next stage of their ministerial training pathway, CME (see section 2.2.8).

According to a retired Church Inspector (see section 4.2), ministerial training had in the past tended to be very academic, with the students receiving little practical experience and only a limited amount of time being allocated for pastoral reflection. This has now changed and the programmes offered by the colleges have become more professional in content with the emphasis being placed on the practical aspects of the training. This emphasis provides the students with an opportunity to experience pastoral and liturgical practice in context. For example, worship is central to this aspect of training, daily prayers and a weekly Eucharist being the usual devotional structure. In addition to the structured college life, it was found that the students of the three colleges do not have Sunday college worship; instead they are attached to a local church and share the life of that congregation through praying and preaching. Other aspects of the professional training undertaken by the students include marriage guidance, bereavement counselling and other areas of social work that will prepare them for parish and community life.

The pastoral oversight of the student was found to feature highly in each of the three colleges in order to aid personal and spiritual development. Students are divided into groups and placed under the care and guidance of a tutor with whom they have regular meetings for prayer and fellowship\(^{19}\). Practical experience, in the form of placements was also found to be an important element of ministerial formational

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\(^{19}\) Fellowship groups provide friendship and mutual support. See http://www.ridley.cam.ac.uk/life.html for examples of community life.
training. Most first year students are involved in an aspect of local community work and during their second year, the students undertake a church placement for a specific period of time. In addition students spend at least one summer vacation receiving ‘on the job’ training under the supervision of a minister. The research revealed that many single students opted to spend this period abroad, for example in India. The length of the placement was found to vary depending upon the denominational church.

Once the required qualifications have been achieved, most students undertake further training as part of their continuing professional development within either a Parish (Church of England) or Circuit (Methodist Church) setting. Most Anglican students return to their sponsoring Diocese unless they are released and allowed to find their own curacy. Post-ordination training is undertaken for a further three or four years until the end of their first curacy. The amount and type of the subsequent training and development is dependent upon the denominational church. For example, within the URC a student will receive practical training for a further year (their fourth year), known as an ‘Internship’ before going to a Pastorate. Interns are assigned to a church but continue formational training by attending their college one day a week.

It should be noted that being part of a living community of faith is an important aspect of ministerial formation (Buchanan 1980). It is also something that was felt to be of great benefit by the nine residential focus group participants from the colleges under investigation. One focus group participant commented that:

Being able to immerse yourself in theology with many like minded people is a wonderful experience, for me that’s what the training is all about……

(Student D, College B)

Whilst another reported that:

See [http://www.westcott.cam.ac.uk/formation/contexts_attachments.html](http://www.westcott.cam.ac.uk/formation/contexts_attachments.html) for examples of the types of placements available to Anglican ministerial students.
Having the opportunity to live and work, discuss and debate within a community of faith is just amazing. It is even better than I imagined it could be…

(Student C, College A)

4.3 Theological college selection

Once the denominational church has approved a student’s selection for ministry, the student is free to seek admittance to the theological college of their choice within their own denomination. Each theological college selects its students; the church does not allocate students to a specific college. The Dean of Studies, College B, confirmed this. As noted previously (see section 2.2.2), theological students tend to be mature which means that many have families or other caring responsibilities. Evidence provided by the three student focus groups indicated that this often limited their choice of ministerial training college, eight of the focus group participants reporting that having family commitments had been a factor in their choice of theological college.

The introduction of flexible part-time courses has enabled many students to remain in their own homes, and avoided the necessity for them to uproot their families. Others, however, are happy to move and often sell their homes since, once in ministry, the denominational church provides their accommodation. For those who opt to move, most residential colleges provide family accommodation on site or close by, thus enabling the whole family to participate in all aspects of college community life. This does, however, mean that these students and their families are residential for the entire duration of their training. For the student, participation in community life and the mutual sharing that this entails is seen as an important aspect of ministerial training. It not only instils the necessary spiritual discipline, it also provides support and friendship networks (see section 2.2.4).

However the research suggests that not all students are able to train at the college of their choice. Two focus group participants from College A, one part-time and one full-time, reported that they had been told to attend their present college. They
stated that they had not been given a reason for this and appeared to be resentful at this lack of choice. This was contradictory to the view expressed by the Dean of Studies from College B and was explored further.

Information obtained from both the Church of England, URC and Methodist Church websites revealed a reduction in the number of residential training colleges (see also section 4.2.1). This suggests that the reduced numbers of residential theological colleges could affect the choice of some ministerial students although it should be noted that there are still sufficient residential Anglican colleges for students to choose from (see section 2.2.2).

The question of college choice was explored in the other focus group sessions. None of the participants considered the reduction in colleges to be a problem. At College B, all the focus group participants stated that they were studying at the college of their choice. Two of the participants reported that they had previously undertaken short courses at the college and, because they had enjoyed the experience, had decided to embark upon further study there. At College C, all the focus group participants stated they had chosen their college. However, two focus group participants did reveal that, as they wanted residential training, they did not have a choice of college (Students B and D). It was the opinion of one student that it was important to experience residential training, as it:

\[ \text{enables me to become totally immersed in my faith and to test my vocation} \]

(Student B, College C)

The other residential focus group participants agreed with this view. The part-time students reported that unfortunately their personal circumstances did not enable them to undertake residential training (Students A, C and E, College C). As all but two of the focus group participants had been accepted into the college of their choice it is possible to conclude that the majority of the focus group students were content with their selection.
4.4 Courses

It has already been established that in the past ministerial candidates usually had a degree in theology prior to entering ministerial training (see section 4.2). The research suggests that this has now changed with many students entering training without a degree or with one in another discipline. The study found that each of the three theological colleges under investigation has the freedom to develop and deliver the curriculum to reflect that institution’s ethos, subject to the approval of the denominational church and the degree awarding body. Thus ministerial training courses offered by theological colleges differ from denomination to denomination and even from college to college. For example, College B is an evangelical college within the Church of England and as such the teaching reflects a more fundamentalist approach to Christianity.

Although all three theological colleges are independent, they are subject to two types of inspections, one by their denominational church and the other from the partner institution (see section 2.2.7). As the churches are the ultimate stakeholders they are able to directly influence the ministerial training provided by the theological colleges to reflect the changing needs of the church. For example, in an effort to reduce costs the Church of England encouraged partnerships between theological colleges and other higher education in the hope of attracting HEF Council funding (see section 2.2.3). The programme reviews undertaken by the validating university ensures that the theological colleges provide the QAA prescribed standards of teaching and student support (see section 2.2.7).

The findings suggest that some theological colleges have their programmes validated by institutions that do not have established theological or religious departments. Whilst the universities that validate the programmes offered by colleges A and B do have established religious studies departments, the partner of College C does not. The appropriateness of such partnerships was considered in Chapter Two (see section 2.2.7). Only one academic member of staff from College C commented on this issue during their interview and expressed some concern. Subsequent informal conversations with other academic members of staff confirmed
the disquiet felt amongst the staff regarding the influence of the degree awarding body that had resulted in the lessening of their own autonomy.

Furthermore, the general opinion gained was that the academic staff did not think that the partnership with the university was appropriate because it did not fully understand the requirements of ministerial training or its community centred model and questioned how church values fitted into the secular framework of the programmes. For the university, academic learning and research tends to be its prime focus; this is not the case for theological colleges. For, as the Dean of Studies, College B, stated, teaching the academic curriculum is not the “main job” of the college. It should be noted that the academic staff interviewed at colleges A and B refused to discuss their partnerships other than saying that they had a good relationship with them.

The Director of Postgraduate Studies (College C) was questioned about the appropriateness of their partnership with the validating university. She felt that not having a religious studies department did not pose a problem because the university was very experienced in validating professional and vocational courses such as nursing and were familiar with the complex relationships that exist between practice and theory. It was the Director’s opinion that the relationship worked well because the college provided all the necessary teaching and that the highly qualified academic staff were employed by the theological college rather than the university. Furthermore, the rigor employed by the external examiners safeguarded the quality of the course delivery, as did the QAA standards “imposed” by the university. She also commented that the partnership had been beneficial to the college as the university provided much needed administrative support and expertise and that this had proved to be invaluable.

4.4.1 Expansion of courses

The research revealed that each of the three colleges offered several training pathways and a variety of flexible courses in order to attract prospective ministerial students. The introduction of part-time training courses had proved to be popular, as
it did not disrupt family life. The published literature recorded an increase in the numbers of people offering for ministry (see also section 2.2.2) that was confirmed by anecdotal evidence obtained from the academic staff in all three colleges. They believed that the flexible training programmes had resulted in an increase in those offering for ministry.

It was noted in section 4.4 that a theological degree is no longer a prerequisite for ministerial training and that the churches are adopting a more flexible approach. For example the Methodist Church now offers pre-ordination training to suitable candidates. In recognition that candidates sometimes lack the necessary qualifications the Church now provides foundation training for those with suitable practical experience. This ensures that the candidates are of sufficient academic ability to undertake a subsequent theological degree\(^21\).

As well as training students for ministry, the colleges also offer places to independent students (those not sponsored by a church). These students can opt to undertake either residential or non-residential theological education without having to complete the formational element of study\(^22\). According to the Director of Studies, College A, the desire to learn theology within a community of faith is becoming increasingly popular. Evidence was found on the college websites, particularly that of College B, that the college had developed part-time courses which had enabled their range of intake to be widened. This has reduced their reliance on the recruitment of ordinands in order to keep the college viable.

The programmes offered by the three colleges under examination range from certificates for lay ministry to PhD research that can be provided either by a full-time or part-time mode of study, residential or non-residential. The flexibility introduced following the Hind Report (see section 2.2.2) provided the opportunity for many theological colleges to design new courses that were more practical thus making them more accessible to those with differing ranges of abilities and from

\(^{21}\) Foundation training is the initial training undertaken by those wishing to offer themselves for ministry Methodist Church. 

\(^{22}\) Independent students. 
http://www.stjohns-nottm.ac.uk/independent-study, [accessed 15.08.2010].
different backgrounds. Furthermore, it was found that some colleges actively targeted independent students. For example, in 2006 College C introduced a new undergraduate degree in Christian Theology without the formational element being attached. This meant that for the first time independent students could be admitted. It also indicated that the college had recognised the need for change if it was to remain viable (academic member of staff, College C). The modular course proved to be popular because it offered different modes of delivery and assessment that could be undertaken as circumstances dictated. Furthermore, the flexibility of the course enabled it to be studied by people with all levels of ability as the course was assessed through essays and portfolios. This allowed for creativity and focused on the individual’s personal strengths and abilities.

4.5 Curriculum development

All the academic members of staff interviewed were involved in curriculum development and design within their colleges. The Dean of Studies at College B stated that the college worked very hard to develop the right curriculum for ministerial training and that it placed a lot of emphasis on student feedback in regard to their overall experiences of the course. He believed that the feedback helped to ensure that any problems identified were corrected and areas that needed improvement were highlighted. In addition, the courses were reviewed each year and any suggestions received from the external examiners were incorporated. The Dean of Studies also added that the college had to plan the curriculum carefully so that the requirements of the discipline were compatible with “the goal of ministerial formation”.

The research found that the curriculum of all three colleges was influenced by the transformative learning method. This approach is based on “the learner’s ability to acquire new understanding through critical self-reflection” (Wickett 2005, p.157). The Dean of Studies at College B believed that this was the right technique as it enabled the students to “contextualise their learning”. Both the Directors of Studies at College C, agreed with this view and emphasised the importance of the students being able to relate their studies to their own experiences. This view was confirmed
by Lynch & Pattison (2005). They also stressed the value of challenging the students to re-think their faith in the light of their academic learning and experiences (see section 2.2.6).

Unlike at many other higher education institutions, the study found that the theological college librarians did not have a role in the development of the curriculum nor did they have a role in its teaching and learning (see section 2.5). When questioned about this the general view of the academic staff was that the librarians had an important role in the provision of resources but not in its teaching and learning. The Dean of Studies at College B explained that although the Librarian was an “important resource”, he did not expect the Librarian to have the necessary specialist knowledge to be involved in the teaching and learning of the college. The academic staff at colleges A and C agreed with this view. At these two colleges the librarians’ depth of theological knowledge was also questioned. It should be noted that neither of the two librarians had a degree in theology, unlike the librarian at College B. Only one academic member of staff believed that the Librarian should play a greater role in providing information literacy skills for the students (Director of Studies, College C). However, it was her view that this would present practical difficulties because of a lack of suitable training facilities and timetabling constraints.

### 4.5.1 Course content

The greater flexibility in the college training programmes and the curriculum changes that now placed the emphasis on pastoral reflection\(^\text{23}\) were found to be causes for concern amongst some of the academic staff. Although all three colleges offer courses that have a high academic content, they also provide programmes for those without a degree. Two academic members of staff from College C felt that these courses did not have sufficient academic content for ministerial preparation. For example, the academic content of the new Christian Theology BA offered at College C, no longer required New Testament Greek and/or Hebrew to be mandatory subjects; they had become options. The academic staff believed that not

\(^{23}\)The student’s reflection upon their personal experiences.
going back to the original sources would lessen their theological arguments and teaching. In addition they felt that the depth of theological understanding was being lost, particularly as the training period for some students had been reduced. Although not stated the impression that the degree had been devalued was obtained by the researcher.

An expression of concern at the loss of academic content of some courses was also obtained from an academic member of staff at College A. He felt that one consequence would be the lack of “good” teachers in the future (Director of Studies, College A). This view is supported by some of the published literature (see section 2.2.5) and was also expressed in an informal conversation with a retired Church Inspector. It was his opinion that too many of the best theologians went abroad and that the lack of good teachers would be a future concern for the churches.

The reduction in the academic content of some courses was also acknowledged by two further academics (College A) who suggested that the reason for the reduction was the church’s need to attract people into ministry. One academic was philosophical about the curriculum development of some courses; he commented that:

\[
\text{there is pressure on the curriculum to produce certain people for a role so it is not theological education in the biggest sense}
\]

(Director of Postgraduate Studies, College A)

The Director explained that the curriculum is concerned with the development of the whole person, academically, personally and spiritually, and that it deals with the ‘formation’ of their character. They are expected to conform to a certain type and most students are expected to change during their time at college. Furthermore, he stated that the students are expected to:

\[
\text{develop self awareness and understanding but as most of them were forty plus and have established insights, we don’t expect radical changes}
\]

(Director of Postgraduate Studies, College A)
This assessment confirms the research findings discussed in section 2.2.4 (Welland 2001).

Whilst some academics were concerned with the lack of academic content, two students felt that their course was more academic than they had been led to believe. At College A, two of the focus group participants were not happy with the content of their course. They felt that the balance between academic study and practical training was wrong. One first year focus group participant felt that he had been directed to a particular course that was more academic than he would have liked (Student A, College A). His expectation had been that the course, whilst providing the necessary underpinning theological knowledge, would have a larger practical element. Another student (Student B, College A) also felt that the course was more academic than she had expected. She gave the impression that she was having difficulties with the academic demands of the course.

None of the other focus group participants related similar experiences. One focus group participant at College B felt that the college had been very helpful in tailoring the course to suit his particular needs at Masters level (Student D, College B). He already had a degree in theology, therefore did not need to study all the required modules. Another stated that she was going to pursue a course at a different college but when she found out about the practical courses that College B offered, she changed her mind and decided to undertake further study at that college (Student F, College B). Apart from the two focus group participants at College A, all the others considered the balance of academic and practical work to be about right.

When asked to comment on his students’ views regarding the balance of academic and practical work of a specific course, the Director of Studies (College A) remarked that the church is very clear about what skills students need to acquire. He believed that each student normally had a specific focus and that sometimes they forgot that they were being trained to work in a parish and became “impatient” with the academic work. The Director of New Testament Studies, (College C) commented that this impatience is not uncommon. He reported that many students find the transition from lay to ministerial status difficult. They often have to
“unlearn” knowledge they have gained by being a lay member of the Church and look at things from a different perspective as they take on their new ministerial role.

4.6 Curriculum delivery

It was previously stated, that there are four major types of approaches to teaching theological education for ministerial formation (see section 2.2.5). Each seeks to provide ministerial formation through the understanding of the living faith, or traditions, of the denominational community. Most theological colleges teach a combination of the four approaches to a varying degree. For example, in College A, it was found that the approach focused on the ideas and beliefs of other denominations and religions that reflected the ecumenical ethos of the college.

In order to accommodate a diverse range of students with differing needs and learning styles, most courses offered at the three theological colleges are delivered through a combination of traditional lectures, seminars, discussion groups, workshops and tutorials. There has been a shift away from the pure lecture style to one that has a high level of student participation through presentations, discussions, readings and assignments. The assignments undertaken include word-limited essays, book reviews, biblical exegesis\(^{24}\), group collaboration projects and sermon preparation. In addition, each student is sent on two or three placements, depending on their need and prior experience (see section 4.2.3). Pastoral placements are usually assessed through a report or a reflective essay. In addition students are expected to spend approximately eight hours a week on attachments that includes preaching and leading worship.

The research indicated that few students are assessed by examinations and that the essay is the predominant mode of assessment for the majority of theological students. The academic staff interviewed believed that this mode of assessment allows for creativity and enables the students to draw upon their personal experiences and encourages reflective practice. All the academics interviewed emphasised the importance of relating book learning to personal experience as this

\(^{24}\) The critical explanation or interpretation of a biblical text.
aids the student’s growth and development. Engaging with the materials and making the connections between theory and practice is considered to be a high priority amongst the academic staff in all three colleges. From the students’ perspective, the focus group participants found sharing their experiences through discussions and seminar group sessions very rewarding, stimulating and enjoyable. One third year College B focus group participant revealed that:

_I really miss this element now that I am at the dissertation stage of my course_  
(Student D, College B)

Unlike most higher education institutions the three colleges under investigation do not use a Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) to support their teaching. This is mainly due to a shortage of skilled staff and the necessary funding required for the installation and maintenance of the IT infrastructure, rather than not recognising the flexibility that it would provide. For example, it could enhance the learning experience of part-time students. Although the Hind Report (Archbishops’ Council 2003, p.89) suggested that considerable savings could be made through the use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in the delivery of ministerial training, it also noted the costs involved in the setting up of such programmes would be “massive” and thus encouraged the colleges to make use of their partners’ resources (Ibid, p.69). The research confirms a lack of IT usage in theological education as suggested in the literature review (see section 2.4.1.1).

### 4.6.1 Affiliated courses

The investigations revealed that other church bodies that delivered part-time ministerial training programmes often used the premises of theological colleges. All three theological colleges under study allowed their facilities to be used in this way. These programmes are ecumenical and primarily, although not exclusively, for the Anglican, Methodist and United Reformed churches. The curriculum for these courses is delivered partly through either residential weekends, at which the whole student group would meet together, or through a weekly teaching session. The
students undertaking the courses at colleges A and B meet one evening per week during term time for community worship, a community meal and a three-hour teaching session. They also receive individual tutorials, small group teaching and supervised placements in their local area. In addition these students undertake a study week in college, usually during the Easter vacation.

The arrangement for College C is slightly different as its region includes the Diocese of Europe. Thus weekly evening sessions are impractical. Those wishing to undertake ministerial training but live and work in Europe meet for six weekends over the course of a year rather than weekly, undertake a ten-day summer school, attend occasional regional seminars and receive support from local tutors. The curriculum is delivered through a programme of CD Roms or workbooks. Although the courses offered by the three colleges are similar in content, they have a great deal of flexibility built into the programmes so that local circumstances can be taken into consideration. For example, some areas are still reliant upon dial-up connections for Internet access thus making the downloading of large files problematic. These students therefore used either CD Roms or workbooks.

4.6.2 The student experience

The focus group discussions provided a view of their ministerial training experiences. The majority of the participants reported that they enjoyed their courses and there were no complaints in regard to the methods of delivery. The participants particularly appreciated the group discussions and seminars because of the stimulation and interaction that they provided. They saw it as a way of learning how to lead Bible groups when in ministry as it encouraged them to develop their arguments, their listening skills and to be receptive to the ideas of others.

However, the students highlighted the competing demands of the academic curriculum and the practical formational training (see also section 2.2.6). The general impression gained by the researcher was that the focus group participants felt that the colleges had very high expectations of them. They were expected to fulfil the requirements of the curriculum, undertake formational training and
participate in college daily life. These activities included morning and evening worship, spirituality sessions, Fellowship groups and community meals. One focus group participant reported that, excluding college commitments and worship, he participated in a minimum of ten hours of activities that were undertaken in the local community per week (College B, Student C). Another focus group participant from the same college felt that:

there was an awful lot that the college makes you do

(Student B, College B)

Students in all three colleges felt that the additional lectures and activities necessary for ministerial formation severely reduced the time available for academic study. These activities included working with the Samaritans, in homeless shelters, marriage guidance and bereavement counselling. The type of activity undertaken was dependent upon prior experience.

The participants of all the focus groups commented that they felt their courses were very intensive and that they were under a lot of pressure. One of the reasons being the reduction in the length of time required for ministerial training for some students (see section 2.2.3). The inflexibility of the college timetable was something that was commented upon by the Librarian of College B and several of the academics interviewed. One lecturer at College C, a former student, felt that the timetable was very full and that students were often very “hard pressed” to do everything expected of them. To alleviate some of the pressure, she provided the students with very specific readings for her course. This, she believed, saved them time and ensured that the set work was completed. Two academic members of staff at College A also acknowledged the time constraints placed upon the students.

It should be noted that at College C, in an effort to ensure that the students receive all the necessary training, it no longer has a Reading Week25 during the first two terms of the academic year. Although this ensures the delivery of the curriculum, it

25 A week that allows the students to catch up on either their reading or assignments.
reduces the study time available to the students. It should be noted that both colleges A and B have Reading Weeks during their first two terms.

The motivation of the theological student should be considered in order to put these views into context. The rigorous church selection process and a belief in the receipt of God’s calling, provides the students with a powerful motivation to succeed. The training itself is not something that is undertaken lightly. As all those training for ministry are mature students (see section 2.2.2 for the average age), such decisions may have huge ramifications for their families (see section 4.3). Failure is therefore not an option to be contemplated. Evidence of the low failure rate was confirmed in the documentary evidence from College C. An external examiners report noted that the module failure rate was ‘extremely small’\textsuperscript{26}.

One consequence of providing a range of courses to suit the needs, circumstances and abilities of ministerial candidates is that more support from the academic staff is required in order to ensure that the students complete their training. The Director of Postgraduates Studies, College A commented that he had found that students tended to expect a lot of support from the staff, more than would be given in a university. He felt that this was now particularly true of part-time students as they had a wide range of abilities. It should be noted that the nature of community life within theological colleges ensures that students have more daily contact with academic staff for discussion and interaction than they would in a university setting. This perhaps increases the workload of the academic staff and places pressure upon them. It is interesting to note that four of the College B focus group participants praised the academic staff for their willingness to help students, even to the extent of providing additional tutorials.

4.7 Continuing ministerial education

At the beginning of their course and at the end of each academic year, each student has the opportunity to discuss their ministerial training needs with their tutor. A set

\textsuperscript{26}XXX University, 2009, \textit{External Examiners Annual Report 2008/9. BA Christian Theology, Humanities and Social Science}. [Internal unpublished document].
of learning objectives for the following year is agreed upon and individual programmes of study are devised. If the student is a leaver, then the training recommendations are sent to their receiving district where the necessary training will be undertaken during the probationary ministry term or curacy\textsuperscript{27}. The length of this training period was found to vary from denomination to denomination (see section 4.2.3). Within the Church of England, for example, the local Church Diocese provides this training as well as the support and necessary resources. Many theological training colleges also provide short courses and sabbatical support for the Continuing Professional Development (CPD) of those in ministry.

The Hind Report (see section 2.2.8) recognised the importance of CPD for ministers in order that they could keep abreast of developments within a variety of specialist fields, such as counselling and leadership. For this reason ministers receive sabbatical leave after a set period of time. Sabbatical leave entitlement for ministers varies within each denominational church. For example within the URC, a minister is entitled to up to three months leave every ten years\textsuperscript{28}, whilst a Methodist minister receives three months after ten years of service and then three months every subsequent seven years.

Although the colleges’ primary function is to provide education and training for ministerial candidates, their secondary role is to provide educational opportunities to lay men and women who are preparing for other Christian work. According to the Director of Postgraduate Studies, College A, the courses provided have proved to be popular and the number of people undertaking a range of such courses has increased. It was found that the colleges actively encourage people to undertake these short courses because the resulting fees generate additional income for the college. Many Anglican theological colleges now employ development officers to market their institutions, for example St. Johns College, Nottingham, Ridley Hall, Cambridge and Wycliffe Hall, Oxford.

\textsuperscript{27} Interview with the Director of Postgraduate Studies, College A, 14/12/06.
\textsuperscript{28} Opportunities for Education and Training. \url{http://www.urc.org.uk/manual/training.htm} [accessed 21.11.07].
4.8 Conclusion

This chapter explored the nature and delivery of theological education within three ministerial training colleges through the documentary analysis, the interviews and the focus group discussions with some of the members of the college communities. The research revealed many similarities and identified a number of issues that occurred in all three theological institutions.

The funding of theological colleges was identified as a common issue in all three colleges under investigation (see section 4.2.1). As theological colleges are financially dependent on their denominational church, they are encouraged to diversify and generate further income themselves. This has led some colleges to enter into partnership with degree awarding institutions that do not have academic experience of theology in order to gain some HEFC funding. This has raised some concerns within the academic community in regard to the validating institutions’ understanding of the requirements for ministry and the setting of the academic learning within a secular framework.

The difficulty in attracting sufficient candidates for ministry has forced the theological colleges to redesign their training programmes in order to appeal to students with a more diverse range of academic abilities. Although the aim of new programmes has been achieved, some concerns were expressed regarding the consequences of these changes that relate to the lowering of academic standards and the ramifications that they may have for the future of theological education.

How theological college libraries are adapting to the changing profile of the library user is explored in the next two chapters. Chapter Five provides an outline of the role of the library and the librarian within theological colleges, whilst Chapter Six explores the theological college library from the perspective of the library user.
CHAPTER 5: THEOLOGICAL COLLEGE LIBRARIES

5.1 Introduction

This chapter investigates the role of the library within the college and the services that it provides as well as discussing the current situation within the three theological college libraries under investigation. It also provides some indication to how these challenges are being met. The next chapter, Chapter Six, considers the nature of the library service from the users’ perspective.

5.2 The role of theological college libraries

The rationalisation of the church’s resources instigated by the 2003 Hind Report resulted in the closure, merger or relocation of some training colleges (see section 2.2.3). For most libraries the consequences of the report presented a challenge because of the diverse nature of the programmes offered, the complexity of their delivery and an increase in the number of students. As each college is independent it has been allowed to develop to suit its community ethos and local circumstances. It was found that the management and the funding for resource provision of the library was the responsibility of each individual college. The Principal of College A reported that the denominational churches are not involved in the management of the library and do not provide guidelines regarding their management. He believed that because academic learning is just one aspect of ministerial formation, less emphasis is placed on library provision unlike that found in other higher education institutions.

As with other higher education institutions, it was found that it was the role of the library to support the parent institution by providing all the necessary resources to serve the teaching and research needs of its community. Although it was clear that the theological college library had a more subordinate role than libraries in other higher education institutions, it still has to fulfil the requirements and standards stipulated by the church inspectors and their degree awarding universities. College
libraries form part of the general college inspection undertaken by the church inspection teams (see section 3.3.2). The libraries are also reviewed by the colleges’ validating university audits as part of their necessary quality assurance process to ensure that the appropriate higher education standards (QAA) are being met for teaching and learning and the quality of the student experience.

The documentary evidence found, however, indicated that little time was actually afforded to reviewing the college library by both the church inspectors and the accrediting university. The style of review was also found to vary from college to college. One past Librarian at College A stated that the impression that she was given was that:

*the library did not feature very highly in the review because the church inspectors did not visit it*

(Past Librarian, College A)

Another past Librarian recalled that:

*the college library inspection by the church inspectors was not intensive. I did not even see the inspectors. The inspection by the university during my tenure of office consisted of someone popping their head around the door and saying yes, they have got one*

(Past Librarian, College B)

The previous Librarian of College C reported a similar experience. The inspectors had not visited the library and from an informal conversation with them, she gained the impression that they were not very aware of how the library operated, nor its role within the college. The Librarian did however report that if the review of the library happened after the introduction of a new course, then it tended to be more thorough.

Although the library did not feature highly during the inspections, it was found that the users placed a high value upon it. Within the institutional settings, the
theological library was seen as the physical location of resources and services and according to one academic member of staff the library was the:

\textit{physical component of curriculum delivery}

(Dean of Studies, College B)

It was the opinion of another academic that the library represented the:

\textit{face of the college and its historic tradition}

(Director of New Testament Studies, College C)

Each library represented a huge investment made by the college over a period of time and apart from being a valuable asset, the collections were felt to bring prestige by attracting scholars and students to the college for study and research purposes. It was the opinion of several academics from the colleges under investigation that the library was:

\textit{at the heart of the college and that it was very important as it was the centre for dialogue and debate}

(Dean of Studies, College B)

It was also considered to provide:

\textit{an important learning environment for the whole community}

(Director of Postgraduate Studies, College A)

The importance of the library was also reflected in the views of the focus group students who believed that it was essential because it provided all the necessary resources to support their courses. Thus the general impression gained from both the academic interviews and focus group discussions was that the library was an important component of college life.

In order to establish some understanding of the libraries under investigation, the following sections provide an overview of the three theological college libraries.
5.2.1 College A and its library

The first college library to be investigated was that of College A. The college was originally founded in 1828 as a medical school in the centre of a large city and began to train Anglican clergy in 1850. The college was established on its present site in 1929 after the medical school was transferred to the local university. In 1970 it became an ecumenical college when it entered into partnership with a Methodist institution. They were later joined by a URC college when the URC was established by the merging of the Congregational Church and the Presbyterian Church of England in 1972.

The college was found to have three modes of operation; providing full-time residential training for ministerial ordination, as a base for the local Ministerial Training Course that provides part-time non-residential ordination training and a research centre that supports higher degrees and sabbatical leave research. The college also incorporates a Mission Studies centre. The college offers a variety of programmes that are validated by the local university and now admits undergraduate, postgraduate and independent students. All teaching, staff and facilities are shared.

The library is not purpose built and is situated on the ground floor of the student accommodation block. When it out grew its allocated space three smaller rooms were added to accommodate the expanding collection of approximately 50,000 volumes and 65 journals. The resources of the three denominational churches are fully integrated into one collection. The library comprises of four rooms off a large entrance hall. They consist of the main library, the periodicals room, the IT room and a separate library office. Each room can be locked separately although they are all, apart from the Librarians Office, accessible twenty-four hours a day for residents but only during office hours for external users. The Librarian commented that the library was cramped with insufficient study spaces and shelving for the growing stock and that both he and the students found it a difficult environment in which to work. The library itself, although shabby and cluttered, was light and airy and had a friendly relaxed atmosphere.
In August 2006 a small extension to the main library was undertaken that helped to improve the study conditions and provided additional shelving space. The library was also refurbished. The library office, however, is still separate from the main library and therefore acts as a physical barrier to the users. The Librarian commented that the room also created a sense of isolation from the rest of the college and the library. He has tried to overcome this by always having coffee with the rest of the staff and eating in the dining room.

Prior to 2005 the library operated a basic automated catalogue using CardBox software. The Librarian reported that this had been introduced in the 1990s and that the retrospective conversion had yet to be completed due to the size of the collection and insufficient staff time. A card catalogue is still used for the pre 1801 Methodist works. In September 2005, Heritage software was installed for both the catalogue and the circulation system. A manual slip system had previously been in operation. The new system has proved particularly popular with the students as it facilitates online catalogue searching.

The college IT Room, situated next to the library, has six computers. All the library’s electronic resources are available via these computers, which were networked to a printer. CD-Roms, such as the ATLA Religious database\textsuperscript{29} are also available on a dedicated machine (ATLA Religious Database 2010). In 2006 a pilot subscription with EBSCO, an electronic journal subscription supplier for online journals, was introduced that enabled journals to be accessed both via these PCs and remotely. Although the usage was not high both the academic staff and the librarian decided to continue the subscription in the belief that interest in electronic journals would increase once students became more familiar with the format.

In 2005 the library had 509 registered users who were primarily the staff and students of the college. Local ministers are not able to access the library as a matter of course as the resources are purchased for the exclusive use of the staff and students. The resources themselves belong to the college and not the church. Local clergy are however, eligible to become external users for a small fee.

\textsuperscript{29}The religious database produced by the American Theological Library Association that provides citations and abstracts of theological journals.
The library does not have a system of fines nor does it employ a security system. Security was originally enforced by the use of a keypad. All residents were given the code but since 2006 access has been provided through the use of a swipe card. There is no additional security except the honesty of the students. The collection is not subjected to an annual stock check due a lack of staffing therefore the extent of any book loss is difficult to assess. The Librarian relies on the users to report suspected missing books.

The college employs a full-time Librarian (in post since October 2002) and has a voluntary term-time part-time assistant. The Librarian reported that this was generally the wife of a residential student who was willing to give some of their time to help in the library. The Librarian is usually available during office hours, four days a week and until 7pm one evening per week, except when he attends meetings. The library is accessible to non-residents at weekends but no library assistance is available. The previous College Librarian (1980-2002) also gives support by working voluntarily one day a week on the retrospective cataloguing of the Methodist collection.

5.2.2 College B and its library

College B was the second college to be investigated. The college, established in 1863, is an Evangelical Anglican college that trains men and women for ministry and service. The college was originally located in the southeast and after several moves became established in the outskirts of a large city in 1970. The college was found to provide a variety of full-time residential and part-time or mixed mode ministerial formation programmes validated by two different universities. The mixed mode programme offers a three-staged ordination training programme that combines distance learning, short periods of residential education and individually-supervised non-residential study. At the time of the research, the college also provided a base for the local Ministerial Training Course. This partnership has been discontinued and the course is now offered in partnership with the local university.
A youth ministry centre is also located at the college. The centre provides a number of programmes for undergraduates in youth and children’s ministry that combines youth placements and study and was at the time validated by Oxford Brookes University. These students are part-time and non-residential, attending the college once a fortnight and are eligible to use the college library. The college thus admits undergraduate, graduate and independent students.

In addition to the above courses the college provides distance learning programmes through their Extension Studies department. Since 1978 the department has offered a variety of courses and training days for those unable to study full-time. The resources needed by these students are provided by the department and are considered to be quite separate from the college library; they are not part of the librarian’s remit.

The college library is well situated being close to the student amenities. The library contains over 50,000 volumes, 100 journal titles and has a large multi media collection of audiocassette tapes and videos produced by the college. The college has a small, well-equipped studio next to the library and students are encouraged to make off air recordings and to record lectures, services and other college related activities. All the items produced are housed in the library. This small room was the location of the original library, the present library being built as an extension. The library itself is modern, light and airy although the stock area is cramped. There is little space between the books shelves and no room for the collection to expand.

The library is ‘L’ shaped in design and to one side is a staircase that leads up to a large lecture room. The Librarian reported that this had been the library’s reading room until 2000 when it was “commandeered” for a lecture room when the college had a large influx of students. A small room, next to the library, had been incorporated into the main library in order to provide some study area. This room also now houses the short loan and reference collections as well as back copies of the journals. The room, which is heavily used, accommodates twelve tables, eight of which can be used as reading/study spaces whilst the remaining four are occupied

30 Date of the extension was unknown. No documents relating to the library extension could be found nor was the building of the extension within the living memory of the present staff.
by the library’s four computers. The tables themselves are old and too large for the room, leaving a cluttered cramped impression. The four computers were originally used for word processing and printing but since September 2005 Internet connections had been installed and therefore were well used. According to the Librarian the computers are not networked because the college does not have sufficient funding to provide dedicated IT support.

The library is very busy particularly as the upstairs lecture room is heavily used. A large number of students pass through the library both to and from the lecture room. Whilst this could be seen to be beneficial to the students for borrowing and returning books, it also has some disadvantages such as noise and security.

As with College A, at College B the staff and students are the prime users of the library with 433 being registered. Again local ministers are not able to use the library as a matter of course although they are able to become external users for a small fee. Similarly the college’s library resources belong to the college and not the church.

The library has a system of fines but does not employ a security system as such. It relies on a keypad entry system and the honesty of the students. As a stock check has not been undertaken for many years it is difficult to assess the annual loss. As in College A, the Librarian relies on the users to report missing items. It was also found that the library was expected to generate a certain level of income each year to supplement the library budget; this was achieved through the fines collection, external membership and other initiatives.

The college employs a part-time qualified librarian for 20 hours per week and at the time of the research a full-time library assistant. Thus the library is continually staffed during office hours and until seven in the evening one day a week. The librarian is usually available four days a week and until 7pm one evening a week, except when she attends meetings. The library is not accessible to non-residents at weekends. In 2002 the library management software system, Heritage, was installed. This provides the library catalogue and its cataloguing and circulation system. Prior to this they used a home made system. The Librarian reported that it
had met with limited success because it could not cope with the demands placed upon it (Librarian, College B).

5.2.3 College C and its library

The final college to be investigated was College C. This college was originally established in a large city in 1842 as a Presbyterian Church of England college and moved to its present location in 1898. It subsequently merged with a Congregational college in 1967, becoming a United Reformed Church college in 1972. The college obtained membership of a small group of theological colleges in 1976. The group consists of Anglican, Methodist, Roman Catholic, Jewish, Muslim and Orthodox Christian institutions and three regional training centres.

The college provides a variety of full-time, part-time, residential and non-residential programmes in conjunction with its partner institutions. Two local universities validate the courses. Prior to 2006, the college only admitted postgraduate students but in an effort to attract more students now admits undergraduate, graduate and independent students. In addition the college also provides a base for the local Ministerial Training Course institution. Unlike the Ministerial Training Courses based at colleges A and B, its geographical area of jurisdiction is too large to enable weekly courses to be provided (see section 4.6.1).

All the college facilities are situated in one block. The library itself is large and somewhat gloomy having small windows and dark oak panelling. The users are however, provided with modern study carrels that contain additional lighting, electric sockets and network points. Evidence from the Library Committee minutes indicated that this was the result of a student led initiative to improve the lighting and comfort of the library. Despite the inadequate heating system, the students like the academic environment that it provides and the study space is well used all the year around (Students A, B and E, College C).

The library has a collection of about 50,000 volumes and 55 journal titles. As with the other two colleges, space for the developing collection has proved to be a
problem. As the college holds an important non-conformist collection, its collection development policy is somewhat different from the other two colleges involved in the research. The library’s collection has been developed for the whole Church and not just for those training for ministry. From the very beginning the aim was to provide a collection that would act as a national resource and at the same time be an historical record of the Church’s development. The collection belongs to the Church and not the college (Academic Librarian, College C). This has meant that very little stock deslection has been undertaken despite its continual growth.

The college shares its library resources and library staff with its theological partner institutions. There are now eleven institutions in the group and they all collect the key texts that relate to the courses offered by the group and materials relating to their denomination or religion. In addition they collect materials relating to specific areas of theology that were assigned to them upon joining the group. This co-operative venture enables them to provide the staff and students of its member institutions with a wide range of resources that an individual college library would not otherwise be able to afford. The specialisms of College C are the Old Testament, philosophy of religion, systematic theology and church history as well as reformed studies (materials relating to the non-conformist churches).

The IT facilities at College C are not extensive. Three computers are located in the centre of the library; two computers are used for email, Internet access and word processing. The other is used for the automated library circulation system. The library’s catalogue was automated in 1992 as part of a project undertaken in collaboration with the local university, one of the group’s accrediting bodies. As a result of this collaboration the college was able to become part of the university’s IT networking system. This enabled the theological group to buy into the university’s automated library software system in 2002. Thus the college was able to purchase (as part of the group) a more sophisticated system than it would ordinarily have been able to afford. Although the college relies on a lecturer for its general IT support, the university provides IT support and training for the library’s software.

In 2005 the college library had 457 registered users. Unlike colleges A and B, local ministers are eligible to use the library because the resources belong to the Church
and are therefore accessible to all its members. In practice, however, few church members use the library or its resources.

A system of fines was introduced in 2006 in order to keep course books circulating and to generate some income to replace the large number of important texts that go missing each year. The library does not employ a security system other than a resident passkey. A stock check is undertaken each year by the library staff with the aid of the students as part of the Community Activities week\textsuperscript{31}. The annual loss was reported to be approximately 250 books per annum (Academic Librarian, College C).

The staffing level at the college was found to be low compared to the other two colleges under investigation. Until September 2006, the theological group’s shared library staff consisted of one full-time librarian and one full-time library assistant. After this date the staffing level was increased by one part-time post in order to cope with the addition of three regional libraries. As the library staff are shared between all of the group’s libraries, College C’s library is only staffed for two and a half days a week during office hours, in term time. On the remaining two and half days, the library is accessible via a key obtained from the college office. The library is not accessible to non-residents in the evenings or at weekends.

### 5.3 Management

The study revealed that each theological college is managed independently of their denominational church and has its own Board of Governors. However, despite this, the management structures of the three colleges under investigation are very similar although the titles of individual committees or groups vary. In both colleges B and C the library committees report to academic boards who in turn report to the management committees. The management committees ultimately report to the council/board of governors/trustees that sanction major projects (see Appendix Three). The model used by College C has not altered since its move and

\textsuperscript{31} At the end of the summer term, the students have a community week where they were expected to ‘give’ something, usually labour, to the college.
enlargement in 1898. It is difficult to ascertain how long the College B model has been in existence because of a lack of documentation. A past Librarian suggested that it had not altered since the college’s move to its current location in 1970.

The management structure at College A was originally similar to that of the other two colleges but changed in 2007. The Library Committee now reports to the Core Staff Group that in turn reports to the Academic Board who then reports to the appropriate policy subgroup depending upon the item via the Principal (see Appendix Three). The appropriate group then reports to the Board of Governors.

5.3.1 College management structures

The following section provides information regarding the composition of the key management groups. These clearly show the importance of the role of the College Principal.

5.3.1.1 The management structure of College A

At College A the Board of Governors consists of the:

- President
- Chair of the Methodist District
- Member of the General Synod
- Two Anglican representatives
- Two Methodist Church educational representatives
- A leading local public figure
- Solicitor
- URC Representative nominated by the General Assembly
- Anglican education expert
- Four members of the college staff (including the Principal)
- Four student representatives
The Core Staff Group consists of the:

- Principal
- Librarian
- All the academic staff
- Senior administrator

5.3.1.2 The management structure of College B

At College B the College Council consists of the:

- President
- Two Bishops (ex officio)
- Student President (ex officio)
- A nominated representative from the local university
- Two General Synod representatives
- Faculty member
- Nine elected alumni
- Five members of college staff (observers)

The College B Management Committee consists of the:

- Principal
- Dean of Studies
- Dean of College
- Director of Extension Studies
- Director of the Youth Ministry Centre
- Development Director
- Bursar
- Student President
5.3.1.3 The management structure of College C

The management structure of College C is slightly different from the other two colleges. Although the Principal has a key role in the management of the college, there is a more consensual approach. This is in keeping with the ethos of the denomination.

At College C the Board of Governors consists of the:

- Convenor
- Clerk
- Eight nominated Trustees
- Principal
- A senior member of College staff
- Chair of an affiliated Foundation
- Student President
- A representative from the theological group
- A representative from each of the two validating universities
- A minister from the Central Office of the United Reformed Church.

The College C Management Committee consisted of the:

- Principal
- Director of the affiliated foundation
- Bursar
- Convenor of the Board of Governors
- Student President
- Seven external members who specialise in project management, disability awareness, banking, law, accountancy, administration and a surveyor
5.3.1.4 Mission statements

The research indicated that not all theological libraries have a separate mission statement from that of their parent institution. According to Gale & Reekie (2008) the purpose of a separate library mission statement is to set the direction for the library service and provide a reference point for all other library policy statements. College A is the only library under investigation that has produced a separate library mission statement. The Librarian felt that it was important because the statement focused specifically on the library and acted as a guide to library policy. The lack of a mission statement in the other two colleges perhaps indicates that the need for a library strategy is not always recognised. For example the Librarian of College C reported that she had suggested the development of a five-year library strategy but the library committee felt that it was unnecessary and no enthusiasm for such an exercise was shown. The documentary evidence revealed that the subject was not placed on the committee agenda again. Independent research would suggest that this attitude is not uncommon. An unpublished survey carried out by ABTAPL in 2007 revealed that only 38% of respondents reported that their libraries had a separate mission statement. This would suggest that opinion is divided in regard to the merits of a separate library mission statement.

5.3.2 Library committees

All three colleges under investigation were found to have library committees through which issues are raised and policies discussed. In College A the previous Librarian had formed the Library Committee in 1995 because she believed that “most academics did not have a clue” about the role of the library in the college. She saw the introduction of a Library Committee as a way of improving communications between the academic members of staff and herself as well as raising the library’s profile. The former College Librarian made it clear that the introduction of a Library Committee was an attempt to improve communications generally rather than to enable the academic staff to influence decision-making. She

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32 Unpublished survey conducted during June 2007 by Carol Reekie for the Association of British Theological and Philosophical Libraries. Questionnaires were sent out to 76 theological colleges, 39 replies were received, giving a response rate of 51%.
explained that the library had always been independent and that she had substantial
decision making authority and controlled and administered the library budget rather
than the Bursar. No date was found in the documentary evidence available to
ascertain when this changed or when the Librarian relinquished the budgetary
control.

The Librarian retired in 2002 and the Library Committee continued to meet termly
under the leadership of the new Librarian. In 2005 the College A Library
Committee consisted of the:

- Librarian (chair)
- Two members of the academic staff
- Two college students
- Two course students (non-residential)

The Librarian reported that it functioned more like a user group than a decision
making body. In 2008 the Librarian reported that the composition and remit of the
library committee had changed\(^3\) and that it was now consists of the:

- Principal
- Librarian
- Governor
- A student
- A representative from the research centre
- A representative from the mission centre
- Plus one external member

Although the Library Committee membership is now more impressive, its role is
advisory and it is concerned with “policy shaping rather than policy making”
(Librarian, College A). The Library Committee reported to the Core Staff Group
and then the Academic Board. This is the forum where policies are discussed and

\(^3\) College A Librarian e-mail to Carol Reekie, 09/01/08.
decisions are made. Major decisions such as the library extension, required an endorsement from the College Governors.

At College B the Library Committee is chaired by an academic member of staff and meets termly. The Library Committee consists of the:

- Academic Librarian (chair of the committee)
- Librarian
- Directory of the youth ministry course
- A tutor
- Two students
- Assistant Bursar

The Chair of the Library Committee represents the library’s interests on the Academic Board. The past Librarian of College B (1989-1994) stated that the Library Committee had been a small group during his tenure of office, with little decision-making authority because everything had to be referred to the Academic Board. The available documentary evidence indicates this has not changed. The Library Committee minutes suggest that the committee has some decision-making powers in regard to library policies, allocation of library funds, overdue books and security. The Librarian reported that projects that required funding were passed to the Academic Board where the decision to proceed or not was made. This was confirmed by the minutes of the Academic Board and by the Vice-Principal. For example, the decision to increase the Librarian’s hours in 2002 was made at this level. The Chair of the Library Committee also believed that it was the Committee’s role to intermediate between the library staff, academic staff and college administration in matters that concerned all three areas, such as the provision of resources.

The Library Committee of College C also meets termly and consists of the:

- Academic Librarian (Chair and Principal)
- The College Librarian/ Librarian of the theological group
• Four full-time members of the academic staff
• Three students, one from each year group

It should be noted that the five academics also constituted the Senatus or Academic Board thus the Library Committee has decision making powers in regard to the majority of matters relating to the library and that in practice issues such as funding are taken to the Management Committee directly rather than to the Senatus first (see section 5.3.1.3). The Management Committee is the forum where major decisions, such as the refurbishment of the library, would be discussed. The previous Librarian commented that:

*the library, because of its past history, has a high place in the regard of the college and that this is reflected in the Committee’s membership*[^34].

(Past Librarian, College C)

The library committees of all three colleges refer issues requiring decisions, such as funding, to the next level of management. As the majority of these committees meet termly, this explains why some decisions take time to implement. For example, the Library Committee minutes at College C suggest that when the students requested modern study carrels to be provided in 1994 it took two years before this was implemented. The Library Committee minutes indicate that the delays were due to the length of time required to approve the request, fund, purchase and install the items. A past Academic Librarian and the previous College Librarian confirmed this evidence.

### 5.3.3 Management and college tradition

The research suggests that tradition plays a large part in the management of some theological colleges. As the religions doctrine taught within a theological college relies heavily upon the traditions of their denominational church, it is not surprising

[^34]: There was much documentary evidence to show that the library was highly valued. Every single gift and benefactor was recorded in the Library Committee Minutes and throughout the College’s history all of the academic staff were expected to attended each meeting.
that the idea of tradition or convention can exert influence on many aspects of the college life and organisation. For example the ‘college rule’ that dictates the pattern of daily life was found to be adhered to in many theological colleges (see section 2.2.4). Although the church inspectors audit each college the colleges are able to develop their own organisational structures (see section 4.4). This can be seen in the colleges’ management of the library in the three colleges under investigation. The Librarian of College B felt that the traditions of the college greatly influenced the management of the community including the library. She felt that adhering to the college traditions had been the main weakness of the college when she first arrived. The Librarian commented that in her opinion:

*theological colleges are like tortoises, slow to change. The reason for this here is that the college had a traditional view of the library*

(Librarian, College B)

She explained further that:

*being a nice Christian community everything was based on trust and the culture was very laid back. It had been very difficult to get a lock for the office library door where the rare books were housed*

(Ibid)

The previous Librarian at College C also expressed her belief that tradition plays a large part not only in the way in which the library is managed but in the whole of college life to the extent that the Library Committee always meets at 1.45pm on the third Thursday in November. This was confirmed by the dates of the Library Committee meetings.

The Librarian at College A however did not feel that tradition played a large part in college life because there were three denominations on one site and because the partnerships were relatively new, no specific tradition dominated. He did however suggest that the slow pace of development was due in some part to:

*the college’s traditional view of the library which was proving very difficult to change….*

(Librarian, College A)
He believed that the college was “slowly catching up” with other higher education libraries and that there was still much to be done. Both the librarians of colleges B and C agreed with these views.

The Academic Librarians interviewed disputed the view that tradition influenced the management of the college library. None of the academic members of staff interviewed believed that the traditions of their colleges affected the management of the library. It was the opinion of the Vice-Principal of College B that:

\[\textit{if things did not happen, it was for reasons of finance or speed rather than keeping things as they are}\]

(Vice-Principal, College B)

A retired Principal of College C had a different perspective on the role of tradition within the college. He felt that tradition had a positive effect on the library because of the importance that the denomination placed on learning. He believed that preserving the traditions and heritage of the college was the reason why the library was considered to be important to it.

5.3.4 External influences

The extent to which external influences affect the management of the college library is difficult to assess. The denominational churches directly exercise control over the teaching and learning by stipulating what skills should be taught (see section 4.4) and directly provide the college funds although the specific allocation of the funding within the college is the responsibility of the college itself (Vice-Principal, College B). By restricting funding, it could be argued that the church exercises control, wittingly or unwittingly, over the development or implementation of new ideas within the college which may directly affect the college library. For example, in 1993 the Library Committee minutes reveal that the URC decided to send an historic collection housed at Church House in London to College C so that it would be better used and correctly cared for. The collection had been poorly stored and was in need of organising, cataloguing and in some instances repair. The retired
Principal explained that the college had not been able to refuse. The collection is now housed and maintained at the expense of the college.

Not all external influences should be seen as being negative. The research revealed that the degree awarding universities are able to exert some indirect influence over a college library by virtue of their accreditation role. For example, an audit produced by the validating university for College B, highlighted the need for a clear library and IT strategy and that broadband Internet access should be provided to the students. The Librarian reported that the audit had proved to be beneficial as it encouraged the college to introduce broadband Internet access into the library in 2006\(^\text{35}\), followed by a subscription to a number of online journals.

5.4 Finance

Section 2.1.1 established that the funding models for most theological colleges that train men and women for ministry. These funding arrangements were confirmed by the Executive Officer of the theological group of which College C was a member. He reported that the churches provide the colleges with a grant that is used to pay for the students’ accommodation, teaching, staff salaries, library resources, administration and all the necessary building and maintenance costs. Other costs such as major refurbishments of buildings or library extensions have to be borne by the college through borrowing, appeals or money that the college is able to generate (see section 4.2.1). The retired Principal of College C was also able to confirm this. As with many higher education institutions, the funding received by the theological colleges is dependent upon student numbers. The Vice-Principal of College B reported that as most theological colleges are autonomous they are able to prioritise their own spending. He also confirmed that the funding for each college library is at the discretion of the parent institution. Evidence of a lack of investment in the college libraries was found in the College Management minutes and the Library Committee minutes of the colleges under study. Many entries were recorded referring to a lack of funds for library development and staffing. It was found that none of the colleges had sufficient staff to devote to fund raising activities. The

\(^{35}\)The library houses the only publicly accessible PC’s in the college.
minutes subsequently revealed that library items such as furniture and valuable books were often sold in order to raise sufficient capital to allow necessary projects to be undertaken. For example, in 1997 College A sold a glass Victorian bookcase to fund the purchase of rolling stacks for the library and College B sold some rare books to pay for the library keypad security system. At College C a sizable rare books collection was sold in order to provide lighting in the college tower which housed the back issues of journals, the strong room and the reserve book collection.

Whilst the physical library represents a fixed cost to the college, the library budget and staffing levels do not and are therefore unprotected during periods of financial constraints. Budgets were often vulnerable because they are to some extent hidden and cuts can be made quickly and easily as compared to losing a member of the academic staff.

The Principal of College A felt that libraries were often treated “in a cavalier fashion” with regard to funding. He believed that:

theological libraries could not be compared with university libraries because theological libraries do not receive government funding nor are they embedded into the system. Whereas university libraries are an integral part of academic learning, theological college libraries are just one of the resources available …

(Principal, College A)

5.4.1 Library staffing

The research found that the staffing of the libraries under examination was at the discretion of the colleges and this was tied to some extent to the fortunes of the churches. The churches are the ultimate stakeholders of the theological colleges and the amount of funding that they are able to provide to the colleges is dependent upon the church revenue. The financial losses that occurred within the Church of England during 1989-91 forced the Church to reduce its funding to theological
colleges (see section 2.2.3). The direct financial effect of these losses resulted in the Librarian at College B being made redundant. The Librarian concerned commented that:

> fewer students means that the college funds are less so the library percentage for staff and resources is less

(Past Librarian, College B)

A similar situation arose at College C in 1991, when the college faced financial difficulties a reduction in the Librarian’s hours was discussed at the Library Committee meeting. The past Librarian confirmed the incident and commented that this was later reconsidered when she “threatened to resign”.

The three college librarians believed that they had insufficient library staff and that this was due to a lack of funding. This belief was confirmed by the Library Committee minutes found in all three colleges and by the Vice Principal of College B. For example the Librarian at College A is a solo librarian and receives little administrative help. College B does not have a full-time Librarian and the Librarian at College C is shared between all of the institutions within the theological college group. The documentary evidence detailed numerous requests for additional library staff in all three colleges. It was also documented that the requests could not be fulfilled due to a lack of funding. At both colleges A and C documentary evidence was found that indicated that the librarians had given up some of their own working hours in an attempt to employ a part-time library assistant in order to increase the time that the library was staffed.

The Librarian of College B provided additional evidence regarding the effects of insufficient funding on staffing levels. The Librarian had for many years been campaigning to have her hours increased from fourteen to twenty and then from twenty to full-time. The Librarian felt that she did not have sufficient time to develop the library service. In 2002 the Librarian was promised increased hours but was obliged to forgo the increase in order that the additional funding could pay for the automation of the library. She subsequently wrote to the Ministry Division of the Church of England asking for funding for a full-time librarian’s post. The reply
stated that staffing levels were the responsibility of the college. The college itself had always maintained that it could not afford to pay for a full-time Librarian without losing another member of staff. Evidence of this was found in the Minutes of the Academic Board and was confirmed by the Librarian and the Vice-Principal. It should be noted that the Librarian’s working hours were increased to 20 hours per week in 2003.

5.4.2 Library budget

The review of the published literature suggests that theological college library budgets are not generous (see section 2.4). Many small college libraries are often poorly funded, with their collections being accumulated through donations. The evidence provided from the Library Committee and the Management Committee minutes of College C indicated that its collection had originally been developed through a series of generous donations. In addition it was found that the denominational churches do not stipulate the proportion of the funding that should be spent on resources. Each college sets its own budgets, thus the library budget allocation was found to vary from college to college. For example, at the time of the research the resource budgets of colleges A and B were each £10,000. College B was, however, expected to generate some additional income through fines and external membership. The budget allocation of College C was £4,000.

It has already been noted that libraries are sometimes targeted first when economies have to be made (see 5.4). Any reductions in the library resource budget can cause problems for the library collection such as maintaining the continuity of the journal subscriptions and ensuring that all the recommended books needed to support the curriculum are provided. Such considerations are not always recognised by the management committees. Evidence was found in the three colleges under investigation that that the budget allocation did not reflect the importance placed on the library by the academic staff (see section 5.2) and that the library budgets were often reduced when economies had to be made by the colleges. Documentary evidence from Library Committee minutes revealed that in 2000 the library budget of College A was reduced by £1500. The original level was not recorded and the
former Librarian was unable to recollect the exact amount. Similarly the documentary evidence states that the library budget of College B was cut by 25% in 2002. Again the original level of the budget was not recorded and the Librarian was unable to recall the amount. Prior to 1999 the library budget of College C had been immune to financial constraint because it was derived from several small endowments that had been set up at the time of the founding of the college. The Academic Librarian explained that in 1999, the money generated by the library endowments was placed into a central college fund and was administered by the Bursar. Over a period of three years the library books and journals budget was reduced from £7,500 in 1999 to £2,300 in 2002\textsuperscript{36}. This evidence suggests that some libraries share in the poverty of their institutions as well as the wealth.

The general increase in the amount of published information and the escalating costs of traditional materials such as books and journals has meant that librarians in all library sectors have had to make difficult choices in regards to resource provision (see section 2.4). The theological college library sector has not been immune to this. At College C, for example, in order to provide the necessary resources it was decided to buy paperback versions of the required readings rather than hardback versions. The Library Committee received several complaints from the students that questioned the wisdom of the decision. No response was recorded and no evidence could be found that this decision had been revoked as the majority of books are still purchased in paperback format.

Furthermore, the librarians reported that as more books and journals were becoming available electronically, their limited budgets forced them to make the difficult choice between printed and online journal subscriptions. They reported that suppliers such as Wiley had increased their prices without any understanding of the financial situation of small theological colleges and their non-receipt of HEFC funding. Whilst this situation affects all institutions it is perhaps felt more acutely within small institutions with limited budgets such as theological libraries (see also 2.4). For example publishers often only provide journal subscriptions as a print plus online package, Modern Theology is a good example of this. As College C wanted

\textsuperscript{36} Information obtained from the College Librarian’s finance database, 04/11/08.
to subscribe to this journal there was no option but to pay for an online subscription that was not used. It should be noted that those theological college libraries that do not have IT support, the setting up and managing of an e-journal subscription is difficult.

It should, however, be noted that all the academic members of staff interviewed believed that the book budgets did not need to be increased because the libraries were well resourced. A retired Church Inspector observed that the value of the library for curriculum delivery had lessened since his time at college because of the change in emphasis from academic learning to pastoral reflection within ministerial training (see section 4.2). An academic member of staff from College C agreed with this view believing that:

> whilst books can aid reflection you don’t get your theology from books. This reduces the need for books as experience and personal reflection cannot be gained through them

(Director of Studies, College C)

This contradicts the views of the student focus group participants who all believed that more books were required.

### 5.5 Library service

The library service provided by the three libraries under study was found to operate along traditional lines. Borrowing, photocopying, current awareness, reservation and a limited inter-library loans service are amongst the services offered. It was found that the inter-library loans service is limited to other theological colleges rather than the British Library which was deemed too costly. Although students are able to obtain items via the inter-library loan schemes provided by their validating universities for a small fee there was no evidence that this has occurred. The three college libraries are members of ABTAPL, and as such are able to request books or photocopied articles for the cost of the postage and photocopying from other member libraries.
5.5.1 Resources

As noted in section 5.4.2, all the academic staff interviewed felt that their libraries were on the whole well resourced (see section 5.4.2). The Dean of Studies, College B, suggested that the reading lists were testament to this as they reflected the breadth of the library collection. It should be noted that all three colleges had been postgraduate colleges in the past thus the readership level and the range of resources available reflected this. The Dean viewed the reading lists as being important resources in themselves as they played an important role within teaching and learning. He believed that they directed the learning of students by providing them with the means that enabled them to complete their course of study (see also section 2.4.1).

The reading lists are compiled at the inception of a course and must be provided as evidence for course approval. The three college librarians reported that they tried to provide the majority, if not all, of the books cited on the reading lists. The research found that supplementary reading lists were often compiled when teaching groups were large to ensure that there were sufficient resources for all the students. The Director of Postgraduate Studies of College A acknowledged that supplementary reading lists are used if there are insufficient library resources for a group. The Librarian at College B reported that unfortunately these were not always given to her or were received at short notice.

5.5.1.1 New courses

The study revealed that financial constraints often make it difficult to decide which products and services are the best purchase, particularly if new programmes have been added and the library budget has not been increased. One College C academic confirmed that library resources had not been considered when designing the new BA course (Director of New Testament Studies, College C). Another confirmed that no new funding had been provided for a new MA module. This meant that new course books had to be purchased from the existing library budget allocation.
The types of materials now produced can also place a strain on a small book budget. For example, according to one academic member of staff at College A, books on pastoral theology only had a shelf life of about five years because ideas and practices changed quickly, whilst a commentary on the writings of St. Augustine would be relevant for approximately twenty years. The research found that limited book budgets means that some librarians are no longer able to purchase materials ‘just–in-case’ as they would have done in the past thus losing the breath of coverage that they would have previously been able to provide.

It was evident that the resources needed to support the curriculum of ministerial training colleges has not only to reflect the modules under study but also take into account the academic abilities of the users. In the past most students who entered ministerial training were postgraduates so the level of ability was known, this has now changed (see section 2.2.2). The student body now covers a wide and diverse range of abilities, with many more students being at undergraduate level. Thus the library has to provide suitable resources to reflect this.

In addition to purchasing resources to support the curriculum, theological libraries also have to purchase those items that support a variety of delivery methods. For example, many staff and students use Microsoft PowerPoint or Adobe Photoshop for their presentations so libraries are obliged to provide materials to support the different types of software as well as the software itself for use within the library. Furthermore, the required pastoral portfolio can now be presented in different formats such as video. The librarians reported that no additional funding had been provided for books to cover these subjects, thus the library budget was expected to stretch further.

5.5.1.2 Historic collections

The collections of the three college libraries under investigation were found to reflect the teaching and research needs of the college users and to have historical collections. The collections are print based and have been accumulated over a number of years and tend to reflect the history and ethos of the college. For example
the collection of College C reflects the developments of the non-conformed churches. The librarians reported that over the years the colleges have attracted a number of gifts that enable them to develop collections of rare books, for example College A has a valuable collection of pre 1801 Methodist materials. Evidence that other theological colleges have historic collections and can be confirmed by a survey undertaken by ABTAPL in 2007. The results revealed that 69% of the theological colleges surveyed hold significant historic collections\textsuperscript{37}. Whilst the owning of this type of material brings kudos to the college, it also presents the library with additional responsibilities, namely the storing and preservation of the materials. None of the colleges under study receive additional funding for the preservation of the collections nor are they able to afford the services of an archivist or specialist librarian.

5.5.2 Library automation

One of the major changes that libraries have experienced in the last forty years is the automation of many of its services (see section 2.4.1.1). Theological libraries have not been immune to this change although they have not been in the position to adapt as quickly as other higher education institutions. The automation of a library requires not only the purchase of the hardware but also the establishment of the necessary infrastructure and ongoing IT support. The lack of capital investment for such projects is well documented in all three colleges under investigation. The documentary evidence indicated that the lack of library IT development was either due to a lack of funding or financial constraints. For example at College A, a lack of funding was cited in the Library Committee Minutes between 1995-2002 as the reason for not “computerising” the library.

At College B the Library Committee minutes recorded that discussions regarding the purchasing of a commercial library automated system for the library began in 1992 but it was not until 2002 that the library was finally automated. Automation of

\textsuperscript{37} Unpublished survey conducted during June 2007 by Carol Reekie for the Association of British Theological and Philosophical Libraries (see Footnote 32).
the library was only achieved when the Librarian agreed that the extra funding that had been allocated to pay for her additional working hours could be used to purchase the automated library management system instead (see section 5.4.1). According to a former Librarian of College B the college had recognised the need for an automated system but it was not prepared to pay for a commercially available system. Instead an academic member of staff developed a home grown system “on the cheap”. The Librarian likened the system to:

\emph{a Blue Peter project. It was only installed because one of the academics was particularly interested in IT and was the driving force}

(Past Librarian, College B)

He believed that his recommendations were over looked in an effort to cut costs; the subsequent unsuitability of the system and the problems that it created because of its limitations and its inability to cope with the high volume of usage is well documented in the Library Committee minutes 1990-2000.

At College C the situation with regards to IT was found to be slightly different. The documented evidence reveals that the need for an automated library circulation system for the whole theological group to which College C belongs had been recognised in 1997. However, a lack of funding meant that it was not possible to automate all of the libraries as many were very small and the cost involved could not be justified. Fortunately the group was invited to join the local university’s new automated library management system at a reduced rate in 2003 (see section 5.2.3).

5.6 

\textbf{Theological library co-operation}

The research highlights the extent to which co-operative initiatives amongst theological college libraries have been undertaken. Co-operation between theological libraries in the UK have traditionally relied on personal contacts, often along denominational lines or geographical proximity, but was not extensive. In America, however, such co-operation has been an established reality since the 1980s (see section 2.3.2). Collaborative projects were undertaken that relied on
geographical location rather than denominational affiliation. Within the UK such projects took longer to become established. For example in 1999 eight theological libraries that used the Heritage library management system created a merged catalogue or union list that facilitates inter lending between these libraries\(^{38}\).

One positive result of library budgetary pressures is that it encourages more theological libraries to become receptive to co-operative initiatives. All three colleges under investigation are members of the ABTPAL and as such have access to a range of services that would not ordinarily have been possible (see section 5.5). For example, inter library loans, the opportunity to join a consortium that subscribes to an e-journal package, a union list of printed journals, discounted journal subscriptions and an electronic book consortium. Individual members achieved these initiatives for the membership as a whole.

### 5.7 The role of the librarian

The role of the Librarian within most theological colleges has changed in recent times from that of an academic to that of a library and information professional. Documentary evidence from College C states that from 1898-1999 the post of Librarian was the preserve of an academic and was honorary and without remuneration. The 2007 survey of ABTAPL members indicated that this practice still continued\(^ {39}\). In the three colleges under investigation the employment of a professional theological librarian is to some extent documented in the minutes of their library and management committees. For example College C, prior to 1999, employed a non-professional and for professional help relied on the good will of professionally qualified librarians who were connected to the college. The City Librarian, who was also a member of the Library Committee, was often consulted on library matters. According to the Library Committee minutes of 1967, he wrote a damning report that lamented the poor state of the library and this resulted in the total reorganisation, re-cataloguing and reclassifying of the entire collection. This

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\(^{38}\) Email from the Librarian, Oak Hill Theological College to Carol Reekie, 15/10/09.

\(^{39}\) Unpublished survey conducted during June 2007 by Carol Reekie for the Association of British Theological and Philosophical Libraries (see Footnote 32).
association ended when the non-professional librarian retired in 1999 and a professional librarian was appointed.

The research revealed the difficulty in defining the role of the theological college librarian since within each college the role has been developed to suit local circumstances. On a basic level, the library is still the physical location of most of the college’s resources. It is part of the librarian’s remit to administer the library and to ensure that the appropriate resources are provided to support the curriculum. However, as illustrated in the literature review (see section 2.5), librarians are no longer just the keepers of books, they have become information service providers. Within the three colleges under investigation the role of the librarian has expanded considerably. They are now system managers and trainers in electronic resources. The library, which had often been regarded as passive, has developed links with other sections of the colleges and become proactive rather than reactive to developments. For example the Vice-Principal of College B stated that the demands of the library had forced the college to rethink its IT provision. Although the research indicates that the extent to which the theological colleges have developed new services has varied, the service still depends on the financial situation of the colleges and their vision.

The academic members of staff interviewed had very mixed opinions regarding the role of the library and the librarian within the college. One academic felt that it was:

> *important for the students to receive a rounded education and that the Librarian should teach students the skills that will help them to evaluate the usefulness of books*

(Dean of Studies, College B)

Other comments included that the library could:

> *play a larger role in user education as some [students] can hardly write an essay*

(Academic Librarian, College C)
Another academic member of staff felt that it was the Librarian’s role to continue the library’s historical heritage as it was the college’s face to the wider church (Director of Studies, College C).

5.7.1 Theologian or library information professional?

Section 2.3.1 provided a brief outline of the development of the role of the theological college librarian with Duckett (1973) suggesting that there was a dearth of full-time professionally qualified librarians. Due to a lack of information regarding theological librarianship it was difficult to ascertain whether the majority of theological college librarians are subject specialists or library information professionals. An unpublished APTAPL questionnaire survey showed that not all theological librarians have a theological qualification. The results revealed that only 36% had a theological qualification whereas 69% were members of CILIP. The data also showed that only 25% had both. These results suggest that theological college librarians are information professionals rather than theologians as had been the case in the past (see section 2.5).

Whether there is a shortage of librarians who are also subject specialists is unknown. Within the academic library sector there is some published evidence to suggest that having some background knowledge is advantageous but that it is more important to have some teaching and research skills and to be a good communicator (Pinfield 2001; Rodwell 2001; Hardy & Corrall 2007). Rodwell argues that although academic staff would be more inclined to accept a librarian if they have the relevant academic background it is more important that the librarian has an understanding and shares the values of the community that they serve (p.49).

The research findings indicated that over time Duckett’s observation regarding the lack of profession librarians no longer appears to be true (see section 2.3.1). Each theological college under investigation has appointed a professional librarian, only one of which has a degree in theology. Using the documentary evidence provided

40 Unpublished survey conducted during June 2007 by Carol Reekie for the Association of British Theological and Philosophical Libraries (See Footnote 32).
by the colleges it was possible to chart the events that led to their appointments. Evidence from the documents provides an indication of when the colleges acknowledge the need for professional input in the management of their libraries.

At College A the Tutor Librarian had previously been responsible for the library and had represented the interests of the library at the Academic Board. In 1992 the Tutor Librarian left the college and none of the academic staff offered to undertake the honorary post. The research revealed that the previous Librarian had originally been employed as a part-time library assistant. She had assisted the Tutor Librarian as he did not have sufficient time to devote to the library. She subsequently funded herself and trained in her own time to become a professionally qualified librarian. Although the college recognised her qualification and provided an increased salary from when she qualified in 1988, the title of Librarian was not conferred upon her until 1992 when the Tutor Librarian left. She believed that the college had been reluctant to:

acknowledge that they had a professional Librarian and did so only because none of the other tutors would take on the job because of the unpaid workload involved

(Past Librarian, College A)

The cause of the reluctance to employ a professional librarian is unknown and appears to be contradictory to the views of the Church Inspector’s report of 1982 that recommended that the college should employ a professionally qualified librarian. The college documentation did not explain why it was reluctant to move away from the Tutor Librarian model. The impression given by the past Librarian was that the resistance was to the idea of change rather than anything else. It should be noted that the college has not had a Tutor Librarian since she was appointed in 1992.

The documentation at College B does not reveal the date on which the first professional librarian was appointed, nor was it within the living memory of any of the college staff. A past Librarian who was appointed full-time in 1989 until his redundancy in 1994 (see section 5.4.1), reported that he had been the second full-
time professionally qualified librarian and that he thought that the previous librarian had been at the college for five years. He was unaware of the library arrangements prior to that. The college did not have a Tutor/Academic Librarian as such and it was unclear if there had been one in the past. The Chair of the Library Committee is usually an academic member of staff and, at the time of the interview the Chair was also the Vice-Principal and therefore a person of some authority.

After the librarian was made redundant in 1994 the documentary evidence indicates that the college relied on volunteers to manage the library. No evidence could be found that revealed why or when the college acknowledged the need for a professional librarian after 1994. It should be noted that the present incumbent is part-time and had been in post since 2002. Information regarding the librarian’s attempts to increase her hours was presented in Section 5.4.1.

The appointment of a professional librarian in College C was found to be slightly different because of the structure of the theological group of which it is a member. College C still retains the honorary post of Academic Librarian although the general management of the library is the province of the Librarian appointed by the theological group. The present Librarian was appointed in 1999 and was the first professionally qualified librarian to work in the college (see section 5.7). The post of Librarian within the theological group was initially part-time but within six months became full-time. The available documentary evidence indicated that in the past the Academic Librarian had managed the library and catalogued and classified the stock as time allowed. The research revealed that this had proved to be unsatisfactory and frequent requests for administrative support were found in the Library Committee minutes. This suggested that the work expected of the office was greater than was anticipated by the college.

Evidence was found that the post of honorary librarian was not popular and that the academic librarians had insufficient time to devote to the management of the library. One past Academic Librarian commented that she had “drawn the short straw” on her first day at the college. She felt that she was unprepared for the task as she had “no experience of running a library” and that she was forced to rely on the students to advise her. This is an indication that the skills required to manage the library had
not been fully understood by the college. One academic, who had held the Academic Librarian post, admitted that he had felt:

\[\textit{out of my depth and would have liked some library training but nothing was available}\]

(Past Principal, College C)

Further documentary evidence and the interviews provided by the current librarians confirmed the lack of understanding of the role of the library. For example, the Librarian at College B expressed her concern at the lack of understanding that many academics had in regard to library matters and the role of the Librarian. In an effort to overcome the problem all new members of staff were provided with a pack that explained the library and its role within the college. The Librarian was unsure if it had had any positive effect, as she never received feedback from the staff. The past Librarian of the College B related a similar experience. It was his opinion that academics did not understand the library’s role because they only viewed it in the sense of “what can it do for me, rather than in the wider context”. The previous Librarian of College A also believed that the academic members had little understanding of library matters and that in an effort to inform them, would send out long explanatory notes before each Library Committee meeting (see also section 5.3.2).

5.7.2 Christian stewardship

According to the review of literature, the role of the theological librarian is often bound up with the idea of Christian stewardship (see section 2.5.1). The principle of Christian stewardship is that the resources of the church are administered on behalf of God. Thus the librarian is a steward of the church’s or the college’s resources (depending upon ownership). Theological librarians have traditionally been seen as the stewards or guardians of their denominational church history with many believing that theological librarianship is a ministry in its own right (see section 2.5.1). This view was not however, corroborated by the librarians of the three colleges under investigation. One Librarian agreed that many librarians might see
their job as a vocation (Librarian, College B) but the other two felt that although vocation may play a part in the initial attraction to the post, there were often other reasons for the choice. For example the Librarian of College A suggested that the transforming of a traditional library into a modern information service was an exciting challenge. All three stated that, whilst they were in sympathy with the ethos of their respective colleges, they did not feel that theological librarianship was a form of ministry other than in its broadest sense of serving a community that happens to be religious.

5.7.3 Status

Although the question of status is one that is of interest to theological librarians it has generated very little literature within the UK. In the US, however, it was found that theological librarians have been more vocal. The research indicates that this is due to the terms of their employment. The majority are employed on twelve month contracts and seek greater security by obtaining academic status and the tenure of office that such status provides. The Librarian of Lancaster Theological Seminary, Pennsylvania confirmed this.\(^{41}\)

Since many UK theological librarians are ‘solo’ or manage ‘one person’ libraries they are often the only library staff within a college.\(^{42}\) This was found to cause problems of position within the college structure. One Librarian recalled that:

> when the college was re-structuring they didn’t know where to put me, as I am neither support staff nor academic

(Librarian, College B)

She felt that her post did not fit into the college organisational structure and she believed that this often led to her being overlooked. The Librarian also disclosed that there had been some opposition to her initial appointment and reported that one academic had said that he couldn’t see why a tutor could not do the job. It is

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\(^{41}\) Email from the Librarian of the Lancaster Theological Seminary to Carol Reekie, 20/04/09.

\(^{42}\) Information obtained from the ABTAPL Directory see http://www.abtapl.org.uk.
possible that this attitude was a result of the college’s previous experience of running a library using a volunteer after the previous Librarian was made redundant (see section 5.4.1). This experience also confirms some of the resistance to employing professional librarians (see section 2.5). It is perhaps more of an image problem rather than anything personal.

The situation at College C, however, is different as the college already had an Academic Librarian, thus the Librarian was placed with the support staff. It should be noted that the previous Librarian also reported that in regard to the college organisational structure:

they just did not know where to put me as they only had one librarian

(Past Librarian, College C)

The fact that the Academic Librarian is a member of the Academic Board might explain why the college did not need another representative from the library.

However, this is not the experience of the Librarian of College A, who has academic status. It is possible to conclude that because the status had been conferred on the previous Librarian it was automatically passed onto the current post holder. This suggests that the status of the college librarian is dependent on the management structure of the individual colleges. This view is supported by the 2007 unpublished ABTAPL survey that indicated that only 51% of respondents were members of the college faculty, the rest were considered to be support staff43 (see also section 2.5.2).

The librarians of both colleges B and C felt that their lack of academic status resulted in them being overlooked by the academic staff and that sometimes this enabled dominant academics to impose their views. For example, an academic member of staff at College B had overruled the Librarian’s choice of software for the library catalogue. According to the Librarian this was not on the grounds of cost

43 Unpublished survey conducted during June 2007 by Carol Reekie for the Association of British Theological and Philosophical Libraries (see Footnote 32).
but because the academic staff member thought that he had a better understanding of what the library required. The past Librarian of College C believed that her lack of status contributed to a sense of isolation and the feeling of “not fitting in”. Several of the librarians, both past and present, reported having a sense of not being a part of the college. The past Librarian of College B recalled that:

*I didn’t fit in because I was neither a teaching member of staff or a student*

(Past Librarian, College B)

The present Librarian reported that on occasions she also felt like an outsider because she was rarely included in college activities. These remarks were interesting because when the academic members of staff were asked about the role of the Librarian within their college one commented that:

*it was important that the librarian should join in the social life of the college*

(Dean of Studies, College B)

It should be noted that this sense of isolation has not gone unnoticed. The Vice-Principal acknowledged that the library staff might have:

*a sense of isolation because they are somewhere between the teaching faculty and other support staff*

(Vice-Principal, College B)

He did not, however, suggest how to change the situation and no evidence was found that any action had been taken to improve it.

The line management of the librarians of the three colleges was found to be considerably different. At one college the Librarian was line managed by the Principal. He felt that this:

*allows me to go straight to the top and I have always found the Principal to be very supportive*

(Librarian, College A)
Both the Librarian and the Principal had joined the college in September 2002 and the impression gained was that they were both keen to undertake the modernisation of the college. At College C the model was different because of the nature of the organisation (see section 5.2.3). Whilst the Librarian liaised with the Principal of the college regarding library matters, the Librarian’s line manager was the Executive Officer of the theological group. The line manager of the Librarian of College B however was not fixed. The Librarian reported that originally it had been the Dean of Studies but that had changed and it was now the Vice-Principal. She felt that:

-as the academic staff are ever so busy, my line manager tends to be the tutor who has room for me

(Librarian, College B)

It is interesting to note that none of the academic staff in College B were willing to comment on the status of the Librarian within the college. The impression obtained was that it was a sensitive subject and one that was not open for discussion.

5.7.4 Remuneration

The findings suggest that there is some evidence to conclude that the librarian’s status has a direct bearing on the low salary of a theological college librarian. Unlike academic librarianship there is little published material relating to theological library sector salaries and no standards from which college administrators can draw upon when formulating policies for college librarians (see section 2.5.2). As the colleges are able to determine the librarians’ salaries themselves, the post would have developed over a number of years and reflects the perceived status of the Librarian. The Vice-Principal of College B reported that, with regard to salary, they had only ever had one college librarian at a time and that there was no benchmark with which to compare salaries. The three college librarians agreed with this assessment.
Two of the librarians reported that they had written to CILIP in an effort to obtain advice and support with their applications for re-grading. CILIP replied that they were unable to help because they do not provide specific salary guidance specifically for the theological library sector. Although they provide salary guides for comparable higher education college posts the theological colleges ignored these. The independent nature of theological training colleges also means that they are not bound by any national agreements (see section 2.5.2) and can therefore determine their own levels of remuneration.

The question of salary and status appeared to be a source of frustration in two of the colleges under investigation. When questioned in regard to the ABTAPL’s views on this matter, the Chair of ABTAPL commented that because of the sensitivity of salary levels for theological librarians it was not a subject that was discussed amongst its members. When asked why the issue of salaries was sensitive, the reply was that because salaries varied greatly, even within the same denomination, it was decided early in the Association’s history that campaigning for higher salaries would not be part of its remit (see section 2.5.3). It was therefore not discussed.

5.7.5 Continuing Professional Development

The question of professional isolation is one that concerns all three college librarians. The Librarian at College A reported that he felt professionally isolated. He had previously worked in a university and had enjoyed the professional contact and networking that a large university staff could provide. Each librarian reported that it was difficult to leave the library during the academic term to undertake training activities because of staffing difficulties. Each also reported that continuing professional development was problematic due to the prohibitive cost of many of the courses on offer in terms of both fees and staff time. One Librarian felt very frustrated because it made “keeping up to date” very difficult (Librarian, College B). All three librarians admitted that they did not attend CILIP training courses because they were too expensive. One Librarian felt that, although he often saw interesting programmes being offered, he could not justify the time or the cost if he
never had the opportunity to use the skills that he would acquire. All three felt that it was particularly difficult to keep abreast of the changes in technology.

Although the three college librarians were members of CILIP, they felt that the organisation did not recognise their needs. One Librarian cited the lack of support that she felt that she had received from CILIP during her attempts to have her post regraded and her salary reviewed by the college (see section 5.4.1). All three colleges were members of ABTAPL and the librarians reported that they felt far more supported by the association than by CILIP. They cited extensive networking opportunities, inexpensive training and other benefits that it offered (see section 2.5.3). For example, the inexpensive annual two day Spring Conference afforded opportunities for networking, discussion and training as well as library tours. The organisation also promotes the sharing of ideas and best practices.

The Chair of ABTAPL reported that the association had originally approached the Library Association with the suggestion of setting up a theological library group within the association but this had not been accepted as it was felt that the sector did not necessitate a separate group and should be part of the Special Libraries Group. The ABTAPL membership, however, felt that this group did not adequately reflect their interests and decided to remain independent. Since that time ABTAPL has grown and developed and as one Librarian commented, had proven to be a “life line” to its membership (Librarian, College B).

5.8 Conclusion

This chapter outlined the organisation of the three representative theological college libraries and provided the context in which they operated. External influences were identified and a number of common issues were highlighted and explored.

44 Spring Conference activities. [http://www.abtapl.org.uk/activities.html](http://www.abtapl.org.uk/activities.html) [accessed 16.08.10].
45 The forerunner of CILIP.
46 Informal conversation with the Chair of ABTAPL, 04/04/08. Unfortunately the written communication between ABTAPL and the Library Association had not been retained.
The management models of the three colleges were found to be similar in structure although the differences in the committee compositions suggest that the groupings reflect local needs and circumstances. The research suggests that those with little understanding of how libraries functioned primarily undertook the management of the libraries and that the opinions of the librarians were often overruled.

As with Chapter Four, the issue with funding and investment was again identified. Under investment was considered to be the main obstacle to the development of the theological college libraries being study. Although the research produced evidence that suggested the libraries were held in high regard within each college, the funding and investment in the libraries did not reflect this.

The research considered the role of the library within the three colleges and found that the traditional view of the library prevailed because there were no pressures or incentives for change. Thus the services were still primarily organised around the full-time residential student with few concessions to off-site or part-time users. The libraries were found to be predominantly print based with few electronic resources or training facilities.

The three college librarians highlighted their concern for their professional status and the ambiguous way in which they and the libraries were treated. They believed that a lack of understanding in regard to the role of a professional librarian was a contributing factor to their low status and salary. Concern was expressed by the librarians regarding the difficulty that they had in obtaining professional training and development. The benefits of developing co-operative activities and self-help groups within the theological library sector were also identified.

The next chapter, Chapter Six, focuses on the use of the three theological college libraries from the perspective of the library user and explores the issues that they identify. The discussions arising from the findings of the research can be found in Chapter Seven.
CHAPTER 6: MEETING USERS’ NEEDS

6.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the extent to which theological colleges are meeting the needs of their user communities. The results of the questionnaire survey are presented and provide an indication of the views and needs of the user communities from the three colleges under investigation. Whilst the questionnaire can only provide a snapshot of the libraries during a given period of time, it does provide information about the types of library user and their experience of the service.

Although the research was primarily focused on the student body as they were the largest user group, the needs of the academic staff were also considered. The results of the survey are supplemented by comments from the interviews and focus group discussions. The issues raised and their subsequent implications for theological library services are discussed in Chapter Seven.

6.2 Profile of the library user

The theological college library user community was found to be a diverse group with wide ranging needs. The group generally comprises of:

- The student body
- Faculty members
- College staff
- Alumni
- Local ministers
- Visiting ministers
- Sabbatical visitors
- Visiting scholars
- External users
Whilst the student body, faculty members, college staff, alumni and local ministers are self explanatory, the remaining types of user require further definition. It should be noted that not all denominations allow local ministers to use their theological college library resources. For example, Anglican clergy are generally not allowed access as the resources are for the exclusive use of ordinands. Anglican clergy do, however, have access to the resources provided by their local dioceses (see section 1.3).

The term visiting minister is applied to someone who might be attending a conference held at the college or is a visiting speaker. This group of users usually require library access for study or personal reading and occasionally borrowing rights are provided for the duration of their stay.

Sabbatical leave for the purpose of study and reflection is granted to all ordained ministers as part of their CPD (see section 2.2.8). Many ministers opt to stay at a theological college and their length of stay varies from a week to a full term. Often the sabbatical visitor attends college lectures or seminars that are related to their areas of interest.

The visiting scholars category refers to researchers and academics from universities and colleges who require access to the special collections held by the college and possibly borrowing rights of the library. This type of user has very specific informational needs and is attracted by the special collections housed in the college. For example, College A has a large eighteenth century denominational collection.

Theological libraries also offer membership to external users for a small annual fee. This group tends to comprise of students undertaking courses at other institutions and for reasons of distance or the availability of resources are prepared to pay for membership of the college library. External users usually receive library access and limited borrowing rights.

The questionnaire survey was designed to provide a basic profile of the theological college library user and their use of the library during a specific visit. These results are now presented in the following sections.
6.2.1 Gender

The results suggested that the library was used approximately equally by both sexes, the number of male respondents being only slightly higher than the female respondents (see Table 6.1).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>College A</th>
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<th>College B</th>
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<th>College C</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>Frequency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6.1. Are you Male or Female?

6.2.2 User groups

It was found that the full-time students constituted the largest group of users, whilst the library usage by academic staff was found to be low (see Table 6.2). The academic staff were represented by only ten percent of the respondents from College B and six percent of College C. None of the respondents were members of the academic staff at College A.

The librarians explained that the low library usage by the academic staff was because the academic staff received generous book allowances from the church. This allowed them to purchase many of the texts that they required for teaching or personal research. The academic members of staff interviewed confirmed this, adding that they generally bought books that they felt to be too specialised for the library collection. Personal copies also ensured that they had continual access to these titles. The academic staff also reported that they used the local university for personal research.
It is interesting to note that few respondents were members of the non-academic staff. The librarians confirmed that few of the non-academic staff used the library. They were unable to explain the reason for this.

### 6.2.3 Course spread

Information regarding the educational level of the courses was also sought as it suggests the prior learning of the respondents (see Table 6.3). For example, the data showed that 40% of College C respondents already had a degree in theology as they were only pursuing the Certificate of Ministerial Training, for which this is a prerequisite. Whereas in College A only 5% of respondents had a theology degree. It should be noted that a Certificate of Ministerial Training is a requirement of licensed ministry (see also section 4.2).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>College A</th>
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<th>College B</th>
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<th>College C</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Certificate</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Degree</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Masters</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MPhil</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PhD</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No answer</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>38</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
<td><strong>70</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
<td><strong>50</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 6.3. What course are you studying?**
6.2.4 Previous occupation

The survey respondents were asked to state their previous occupations in order to provide an indication of the number of those who might have some prior experience of a higher or further education library. It was thought that those having some prior experience might require less assistance than those who did not. However the length of time that may have elapsed since the original course of study may be sufficiently great so as to lessen the advantage that previous library experience could afford (see Table 6.4).

The results given in Table 6.4 show that at College B 50% of the respondents had a professional background whilst at colleges A and C the percentages were 74% and 76% respectively. The data suggests that College B’s founding principles, to attract candidates from different backgrounds rather than just those with a university education, are still adhered to. It also suggests that the college has some experience of providing education and training for a more diverse group of ministerial candidates.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>College A</th>
<th></th>
<th>College B</th>
<th></th>
<th>College C</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-professional</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No answer</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6.4. What was your previous occupation?

Discussions with the focus group participants, however, suggested that most students deemed their past lives to be unimportant and they were rarely discussed. Once they had received ‘God’s calling’ their future ministry became their main goal and they view their training as a means to that end. The focus group discussions and the academic staff interviews (see section 4.2.2) confirm this view. For example the focus group participants of College B felt that their previous occupations were only relevant because of the skills they had acquired and could now offer to their church.
They all firmly believed that their past experiences were part of God’s plan to prepare them for ministry. Similar views were found in the college A and C focus groups.

6.2.5 Age range

The results from the following Table (see Table 6.5) reveal that the largest group of respondents were from the 45-54 age group at both colleges A and C, whilst in College B it was from the 25-34 age group. These findings suggested that College B attracted a younger student age group than the other two colleges. However it should be noted that the college offers a Youth Ministry programme to an 18+ age group and this was an influencing factor. Further more the provision of a crèche at College B that enables both husband and wife to train together suggests that the college has specifically targeted a younger age range.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Group</th>
<th>College A</th>
<th></th>
<th>College B</th>
<th></th>
<th>College C</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Under 24</td>
<td>0 0%</td>
<td>14 20%</td>
<td>1 2%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25-34</td>
<td>9 24%</td>
<td>21 30%</td>
<td>8 16%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35-44</td>
<td>11 28%</td>
<td>16 23%</td>
<td>13 26%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45-54</td>
<td>12 32%</td>
<td>12 17%</td>
<td>23 46%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55+</td>
<td>6 16%</td>
<td>7 10%</td>
<td>5 10%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>38 100%</td>
<td>70 100%</td>
<td>50 100%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6.5. What age category best describes yourself?

Table 6.5 provides a breakdown of the age ranges and suggests that the largest overall age group that use the library, in all three colleges combined, is the over 45 age group. This supports the published literature that states that those offering for ministry are much older than had been the case in the past (see section 2.2.2). The results for colleges A and C also indicate that they are communities of mature people and confirms the age range of those offering for ministry from within the Anglican, Methodist and United Reformed churches as found in the literature reviewed (see section 2.2.2).
6.3 Library usage

The questionnaire was designed to obtain a sense of library usage as well as an indication of its perceived value. The results revealed that at College A 37% of respondents used the library daily whilst the response rate was 23% at College B and 44% at College C (see Table 6.6).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>College A</th>
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<th>College B</th>
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<th>College C</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>Frequency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daily</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weekly</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monthly</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Termly</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6.6. How often do you use the library?

These results clearly highlight the fact that the types of programmes offered by the colleges affect the pattern of library usage. For example at colleges A and B, the Ministerial Training Course students have lectures one evening per week (see section 5.2.1), hence the responses 58% and 40% respectively. This type of regular usage pattern is useful as it enables the librarian to set loan periods and arrange staffing accordingly. The arrangements at College C are somewhat different, with the students having ‘study weekends’ rather than weekly meetings (see section 4.6.1).

Furthermore, the number of respondents of colleges B and C that reported that they used the library monthly also reflected the type of programme that they were following. For example in College B a group of students from a fairly wide geographical radius attend lectures in college one day per month. This is reflected in the 21% of College B respondents who stated that they used the library monthly.
6.3.1 Library inductions

The study revealed that all students were supposed to receive a basic library induction or library orientation during their first week of term. This was however restricted to about 30 minutes. Although none of the librarians believed that the sessions were sufficient, there was no other opportunity in the term to provide a more detailed session on specific resources due to the pressures of the curriculum timetable. The librarians firmly believed that the information needs of each year group were sufficiently diverse to require different types of training at specific stages of their course. Several academics agreed with this assessment but felt that the timetabling practicalities prevented this from being done.

However, the data revealed that some of the questionnaire respondents did not receive a library induction. At College A 11% of students did not have an induction, whilst the figures for colleges B and C were 20% and 36% respectively (see Table 6.7).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>College A</th>
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<th>College B</th>
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<th>College C</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>Frequency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>89</td>
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<td>14</td>
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<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6.7. Did you attend a formal induction into the library?

The results from Table 6.7 show that a high percentage of College C respondents did not receive a library induction. The reason for this lay within the organisation of the theological group of colleges. Each student receives an induction into their home college library; inductions into other college libraries are available upon request. It should be noted that the questionnaire did not ask whether College C was the respondents ‘home’ institution.

When the focus group participants were asked if they received an induction in their first year only two stated that they had not. One student explained that she as she was part-time and did not attend college frequently she had missed the assigned day
(Student B, College A). The other participant admitted that she had not attended an induction because:

\[ I \text{ have just finished my first degree and know how libraries work } \]

(Student D, College B)

The librarians reported that this was a common belief amongst the younger students.

The value of having the library induction during the first week of term was brought into question by two of the College B focus group participants. They admitted that they could not remember anything that they had been told during the library induction session because the whole college induction programme was very full (Students A and E). They were, however, given a number of leaflets to which they could refer. It was the opinion of the three college librarians that only basic library orientation sessions should be provided during the first week of term and that it would be better to have information literacy skills training for the first year students immediately prior to their first assignment. Although all three librarians advocated this, such sessions had proved impossible to organise due to timetabling restrictions and a lack of training facilities at colleges B and C. The academic staff interviewed also acknowledged these difficulties but could offer no solutions.

Despite the concern expressed by the three college librarians that the library inductions were insufficient, the majority of the questionnaire respondents appeared to have appreciated the sessions (see Table 6.8). Those who had received a library induction were asked to rate the session. The majority of the respondents felt that their induction was either informative or very informative. Although none of the respondents felt that it was of little use, 36% of College C respondents did not answer the question. This figure corresponds with the percentage of those who stated that they did not receive a library induction.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>College A</th>
<th></th>
<th>College B</th>
<th></th>
<th>College C</th>
<th></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very informative</td>
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<td>21</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Informative</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not very informative</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Of little use</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No answer</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>18</td>
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<td><strong>100</strong></td>
<td><strong>70</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
<td><strong>50</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 6.8. How would you rate the library induction?**

The library experience of an external user was found to be very different. This group of users do not normally receive a full library induction, just a short orientation session. One College C focus group participant reported that:

> as an external user, I did not received a library induction. I have not found this to be a problem because if I need to know anything I can always ask the Librarian or a student

(Student A, College C)

The focus group participants at College B reported similar experiences of peer-to-peer information sharing and help. One part-time participant reported that other students were always willing to help with a problem (Student A, College B), whilst others stated that they told fellow students about useful websites they had found. The focus group participants of College A also reported the sharing of useful information.

### 6.4 Resource Provision

The published literature suggests that academic library users have a choice in the way that library services are provided, they can visit the library in person or access some of the library services remotely from their home or place of work or study (see section 2.4.1). Such methods of access are relatively new to some theological colleges. For example not all theological colleges have an online library catalogue.
The catalogue at College A only became available online in 2005 after many requests from both the staff and students. Not having a computerised library catalogue is not uncommon. The findings from an unpublished ABTAPL 2007 survey revealed that only 56% of theological colleges that responded to the survey had an online library catalogue. This indicates that many theological college library users are still unable to access their college library catalogue from other locations. With regard to the three colleges under investigation, the findings revealed that the online catalogue was particularly appreciated by eight part-time focus group participants, who stated that being able to search for books from home saved a lot of time when in college, as they had little time to do this between lectures.

When asked about the types of resources they used, the academic members of staff interviewed stated that they thought of their library primarily in terms of books and the provision of traditional services such as reservations and current awareness. One academic member of staff suggested that:

*the reason for this is that it’s the way I have always used the library in the past*

(Academic Librarian, College C)

This view was also found amongst the focus group participants. It was the consensus in all three focus groups that books were preferred; a typical comment being “I’m a book person, so I like books” (Student A, College B). The questionnaire survey also confirmed this view. The results of this revealed that books were the resources most used by the respondents (see Table 6.9). These findings support the evidence found in the published literature that the traditional print based view of the library is prevalent amongst theological library users (see section 2.4.1). The three college librarians agreed with these findings and felt that only viewing the library in terms of books was very deep rooted within their

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47Unpublished survey conducted during June 2007 by Carol Reekie for the Association of British Theological and Philosophical Libraries. Questionnaires were sent out to 76 theological colleges, 39 replies were received, giving a response rate of 51%.
colleges and they had found this attitude difficult to change. One Librarian commented that if the library was:

*considered to be traditional then the users would have traditional expectations and aspirations. This attitude is difficult to overcome if you are hoping to create a library and learning centre*

(Librarian, College A)

The Librarian at College B felt that if the academics recommended resources in other formats then many of the students would use them. The previous Librarian at College C also agreed with this view. Table 6.9 provides a clear break down of the resources used by the respondents.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>College A</th>
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<th>College B</th>
<th></th>
<th>College C</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Books</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Journals</td>
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<td>92</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Videos</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>0</td>
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<td>Computers</td>
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<td>21</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quiet study</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6.9. What do you use the library for?

### 6.4.1 Study space

The provision of quiet study space proved to be an important requirement for both the focus group users and the questionnaire respondents in all three colleges. The questionnaire showed that 66% of College A respondents used the library for study, the results for colleges B and C were 40% and 72% respectively (see Table 6.9). The focus group participants also emphasised the importance of quiet study, with it being of particular importance for part-time students. Being non-residential and infrequently in college, this group expressed the need for a quiet place to work and, more importantly, somewhere for them to store their books and materials. Both
colleges B and C provided the students with lockers but College A did not. Both the part-time and non-residential focus group students from College A highlighted the problems of not having a study or being provided with a locker in which they could leave their personal possessions whilst they were off-site. The focus group participants at College A felt that having to bring in their personal items each time deterred them from working in the library. The Librarian was completely unaware of this need and said that no one had mentioned this in his library survey. It was not known why the students were reluctant to communicate this need.

The Librarian of College B explained that the difficulties that their students faced in regard to study space were primarily due to the arrangement of the library. A shortage of shelf space necessitated the library shelves to be arranged closely together thus little study space was available (see section 5.2.2). Furthermore, the Librarian felt that a store was needed to free some space that would provide room for more study tables.

The part-time participants from College C also emphasised the importance of having a quiet place in which to work. The three focus group participants who were in residence reported that library study spaces was usually available for non-residential students as the residents always studied in their rooms during the day to ensure that others could use a study space. The academic staff confirmed this unofficial arrangement.

### 6.4.2 Books

The literature review indicated that the majority of theological resources within theological college libraries are largely book based (see section 2.4.1). This was confirmed by the interviews and focus group discussions (see section 6.4) as well as by the questionnaire in the three colleges under investigation. Table 6.10 shows that books were the most popular resource used during the survey period. It is therefore reasonable to conclude that the traditional usage of the library prevails. Book borrowing accounted for 82% of the respondents activities at College A, whilst it was 57% at College B and 74% at College C. Journals appeared to be little used in
all the colleges with College A recording 16% and colleges B and C, 4% and 6% respectively.

The focus group discussions also suggested that books were the students preferred choice of format and that few used electronic resources. Three focus group participants stated that they found books quicker and easier to use as they did not have much time to look for information between lectures (Student C, College A; Student A, College B; Student A, College C). All the focus group participants reported that the academic staff generally recommended books rather than electronic resources. The librarians and the results of the questionnaire confirmed this view (see Table 6.10).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>College A</th>
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<th>College B</th>
<th></th>
<th>College C</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Borrow/Return books</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Journals</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Email/Internet</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Study</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Library catalogue</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Word processing</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6.10. What did you use the library for today?

All the academic staff interviewed felt that their libraries were on the whole well resourced but often there was an issue with the number of multiple copies of important texts available. It was their opinion that pressure was placed on certain books during particular stages of the curriculum. The three college librarians acknowledged this and they added that small library budgets did not allow for the purchase of additional copies. They reported that the increased student numbers and the variety of programmes now on offer as a result of the Hind Report (2003) had increased the demand for resources. Whilst a wide variety of books are provided because students are expected to read ‘around’ their subject areas, sufficient multiple copies of key reading texts are not. For example the Librarian of College C reported that as only a couple of copies of each key text were purchased the lack of sufficient texts had proved to be problematic particularly as class sizes had
increased. As many students were non-residential the circulation of key texts had slowed down because part-time students only returned their books when they were in college. This also affected the recall and reservation processes.

In order to alleviate this problem the librarians reported that they had introduced a number of measures. A system of short book loans was introduced at College B that restricted the loan to four hours. This was heavily used by the students and according to the Librarian worked reasonably well. Colleges A and C are not able to offer a similar system due to their low staffing levels. Placing books on reserve and introducing seven-day loans are amongst the options used in these libraries in an effort to keep the books circulating. Whilst both systems work well for residential users those who are infrequently in college are disadvantaged. The part-time student focus group participants commented that often they did not have the time to use the reserved books nor did they bother to borrow seven-day items, as they could not return them on time. An option would be to purchase a special collection for part-time users; none of the colleges had sufficient funding to be able to do this.

The research revealed that because of the staffing levels at colleges A and C, the libraries were not able to provide an automated reservation system. These systems required the library staff to be able to retrieve requested books upon their return or stop them from being borrowed again. As these libraries were not continuously staffed this system could not operate effectively. Requests go through the librarian who then contacts the reader and asks for the return of the book. The librarians reported that few students placed reservations for books using this method because it was slow.

Given that there is a perceived lack of course texts, the question that has to be asked is where do the users obtain the resources that they need and what strategies do they adopt in order to obtain them? The data produced from the focus group sessions provided some insight into these questions. The study revealed that all sponsored students receive a book grant from their sponsoring church or diocese. The Academic Librarian at College C explained that the students were expected to amass their own libraries for preaching and teaching whilst in ministry; they receive book grants whilst in training in order to begin their collection. This view was
confirmed by all the academic members of staff interviewed and by the focus group participants. The amount received by each student varies between denominational churches and also from diocese to diocese within the Church of England. The focus group participants reported that they used the library collections to assess which books would be of most use in ministry. They also added that they tended to wait until the end of their course before deciding which items to buy although they would buy specific books if they thought it necessary. From this it can be suggested that the students’ receipt of a book grant is one reason why the colleges limit their library resource budgets.

The focus groups also reported that they acquired the resources they needed through a variety of methods if they could not obtain them from the library. They bought second hand copies cheaply from Internet companies such as Amazon and borrowed from a network of people. For example, they borrowed from each other, their lecturers, their minister, their local diocese and members of their congregation. This was found to be particularly true of part-time students who were infrequently in college. One College B user, who was unable to attend the focus group session, stated in an email to the researcher that he never had the time to use the library and that he obtained all the resources he needed from friends and from the library of his local minister.

An informal conversation with a part-time College C lecturer confirmed this type of networking and borrowing. He further suggested that part-time students in particular, who do not have daily access to the library, rely on a smaller number of texts. It was his opinion that if students could not find a text easily they did not in general, look for an alternative. He cited the limited bibliographies attached to assignments as evidence. Although the students’ ingenuity must be commended it also highlights their single mindedness in the pursuit of specific recommended books rather than alternative resources. Four lecturers from the three colleges under investigation confirmed this view. Alternatively it is possible that many students opt for the resources that require the least effort to obtain as suggested in the published literature (see section 2.4.1).
6.4.3 Electronic resources

The extent of information technology provision within theological colleges in general, is largely unknown (see section 2.4.1.1). The research indicated that IT provision within the three theological colleges under investigation has not developed as quickly as in other higher education institutions. The investigations reveal that this is largely due to a lack of strategy and investment for, as previously noted, theological colleges have not been affected by the reforms instigated by the government (see section 2.1.1). Unlike other higher education institutions, theological colleges have not placed an emphasis on developing the IT skills of their students as such skills are not a requirement of their denominational churches for ministry. Although the library users in the three theological colleges have access to the Internet and email, the availability of other electronic resources is limited and varies between the colleges.

6.4.3.1 College IT

The IT infrastructure found in the three theological colleges was found to be modest because of the financial costs required for its development and the continual need to replace and upgrade the equipment (see section 5.5.2). Although IT is recognised as an important addition to theological libraries, particularly for Internet and e-mail access, the facilities at colleges B and C were limited. Only College A has an IT Room (see section 5.2.1). None of the three colleges have a dedicated IT officer and they rely on the skills of the college staff and students to provide technical support. The lack of dedicated IT support means that the colleges are unable to provide or maintain the necessary infrastructure or platforms to support specific e-resources. For example, none of the three colleges have electronic resources that require an individual username and password because they do not have sufficient staff to administer the system.

A lack of dedicated IT support is not uncommon amongst theological colleges in the UK. An unpublished survey conducted on behalf of ABTAPL revealed that IT support was contracted out to external companies by 49% of the theological
institutions participating in the survey. The results showed that IT support was provided by 7% of college librarians and other members of college staff provided a further 44%.\(^{48}\)

In order to overcome the problem of not having dedicated IT support the colleges have utilised the skills of their student body. The librarians reported that having a diverse range of students has meant that their IT skills are similarly varied. Some mature students arrive at college with minimal IT skills; others had been working within the computing industry and require little help. The colleges, in recognition of this, encourage the more able to help their less able fellow students. For example, College B appoints a student IT Rep whose responsibility it is to help students with such things as setting up their PCs, buying useful software and generally trouble shooting. The focus group participants and the Vice-Principal of the College B confirmed this. Eight of the focus group participants from the three colleges admitted that they preferred to ask a fellow student for help as it “was not so embarrassing” as asking the librarian (Student D, College A).

None of the three colleges under study had an IT strategy during the research period. The three college librarians reported that they had continually lobbied their college to invest in IT. One Librarian stated that she had been very surprised at the lack of an IT policy when she had taken up her appointment in 2000 (Librarian, College B). The under investment in IT, according to the Vice-Principal, College B was due to insufficient funding. He added that the delay in investing in library IT was a result of having to install the necessary college infrastructure to support the system. It should be noted that although the infrastructure has now been provided, the college still relies on an external provider for support and does not have a dedicated IT officer.

Some evidence was found suggesting that the requirements of the library had been the driving force for IT development in all three theological colleges. The Vice-Principal of College B acknowledged that the Librarian had played a significant role in the development of the college’s IT structure. The librarians of both colleges A  

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\(^{48}\) Unpublished survey conducted during June 2007 by Carol Reekie for the Association of British Theological and Philosophical Libraries (see Footnote 47).
and C reported similar situations. The Librarian at College A had been instrumental in convincing the college to work towards developing and implementing an IT policy. Equally the documented evidence from College C revealed that the need for a single library catalogue for the theological group had been the driving force to install the necessary IT infrastructure to enable this to happen.

6.4.3.2 Library IT

The published literature suggests that the ease of access coupled with the developments in technology had encouraged some library users to adopt a ‘just-in-time’ attitude towards seeking information, believing that everything can be found on the Internet (see section 2.5). Within theological colleges the situation was found to be no different. However, whilst some students were very adept at finding information and had competent IT skills, many did not. Evidence was found in the three colleges under study suggesting that many students lacked general IT skills. The part-time focus group participants, in particular, revealed that they often found the volume of information available overwhelming and that making the appropriate choices was often difficult. One part-time student reported that she often tried and failed to use the library computers (Student B, College A). Another stated that if she could not find someone to help her, she often gave up (Student E, College C). A further four students agreed with these statements. This would seem to confirm the views of Graham (2002) regarding theological library users’ lack of confidence in using IT (see section 2.4.1.1). It is therefore not surprising that the questionnaire survey revealed that, although a large number of people used the library catalogue, the percentage of those using e-journals and databases was not high (see Table 6.11).

Although the three college libraries provided access to a small number of online databases, only 11% of the respondents from College A stated that they used them, whilst the percentages at colleges B and C were 9% and 26% respectively. The Librarian of College A attributed this low database usage to a general lack of confidence in using the resource. It was his experience that many of the library users
did not like to read long documents from a screen. This view concurred with that expressed in the published literature (see section 2.4.1.1).

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<th>College A</th>
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<th>College C</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Library catalogue</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>11</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E-Journals</td>
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<td>21</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>4</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 6.11. If you use the library computers, what do you use them for?**

It should be noted that the questionnaire was undertaken prior to the installation of the library management system at College A. This may account for the low catalogue usage.

Although it has previously been established that the users of the three colleges under investigation preferred to use the printed format, the literature review indicated that more materials are becoming available electronically (see section 2.4). The dilemma for the college librarians is therefore to decide which items to purchase in electronic format and which to provide in the printed form in order to offer their users a choice of format. The librarians reported that obtaining the financial resources to support the library is the biggest challenge that they have. They believed that the escalating costs of traditional materials and the additional expenditure needed to provide materials in electronic format, including the hidden costs of maintaining and developing the necessary IT infrastructure, were often beyond the means of a small theological college library. These views confirmed the published assessment of small theological institutions by Ammerman (2004), see section 2.4.

During the research period electronic journals were introduced in both colleges A and B; they both subscribed to the Religion and Philosophy package offered by EBSCO. The majority of the journals in the package were new titles for the colleges
therefore back copies in printed format were not available. An indication of the usage of these journals was revealed in the questionnaire survey (see Table 6.11). At College A 21% of respondents indicated that they used e-journals whilst the results for colleges B and C were 11% and 2% respectively. It should be noted that College C did not subscribe to any e-journals at that time and obtained access to a few via their validating university. One College C student (Student B) commented that there were few theological journals available online compared to other academic disciplines and that he tended not to use them as the back copies of those available online were not extensive.

The study found that only the users of College C had access to electronic books. As College C and the theological group to which it belongs, have a large number of regional students, the use of electronic books is seen as a way of providing easy access to a number of basic critical commentaries that eased the pressure on the printed texts. However, training the users in the use of this resource has proven to be difficult because of a lack of training facilities. It should also be noted that the electronic book subscription is only possible because ABTAPL negotiated a 50% discount for its members (see section 5.6).

6.4.3.3 Electronic access to other libraries

In addition to having access to the electronic resources of their college, some users also had access to the electronic resources of their validating university. This was not however available to all students undertaking degree courses within the three colleges under investigation. For example only students undertaking postgraduate degree courses at both colleges A and B have access to the electronic resources of their degree awarding university. The students at College C however, regardless of course level, receive full access to the electronic resources of the local university. This privilege does not, however, extend to the academic staff or the Librarian because they are not registered university staff. Evidence was found that a lack of electronic access for students by their validating university was not uncommon. An unpublished survey of theological colleges by ABTAPL revealed that only 56% of
students from the responding colleges had access to the electronic resources of their validating university\textsuperscript{49}.

It should be noted that the Youth Ministry undergraduate degree students of College B did have access to the electronic resources of their degree awarding body that was located some distance from the college. This suggested that, in regards to resources, their agreements are formed to suit local circumstances and there is not a standard form of partnership.

6.5 Users’ expectations

The focus group participants unanimously agreed that they expected the library to provide all the books and journals that were needed for them to complete their course of study. When asked if they agreed with the statement that the library provides all the information that I need only 8\% of College A respondents disagreed. In colleges B and C the percentage of those who disagreed was 14\% and 6\% respectively (see Table 6.12).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>College A</th>
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<th>College B</th>
<th></th>
<th>College C</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly agree</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>66%</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>66%</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>82%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slightly disagree</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly disagree</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No answer</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6.12. The library provides all the information that I need

Although the majority of the respondents either ‘strongly agreed’ or ‘agreed’ with above statement, many more respondents reported that they used other libraries (see Table 6.13). Certainly at College C students are expected to use other libraries as

\textsuperscript{49} Unpublished survey conducted during June 2007 by Carol Reekie for the Association of British Theological and Philosophical Libraries (see Footnote 47).
the college library, whilst having basic texts, does not have the specialist books on
Spirituality for example (see section 5.2.3). The results would suggest that the needs
of the questionnaire respondents are largely being met.

In order to discover if the library really does provide for all the respondents
academic needs they were asked if they used other libraries for academic purposes.
The results revealed that 56% from College C and 18% from College B regularly
used other libraries, whilst few from College B did (see Table 6.13).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>College A</th>
<th>College B</th>
<th>College C</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>Frequency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regularly</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Occasionally</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>38</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
<td><strong>70</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 6.13. Do you use other libraries for academic purposes?**

It is possible that the high response rate to ‘Never’ using another library at College
B was due to the Youth Ministry students reporting that they only used their college
library. It was the opinion of the Librarian at College B that the Youth Ministry
students were generally reluctant to borrow anything other than that stipulated on
the reading list and that it was:

*difficult to persuade them to consider alternative titles even within the same
subject area*

(Librarian, College B)

Table 6.13 confirms that College C respondents used other libraries but that few
respondents from colleges A and B did so. It should be noted that the validating
universities of both colleges A and B have religious studies departments and that the
theological students have access to these collections. The validating university of
College C does not however have a religious studies department, thus these students
have to rely on the college to provide all their resources.
The reason for the non-usage of other academic libraries was explored in the focus group sessions. The participants from College A cited a feeling of intimidation, confusion and a lack of orientation with the local university library. Although these students did not receive a library induction session, it is perhaps an indication that some students lacked the confidence to use other higher education libraries. However, the consensus of the focus group at College B was that they could find everything they needed in the college library or on the Internet so they did not need to use other libraries.

The results shown in tables 6.12 and 613 are somewhat contradictory regarding the usage of other libraries. Whether this was the result of a misinterpretation of the question or a desire to please was unknown. The results of the next question attempts to explain the contradiction (see Table 6.14). The users were asked the reason why they used other libraries on either a regularly or an occasional basis. The reasons given by the respondents were either the library was nearer to their home or the availability of books (see Table 6.14).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>College A</th>
<th></th>
<th>College B</th>
<th></th>
<th>College C</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Near home</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Availability of books</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>63%</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>89%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6.14. If you have answered a or b please give a reason for this.
(see Appendix Four)

The availability of books was cited by 63% of the respondents from College A, 54% from those at College B and 89% from those at College C. The reason for using other libraries because they were nearer to the user’s home was given by 37% of College A respondents, 46% of those from College B and 11% of those from College C. The low percentage at College C may be explained by looking at Table 6.2. Most of the respondents were full-time residential students/staff. Equally College A respondents included many part-time students whose nearest library might not be College A.
6.6 Library services

The research revealed that the three college libraries provided similar services. In order to gauge how well the library services were used the questionnaire survey asked the respondents to indicate which services they used (see Table 6.15).

The short loan service appeared to be the most used by the respondents. The results suggest that at College B the large short loan collection is well used by the students. At College C certain books are placed on ‘reserve’ each term and can only be consulted in the library. Although the short loan collection at College C is different to that of College B, it is also well used. Advice from the library staff was also rated highly despite the staffing level at College C being low.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service</th>
<th>College A</th>
<th></th>
<th>College B</th>
<th></th>
<th>College C</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inter library loan</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advice from staff</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Short loans</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No comments</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6.15. Which of these services do you use the library for?

The focus group participants at colleges A and C reported the value of having library staff available at their time of need. They did however suggest that more library staff were needed “as they help you find books” (Student F, College A). These two groups also believed that more library staff were required to help with information literacy skills training, particularly in Internet and e-journals usage (Student A, College C). At College B, where staffing is continuous throughout the day, all the focus group participants spoke highly of the library staff and of the service they provided.

The respondents were given an opportunity to express their needs directly (see Table 6.16). More key texts were desired by 11% of the respondents from College A, 10% of those from College B and 10% from College C. Although this was a
small percentage of respondents, it was nevertheless significant as it supported the views of the college librarians who believed that there were not sufficient resources (see section 6.4.2).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service</th>
<th>College A</th>
<th>College B</th>
<th>College C</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>Frequency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More books</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online catalogue</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More journals</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More study space</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More CDs</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More DVDs</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More worship resources</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 6.16. What other services would you like the library to provide?**

The question of book provision was explored in the focus group sessions. All three focus groups made it clear that obtaining books, at their time of need, was not always possible therefore they felt that more books were required. This view was forcefully stated and indicated an underlying sense of frustration with obtaining important books. It also suggested that browsing for alternative texts was not considered. This confirms the general lack of browsing found amongst theological students as noted in the published literature (see section 2.4.1.1).

**6.6.1 User education**

Theological college students, like those of other higher educational institutions, require user education and information literacy skills training if they are to benefit from the resources on offer. The research revealed that the three colleges under study placed little emphasis on user education other than the provision of leaflets and user guides. Observations made by Lincoln in 2003 in regard of the library provision of electronic resources and their usage (see section 2.4.1.1) accurately reflected the circumstances of the three theological colleges under investigation. Although the three college libraries had Internet access and provided a limited
number of electronic resources, the training of the users varied from in each college. All three librarians and the academic staff interviewed commented that because of timetabling constraints, little time could be afforded to training.

6.6.2 Information literacy skills training

Although the librarians of all three colleges recognised the importance of information literacy skills training there was little opportunity to provide it to the students even though the need for such training had been identified. Concerns regarding the lack of website evaluation by students found in the literature reviewed were detected in the three theological colleges (see section 2.4.1.1). Six members of the academic staff from the three colleges expressed their concern that students did not evaluate Internet websites and took them “on face value” (Director of Postgraduate Studies, College B). The academics interviewed were reluctant to recommend websites or incorporate them into their teaching as timetabling pressures did not allow for website evaluation training to be undertaken. Although this was recognised as a problem the consensus from amongst the academic staff from colleges B and C was that there was little that they could do about it. They also cited a lack of college IT facilities as a reason for not providing training. The academic staff at college A, although having training facilities, felt that this could not be addressed at present because of time pressures.

The concern for a lack of resource evaluation by students was fully justified. When discussing electronic resources with the focus group participants each group acknowledged that they did not always bother to evaluate the electronic information that they found on websites. When the focus group participants of College B were asked about their evaluation criteria for information found on the Internet, there was little initial response. One participant commented that:

_I act as the critical filter. If it agrees with what I am saying, I will use it_

(Student B, College C)
This was particularly interesting as Student B was studying for an MPhil and had received research skills training. The other students within the group agreed with this opinion. Similar responses were received from the focus groups of colleges A and C. In addition some participants freely admitted to cutting and pasting information and were ignorant of copyright law.

However because IT training is not a requirement for ministry, it is not seen as a priority by the colleges and no formal time is made available for the necessary training. When asked about the teaching of information literacy skills both the Director of Studies at College A and the Dean of Studies at College B stated that the churches are very clear about what skills the students are expected to acquire. The acquiring of IT skills is considered to be the responsibility of the student and not the college. As the three colleges under study have neither the staff nor the technical support to provide basic IT training it was not obvious where these skills could be obtained. Unlike typical higher education institutions the emphasis is not on providing users with transferable skills. The only skills taught are those deemed necessary for ministry by the denominational churches. The librarians believed that convincing the academic staff of the importance of acquiring these skills had been made more difficult because they have little formal involvement in teaching. They therefore felt that their opinions would not be taken seriously.

Although IT skills are not a requirement for ministry, one College A focus group participant felt that the church should recognise the potential of IT in furthering its mission. He also felt that his college should take a “more holistic approach” to information literacy skills training and identify the needs or the skill requirements of each student and provide a personal development plan (Student A, College A). This suggestion was discussed with the Director of Postgraduate Studies (College A) who, whilst acknowledging that it was a sound suggestion, explained that there was little room in the timetable for this to be implemented.

The research highlighted the librarians’ efforts to provide information literacy skills training for their users in order to ensure that they can access the library’s electronic resources. In colleges B and C group training sessions are not possible due to a lack of training facilities. The limited training provided usually comprises of one or two
users gathered around the librarian’s computer. The librarians reported, and the
students confirmed, that the users often received one to one training with the
librarians at their time of need and at their time of asking. For example, the
Librarian at College B provides training on Hebrew and Greek software packages
when the students recognise their need rather than at the beginning of the year. This
was appreciated by three of the College B focus group participants who had
received such training.

Furthermore, and despite the lack of IT facilities, the librarians at both colleges B
and C reported that they had tried to offer one-to-one training sessions at lunchtime
and late in the afternoon after lectures had finished. These sessions had proved not
to be popular. The librarians believed that the lack of uptake was due to the students
desire to leave promptly at the end of the day, particularly those reliant on public
transport and the importance placed on community luncheon. Lunchtime sessions,
although well received in many higher education libraries, are not feasible in
theological colleges because community meals are an important aspect of college
life; staff and students are expected to eat together (see section 4.6.2). Community
luncheon is considered particularly important for part-time students who are
infrequently in college, as it encourages a feeling of community sharing. The
college librarians are also expected to partake in this aspect of community life. It
should be noted that early morning sessions are not feasible, as students are obliged
to attend Chapel before lectures.

The situation at College A is different because it has a small separate IT Room (see
section 5.2.1). Despite having these facilities the Librarian reported the low usage of
the electronic journals and software packages such as Bible Works\(^{50}\). He also felt
that from the conversations that he had had with the users, the low usage was due to
the limited amount of training that he was able to provide because of the timetabling
restrictions. The Librarian also reported that his long-term aim is to integrate user
education into the curriculum.

\(^{50}\) Software designed to aid scholarly analysis of Biblical text.
The views of the other focus group participants with regard to information literacy skills training indicated that for them, time constraints were the main barriers. Fourteen of the focus group students commented that their time between lectures was limited and they had little opportunity for training during the course of the day. In addition, one student at College B, stated that, as she was part-time:

*I’m only in college every couple of months and I can never remember how to use the software packages after being shown. Fortunately the Librarian is always willing to go over basic stuff with me, which is great*

(Student E, College B)

Another commented that:

*I have real trouble with the mechanics of IT and greatly value the help provided by the library staff*

(Student F, College B)

Help with using the self circulation system or the library catalogue is readily available at College B because the library is staffed throughout the day, thus enabling basic training ‘at the time of need’ to occur. The importance of help or training on demand was further emphasised by one student who confessed that she always forgot how to issue a book and had to repeatedly ask for help. She commented that:

*the staff never get cross, which is ever so nice*

(Student A, College B)

This perhaps shows the appreciation felt by the students for the individual help provided by the library staff.

In contrast, the staffing levels at colleges A and C means that they are not always able to provide help or training on demand. One College A focus group participant explained that:
on one occasion I really struggled to use a particular database and, as I couldn’t find the Librarian, I gave up and have not bothered since

(Student B, College A)

Other focus group participants reported similar incidents. This is perhaps an indication of the importance of assistance at the time of need.

The research revealed that if students with disabilities have informed the college of their disability they fare much better in terms of receiving training. The college usually provides them with training in software packages such as for voice recognition. One part-time student felt that the college had been very supportive and that she had received adequate training in the use of the software packages that they had provided. The student also commented that:

I don’t a problem using the library, as there is usually a member of the library staff there to help if necessary

(Student E, College B)

6.6.3 Use of electronic resources

Whilst the general library services of the three colleges were well used, the focus group data revealed that electronic resources were not. Although students used the library computers the data suggested that that they were mainly used for Internet and email access (see Table 6.11). The reason for this is that none of the student accommodation is networked therefore for some this is their only method of Internet access. Furthermore, the librarians reported that some students paid for a telephone dial up system to access the Internet and their email accounts from their rooms but as the connection tended to be slow they preferred to use the library computers that were free and had a faster broadband connection.

Apart from the lack of training facilities, the librarians cited the curriculum time pressures placed on the students, as a reason for the low use of the electronic resources. Only four of the focus group participants stated that they used e-journals,
the other participants cited a lack of time as a reason for their non-usage. Other reasons given as being “outside my comfort zone” (Student C, College B) and experiencing problems with passwords so found books quicker and easier to use (Students A, B and D, College A).

Furthermore, the librarians believed that the students often found the range of software packages, employed by different publishing companies confusing and that greater uniformity would help to overcome the problem. It was the view of one College C lecturer that there was a more basic reason for the lack of electronic resource usage. The lecturer believed that many students did not feel confident using a computer and that:

\[ \text{for some electronic resources are a step too far} \]

(Director of Studies, College C)

Eight focus group participants agreed with this assessment when asked.

The focus group participants also cited resource awareness as a reason for not using electronic resources. Nine focus group participants commented on the usefulness of knowing what resources are available in electronic format. One College C student felt that this was important because:

\[ \text{sometimes they were quicker to use than finding a book and making a photocopy} \]

(Student D, College C)

This emphasises the importance of resource awareness and training to ensure that all library resources are fully utilised.

The librarians also acknowledged that a contributing factor to the low usage of resources was that many students preferred the printed format because they disliked reading from a screen and it is perceived to be easier to consult, search and to make notes from a book. The librarians believed that the library should offer some
resources in both print and electronic format thus providing the users, particularly those off site, with choice, accessibility and flexibility.

Although some focus group participants expressed having difficulties in using electronic resources, others were very positive. Several felt that being able to access the online library catalogue and some e-resources from home saved them a lot of time and often reduced the need to use the library when in college (Student C, College A). Another focus group participant reported that:

*being able to access resources online from home saves me from having to make a lengthy trip to use the library resources when I’m not in college*

(Student E, College A)

Another stated that:

*I don’t like reading from a screen so being able to print off a chapter from home is great*

(Student E, College B)

In addition two part-time student focus group participants commented on the benefit that being able to search the catalogue from home provided as they did not always have an opportunity to use the library catalogue in between lectures (Students A and F, College B).

Despite IT skills not being a requirement for ministry, evidence could be found at College C that competent IT skills were becoming essential for both staff and students. The college now provides digitised resources via the college intranet for all staff and students. In 2006 the Copyright Licensing Agency introduced a licence that included permission to digitise many required readings (Copyright Licensing Agency [n.d.]). This has made the dissemination of information much easier and has helped to overcome some of the problems of having limited resources. Previously the college provided course packs that were expensive to produce and administer. This method has reduced administration costs and ensures that some of the required course readings are available to all the students. Although this service provides
choice and equality of access to all, it is dependent on the users’ ability to access it. It should be noted that some of the academic staff of College C refuse to consider digitisation of existing resources as an option. One lecturer believes that:

*recommending specific electronic readings provides too much directed learning and that it does not encourage students to explore and discover....*

(Academic Librarian, College C)

She also feels that it encourages a ‘least effort’ attitude. This view confirms that found in the published literature (see section 2.4.1.1).

### 6.7 Academic staff

Although the research focused on the library usage by the student body, data regarding library usage by the academic staff was also obtained from the questionnaire survey and the interviews undertaken. The survey revealed that the library was well used during the survey period by the staff in College B but not in colleges A and C (see Table 6.2). However, all the academics interviewed confirmed that they used the library for their teaching and their personal research. When questioned about their research needs, one academic explained that he received a generous book allowance that enabled him to buy most of the books that he needed for his research (Director of Studies, College C). The Vice-Principal of the Anglican College B confirmed this and added:

*the library budget provided by the church is exclusively to purchase resources for ordination training. The academic staff receive a generous book grant for their own purchases so do not have to rely heavily on the library*

(Vice-Principal, College B)

There was also some evidence that academic staff members regularly loaned their own books to students. The focus group participants of colleges B and C reported
that this occurred when there was a shortage of a specific core text (see section 6.4.2).

The data gathered from the questionnaire also revealed that the respondents who were academic staff used the libraries of their degree awarding bodies. The usage of these libraries for research was necessary because, as reported by the academic members of staff interviewed, the theological college libraries under investigation were on the whole teaching rather than research libraries.

### 6.7.1 Academic staff use of electronic resources

The interviews and the questionnaire survey showed that the majority of the academic staff used electronic resources for their own research however some evidence was found suggesting that the use of e-resources for teaching purposes was not endorsed by all members of the teaching staff. Whilst some staff recommended the use of electronic journals or electronic books as part of their teaching, others were more reluctant and wanted to encourage the students to browse the shelves.

With regard to the IT training of the academic staff, they reported that they either received specific database training on a one to one basis with the Librarian or explored the resources themselves (Director of Postgraduate Studies, College B). The librarians felt that co-operation with the academic staff was key to increasing electronic resource usage. They believed that encouraging and training the academic staff in the use of specific databases was the best approach, particularly if the lecturers then recommended the resource for an assignment (Librarian, College B). Another reported that he was working with the academic staff to incorporate their electronic journals into the curriculum (Librarian, College A).

A contributing factor to the lack of electronic resource recommendation by the academic staff was found to be their lack of access to the resources provided by their degree awarding body. It was established earlier that the academic staff of the three colleges under investigation did not receive access to the electronic resources provided by the validating university (see section 6.4.3.3). This anomaly makes it
difficult for academic staff to recommend useful resources to students, as they do not have an opportunity to evaluate them themselves beforehand. Again, the unpublished ABTAPL survey provided evidence that this was not uncommon within the theological college library sector (see section 6.4.3.3).

6.8 User Satisfaction

In order to gain some insight into the satisfaction levels of the college library user the questionnaire asked the respondents what they used the library for (see Table 6.9) and whether this had been successful (see Table 6.17). A positive reply was given by 92% of the College A respondents and 67% and 84% of those from colleges B and C respectively. This would appear to suggest a high satisfaction rate amongst the questionnaire respondents.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>College A</th>
<th></th>
<th>College B</th>
<th></th>
<th>College C</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>27</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6.17. Was your visit successful?

It should be noted that a large number of College B respondents did not answer the question. This would suggest that these students were just using the library to access the lecture room rather than using its services and facilities (see section 5.2.2).

User satisfaction was further explored in the focus group sessions. Whilst it was felt that the majority of the required resources were provided, some underlying frustration with regard to obtaining course textbooks was revealed. The shortage of reading texts at certain periods of time was identified in Chapter Five (see section 5.5.1). The academic members of staff acknowledged that there were insufficient copies of some texts and that a series of measures had been put into place to lessen the effects of this. Despite this the questionnaire and the focus group discussions both indicated that these measures had not been effective.
It should be noted that the focus group discussions revealed that there were other factors that contributed to the lack of resources. For example, one focus group participant felt that a few “eager beavers” borrowed all the set texts rather than leaving some for other students and that this contributed to the shortage of some books (Student C, College B). Another participant suggested that part-timer users are often tempted to take more books than they need because they were not frequently in college (Student E, College B). Furthermore, the relaxed attitude towards returning books was found to be a significant factor that needed be addressed to improve this situation. The three focus groups felt that some of the measures implemented to provide a fair distribution of resources were undermined when students did not return the recommended books on time or ignored recall requests. The overall dissatisfaction, frustration and feelings of impotency with the system were clearly revealed.

6.8.1 Library fines

The focus group participants from colleges A and B specifically complained that there was no mechanism by which students could be compelled to return books. One student commented that:

\[
\text{people just don’t take any notice of due dates because there are not any penalties to encourage their return}
\]

(Student C College A)

The absence of deterrents such as fines was clearly seen by this student as a reason for the late return of books. Although both colleges B and C have a system of fines the librarians reported that there had only been a slight improvement in the prompt return of books since this had been introduced. One student believed that if someone needed to keep a book they were usually prepared to pay a fine (Student D, College C). A fines system had been introduced at College C in 2006 and there was some evidence to show that this view could be substantiated. In the first year the Library Committee minutes for 2007 showed that £600 had been received in fines from the library users.
The consensus of the focus group participants was that a financial penalty was not seen as being sufficiently harsh to overcome the problems. Although they did not suggest a solution, the impression gained was that the penalty did not need to be monetary. None of the participants would offer an opinion as to what type of penalty would be sufficient.

6.8.2 Library security

An additional area of concern expressed by the focus groups related to the number of books missing from their libraries. There was clear evidence that some members of each college community abused the system of trust used by all three college libraries. It was the belief of fourteen focus group participants that some students would take out the course readings as soon as the reading lists became available without first issuing the books to themselves. This ensured that they had all the necessary course texts and that these could not be recalled. It was found that the majority of the full-time users had continual access to the library, even when it was unstaffed (see section 5.2.1-5.2.3).

Documentary evidence was found that indicated that library security was an ongoing problem that had not yet been resolved by the management committees of the three colleges. The academic staff interviewed, the focus group participants and the college librarians all expressed concern at the missing texts. The librarians reported that each year a number of key texts from the recommended course reading lists were reported missing but later returned once the assignment due date had passed or at the end of the academic year. They also reported that they did not receive additional funding to replace the books that were not returned. It can be concluded that this problem is a contributing factor to the shortage of recommended texts.

Whilst the academic staff interviewed expressed concern at the number of missing books they were not able to offer a solution. They believed that a commercially available library security system would be too costly. The librarians confirmed that this was also the view of the college management committees. The librarians
however, believed that they could recoup the cost within five years from the money saved by not replacing books. However the problem is not straightforward. For example, the installation of a commercial library security system would only prove to be beneficial if the library opening hours were restricted to staffed times at all three colleges and this would curtail the 24-hour access. The Library Committee minutes from College C indicate that the college is not prepared to sanction this, as they do not want to withdraw this privilege.

Although the problem of missing books is not new, little documentary evidence could be found referring to it in colleges A and B. However, the minutes of the Library Committee for College C indicate that book security was discussed in 1964, 1995 and again in 1999. A review of security was called for in 2005 but there is no documented evidence to indicate that this was undertaken. The management committees appear to be content to write off the losses. It is interesting to note that the Inspectors Report of 2004 for the theological group, of which College C is a member, expressed concern at the high number of missing books and recommended that it “should work towards a solution that would provide greater security”[51]. The research found that although there had been much documented discussion regarding which method of security to use, improved security had yet to be implemented. It is apparent that library security is not a priority for the college and the fact that it is content to write off the losses is perhaps an indication of the true perception of the library by the college management.

6.8.3 Library feedback

Although the focus group participants readily expressed a number of concerns, the three college librarians reported that they rarely received negative feedback or complaints. Nor had they received any via the questionnaires that they had used in the past. The college librarians believe that because the library serves a small community it is possible to get to know the users and to some extent anticipate their needs. This was also highlighted in the focus group discussions with all three groups

commenting that because they were small communities personal relationships were important and they appreciated the personal library service that they received from the librarians. The Librarian of College B is so committed to her role that she learnt Greek and Hebrew in order to be able to assist her library users. This effort was greatly appreciated by all the College B focus group participants.

Although the students are able to suggest books for purchase and have a presence on each library committee (see section 5.3.2), little documentary evidence could be found that indicated that their views were recorded or acted upon. The librarians felt that a lack of feedback and complaints made measuring the levels of user satisfaction difficult. They also reported that a lack of staff time made it difficult to implement user surveys on a regular basis. Instead they relied upon their community involvement, the library suggestion book and the student representatives on the library committees to obtain the opinions of their library users. One librarian was of the opinion that:

> if the users were more vocal it would lend support to the changes that needed to be considered, such as a larger reading room and the installation of broadband in their rooms

(Librarian, College B)

The librarians also believed that many students had low expectations of the library service and that:

> the users were grateful for anything we can provide

(Librarian, College B)

The other librarians interviewed confirmed these views.

6.8.4 Additional comments

The questionnaire asked the respondents if they wished to make any comments. The need for more books was cited by a small percentage of respondents (see Table
6.18). These are in addition to those recorded in Table 6.16 (see section 6.6). As the comments were from different respondents the combined results show that 16% (6 respondents) for College A, 13% (9 respondents) for College B and 18% (9 respondents) for College C. These figures give more weight to the stated need.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>College A</th>
<th></th>
<th>College B</th>
<th></th>
<th>College C</th>
<th></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>Frequency</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More books</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More online resources</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increased opening hours</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Noise</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good service</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No comment</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6.18. Are there any comments that you would like to make?

The focus group participants were also given the opportunity to suggest improvements to the library service. Apart from the need for more books, the other major comment from the focus groups of colleges B and C was for more library computers. The numbers of which were deemed to be insufficient as they were the only public use computers available in the colleges. This comment from the College C focus group is surprising as URC students receive a grant from their church to purchase a computer for their studies. The Academic Librarian confirmed this and suggested that in practice most students wait until they have completed their course of study before buying a computer as this ensures they have an up to date model when they enter ministry. As the grant is given to the student the college cannot stipulate when the money should be spent.

The noise level at College B was also commented upon. Although this was only cited by 3% of the questionnaire respondents and was not sufficient to indicate that this was a concern for the questionnaire respondents (see Table 6.18). Evidence obtained from the College B focus group participants suggested that the noise level was a problem for some. One part-time focus group participant reported that she had no choice but to use the reading room for study and wished people:
would not hold random conversations whilst others were trying to work…

(Student E, College B)

The other focus group participants agreed with her. It should be noted that residential students are able to study in their rooms and the largest questionnaire survey respondent group for College B had been the full-time residential students (see Table 6.2). The depth of feeling suggests the importance of the correct environment in which to study and learn. Unlike large universities, small theological college libraries are unable to provide separate learning or study zones.

The Librarian of College B reported that she was fully aware of the need for additional study spaces and the noise level difficulties but felt that there was little that she could do. In the past the library had had a large reading room but this is now used for teaching (see section 5.2.2). Although the Academic Board and the Chair of the Library Committee are aware of the situation, the Librarian felt that the students, who could perhaps exert some pressure on the college management, were “too nice” to take their complaints further.

It should be noted that the College B does not have sufficient space to increase the study space without undertaking major building work. This college, like the other two colleges under investigation, does not receive Higher Education Funding Council funding (see section 2.1.1) and the Church of England does not provide the finance for this type of project (see section 5.4). The enlargement of the library would require the college to provide the necessary funding itself, an undertaking that the College Management Committee do not believe is affordable. The Vice-Principal confirmed this.

The views of the academic staff interviewed regarding how the library services could be improved and what services they might like it to provide were also canvassed. None offered an opinion. They all stated that they were satisfied with the current provision of their library service and would not be drawn further. Whether this was because they did not wish to appear to be critical was unknown. It was clear however that a library ‘wish list’ had not been considered.
6.9 **Barriers to library usage**

The findings of the research suggest that the libraries are structured around the full-time residential student and that the service did not reflect the changing requirements of the whole student body. Only one of the three college libraries is accessible to off-site students at weekends and only two of the college libraries open until late, one evening a week. Residential students, in all three colleges, have access to the library 24 hours a day because they have a passkey or swipe card. In an attempt to provide some equality of access for the students and to overcome the problem of access outside staffed office hours, College C provides a postal loan service for distance students whereby the college bears the cost of the postage.

The research revealed that part-time, off-site, students are disadvantaged in regards of library access and have to contend with a number of barriers in order to use the library compared to full-time, residential, students. In addition to having church, work and family commitments the students often have to travel long distances to their college and are subject to library access restrictions. It should be noted that since the research period the librarians of colleges A and B reported that their colleges had adopted a more flexible approach and now allowed greater library access to off-site users.

In addition to access problems, the study revealed that part-time students are unable to borrow short-term loan books or consult reference books because they are infrequently in college. The inequality of access for off-site users has persuaded the college librarians that a fairer option would be to provide some resources in electronic format. Thus a limited number of electronic resources have been introduced that provide the users with a choice of resource. However, attending training sessions was found to be problematic for some thus making it impossible for this group of users to fully benefit from the library facilities.

Furthermore, some students reported difficulties when trying to access electronic resources from home. Four part-time focus group participants stated that they often needed support and advice to ensure that they had the necessary network
connections and the required authentications. One focus group participant also recounted the problems that he had experienced when trying to access electronic resources because he lived in an area that did not have access to broadband. He had to rely on the slower dial up service (Student A, College C). These experiences confirm those reported in the published literature with Graham (2002) commenting on the difficulties that some off-site students face when trying to ensure that their home computers are configured correctly to access and print electronic resources (see section 2.4.1.1).

The librarians of the three college libraries acknowledged these difficulties but felt that there was little that they were able to do without additional resources. All three librarians felt that online resources, such as electronic books, could play a role in making relevant information more accessible to this group of users but that it also created additional problems such as the training required. Furthermore, the librarians believed that the diverse age range of the part-time users meant their IT skills varied considerably and without adequate training the users would be discouraged from using the electronic resources. In particular their experience suggested that some students struggled to use the software packages remotely and that others were not equipped to manage online reading from home. Unless these barriers are removed they believed that part-time students would continue to be disadvantaged.

6.10 Conclusion

This Chapter focused on the needs and expectations of the theological college library user and provided an indication of the levels of user satisfaction. Drawing on the data gathered, the research revealed that the students expected the library to provide all the resources necessary to support their studies. This, however, proved to be an unrealistic expectation, as libraries are not seen to be a high priority by the colleges and therefore have limited resource budgets.

The findings of the study suggest that the library services of the three theological colleges under investigation were still organised around full-time residential
students and that insufficient consideration had been given to those studying part-
time. Part-time students identified library access, book loan periods, IT training and
a lack of support as being barriers to their use of the library.

The research shows that, unlike other typical higher education institutions, IT plays
little part in the delivery of ministerial education and library resource provision.
Although evidence was found to suggest that the library users preferred printed
materials, the lack of electronic resources restricted the choice of resource format
and limited information literacy training. The lack of a college IT strategy was
found to have hampered the development of library IT provision in regard to both
facilities and training. Insufficient funding and technical support were found to be
the key reasons for this.

The level of user satisfaction was found to be difficult to assess. The overall
impression was that the users were generally very appreciative of any help that they
received and that they valued a personalised library service. However, whilst the
results of the questionnaire survey inferred user satisfaction with the library service,
the focus group sessions suggested that there were elements of dissatisfaction,
particularly from amongst part-time students. As the librarians receive very little
feedback, in which to present to the college management, it is unlikely that the
situation will change.

The next chapter discusses and assesses the current provision of library information
services within the three colleges under investigation and Chapter Eight gives the
conclusions of the study and recommends areas for further study.
CHAPTER 7: DISCUSSION

7.1 Introduction

This chapter explores the implications of the findings presented in Chapters Four, Five and Six in the context of the purpose of the study, the literature reviewed and the aims and objectives set out in Chapter One. Chapter Eight contains the conclusions of the research, the recommendations and suggested areas for further study.

7.2 Purpose of the study

The literature review revealed the limited amount of published literature available relating to theological librarianship and highlighted the lack of knowledge regarding the process and nature of change within the UK theological library sector. The purpose of this study was to provide some understanding of their operational environment by presenting a ‘snapshot’ of theological college libraries during a given period of time. By analysing the data gathered from the three theological colleges investigated it was felt that it would be possible and make recommendations, if appropriate, that would enhance library provision in the support of ministerial education and training. The following sections provide a discussion of the findings gathered from the three theological colleges and focuses on the changes within ministerial training and the implications for resource provision.

7.3 Summary of findings

The research indicates that the nature of theological education has been transformed in order to meet the changing requirements of the denominational churches. Such changes have resulted in major implications for resource provision. The main findings of the study are that:
• Although curriculum changes have resulted in the loss of the academic content of some programmes, the training has become more professional in its approach.

• Evidence was found of concern regarding the limited amount of theological knowledge of some students and how this will affect the calibre of future church leaders.

• There is a conflict between the formational training needs of the churches and the academic learning requirements of their partner institutions.

• The libraries are still structured around the needs of the full-time residential user with few concessions to part-time users.

• Flexible training programmes and increased student numbers have created a demand for a greater range of resources.

• Insufficient investment and funding has resulted in the library services being unable to respond effectively to the changing needs of their users.

• Evidence supports the notion that IT plays little part within teaching and learning and a lack of funding and investment has hampered the development of library IT provision.

• There is a lack of understanding of the role of the college library and the librarian within ministerial training colleges.

7.4 The nature and delivery of theological education

In order to investigate the role of the theological library within ministerial education and training the nature of theological education was explored. The study investigated the way that theological education was delivered in three theological colleges chosen as representative samples of the diversity found amongst higher education theological colleges.
7.4.1 Ministerial training

The research findings revealed that the Church of England’s need to recruit more ministers whilst at the same time reducing costs has profoundly affected the delivery of ministerial training (see section 2.2.2). The literature review suggested that the implementation of the Hind Report, a new approach to ministerial training, had been largely successful (see section 4.4.1). The findings from the three colleges investigated confirmed this. It was found that the churches have reduced their residential training capacity and increased their non-residential training in order to further reduce their training costs (see section 2.2.3). However it should be noted that whilst these cost reductions have been of benefit to the churches, they have also resulted in a loss of income for the colleges (see section 4.2.1).

Although the introduction of flexible training pathways has been successful in increasing recruitment, the findings suggest that it has also created a number of issues yet to be resolved. These include the increased number of part-time students, the diverse range of skills and abilities of those accepted for training, the lack of underpinning theological knowledge of some students, the loss of academic content of some courses and time constraints. These issues were found to have implications for resource provision in all three colleges investigated.

7.4.2 Levels of ability

The findings from the data obtained from the three colleges investigated suggest that attracting a wider range of abilities in order to increase recruitment has meant that some students struggle academically (see section 4.5.1). The difficulties appeared to be more prevalent amongst the part-time and off-site students as they missed out on aspects of community life that facilitated discourse and learning. Although these students may have found the academic study challenging for a variety of reasons, the evidence collected infers that the difficulties reported related more to the training structure than their academic ability (see section 4.6.2). Furthermore, there was evidence to suggest that timetabling constraints further compounded this issue.
The implications of this are that the academic and community needs of some learners are not being met in the new training pathways. The part-time, off-site, students do not receive the same learning experience as their full-time counterparts as they are not able to fully immerse themselves in the teachings and traditions of their denomination. For some this may mean that they will not be sufficiently prepared or as effective as full-time students who experience the monastic model of living, working and learning within a community of faith (see section 2.2.4).

7.4.3 Curriculum changes

The research findings highlighted concerns found amongst the academic staff regarding the lack of underpinning theological knowledge of some students recruited for ministry. The church’s drive to recruit more students has led to many that do not have a theological background being accepted for ministry (see section 2.2.2). It was the opinion of the academic staff interviewed that this policy would have a detrimental effect on the quality of future church leaders (see section 4.5.1). These views confirmed those voiced by Le Cornu (2003) in the published literature (see section 2.2.5).

These findings, therefore, question whether current ministerial students will be suitable to be church leaders. The evidence suggests that those who have successfully passed through the church selection procedure are considered, by the churches, to have the right skills for ministry and as such should receive the necessary amount of support to be able to complete the training to the required level (see section 2.2.4). A solution to the lack of underpinning theological knowledge is to employ additional staff to provide extra tuition to those students who require it. Although the churches do not currently provide funding for additional staff (see section 4.2.1), they need to recognise that some students may require additional teaching support and be prepared to fund this where necessary. However, as the Hind Report proposed making substantial savings on academic staff costs, obtaining additional funding may be difficult to achieve (Archbishops’ Council 2003, p.95). The colleges should therefore consider other teaching models such as providing
additional biblical sessions during the vacation periods using volunteer tutors or local ministers.

The fact that the curriculum is delivered in a shorter time frame was found to have intensified the time pressures for some students. All the focus group participants reported that their training was intensive, leaving them with little free time (see section 4.6.2). The effects of the reduced training period were also explored in the academic staff interviews. They believed that the reduction in the training period makes it difficult for the students to find a balance between academic learning and formational training (see section 4.6.2). The removal of the reading week at College C is perhaps an acknowledgement that there is not sufficient time to deliver the curriculum (see section 4.6.2). It should be noted that concerns regarding the balance between academic learning and formational training are not new and can be found in the published literature (see section 2.2.6).

One solution to this dilemma would be to review the existing training programme in order to identify areas of training that could be undertaken prior to entering a theological college and further training to be undertaken whilst in ministry (see section 2.2.8). Some formational requirements could be provided more effectively as part of the ‘on-the job’ training rather than by academic learning. This would make the experiences more immediate and relevant thus enabling reflective practice to be undertaken. This would also be in line with the published literature that calls for a more holistic approach to ministerial training rather than the existing ‘factory’ system (see section 2.2.4).

An alternative solution would be to provide vocational training courses that are validated by the churches, thus creating a two-tier ministerial training system. As has already been established, some courses are now more professional and practical in content than they have been in the past (see section 4.6). Since the churches are now selecting those for ministry with the right skills, it could be questioned whether there is a need for a theology degree to remain a requisite for all ministries. Changes in the church’s role in the community and smaller congregations suggest that different types of theological and pastoral support are now required hence the emphasis on practical professional skills rather than academic learning (see section
2.2.5). Self validated courses would be more cost effective and would also widen the ministerial recruitment pool further. For example, they could be extended to lay ministers who have a theological background.

Although these issues are a concern and the long term consequences of the flexible training programmes have yet to be realised, the evidence infers that as long as there are sufficient ‘academic’ programmes available to attract those destined for either an academic life or future church governance, then such concerns are at present groundless (see section 4.5.1).

7.4.4 Formational training verse academic learning

As theological colleges are not able to award degrees they are obliged to form a partnership with a degree awarding institution. An issue identified during the research investigations was the secular nature of some validating partners and their values being incompatible with those of theological colleges (see section 4.4). The academic staff believed that because their partner institution did not fully understand the nature of theological education for ministry, the delivery of the curriculum was affected and that an imbalance between the requirements for academic learning and those for formational ministry had been created. Similar views are reported in the published literature (see section 2.2.7). Overend (2007, p.145), in particular, felt that the strong sense of community, vital to ministerial training, was not quantifiable (see sections 2.1.1 and 4.4).

Despite these concerns such partnerships do provide some benefits to both partners. For the university it expands its student base without committing any teaching or learning resources. For the colleges, it provides administrative support and ensures that high teaching and student support standards are maintained (see section 4.4). Notwithstanding the voiced concerns, the Church of England, in particular, still appears to believe in this collaborative model. However, now that the new HE Funding Council’s co-funding arrangements have been introduced it will be interesting to see if the churches will still consider this method of programme
validation appropriate (see section 2.2.7) or if they will explore other options such as self validation.

Finally, the study revealed that the introduction of the flexible training pathways had raised a number of concerns that need to be resolved by both the churches and the theological colleges. As the churches are the ultimate stakeholders, the colleges are obliged to produce sufficient numbers of candidates for ordained ministry in the quickest and most cost efficient way possible. This has led to the colleges adopting attitudes more reminiscent of a factory rather than individual training and is confirmed by some of the concerns expressed in the published literature (see section 2.2.4). How the college libraries are dealing with the consequences of these issues and their effects upon resource provision are discussed in the following section.

7.5 Library provision

The second and third objectives of the study were to assess the current provision of library information services and their effectiveness within theological colleges. To this end, this section will discuss the existing provision of resources in the three college libraries under investigation and consider how far the identified resource provision implications are being addressed.

The investigation into the nature of theological education identified a number of issues as having implications for resource provision within the three colleges under investigation (see section 7.4.1). Furthermore, the evidence suggests that the reduction in the number of residential theological training colleges (see section 4.3) and the introduction of the flexible training pathways has meant that many colleges have become training centres (see section 4.2.1). Thus theological colleges are no longer primarily places of scholarship as they had been in the past. Moreover the nature of the community has changed from the “monastic” style as described by Buchanan (see section 2.2.1) to one that is more transient. This was found to have had additional implications for resource provision.
7.5.1 Book resources

Despite the rise in the number of part-time students it was found that the libraries were still organised around the full-time residential user with little consideration being given to their part-time, off-site counterparts. For the college libraries under investigation many of the issues identified relate to the composition of their library collections. As previously established the colleges had been postgraduate institutions and this was reflected in the library collection, for example the libraries did not require multiple copies of certain texts (see section 5.5.1). The introduction of flexible training pathways has not only broadened the level of resources required to include those of undergraduates it has also placed pressure on existing texts. This has resulted in the libraries having insufficient multiple copies of books to satisfy the needs of the users (see section 6.4.2). This has meant that the collections have had to change. However, the data suggested that during the research period the library collections did not reflect the number and range of resources now required (see section 5.5.1.1). Moreover the findings show that, for the flexible training courses, the balance and range of the library resources required has changed (see section 4.2.3). As the emphasis is now placed upon theological reflection, fewer theological books are actually required for some courses but the range of subjects required has increased (see sections 5.5.1.1).

In addition to this, the evidence suggests that the libraries still have to provide resources for their postgraduate students (see section 6.2.3). Whilst some postgraduate students could use the libraries of their validating institutions, others could not. The study revealed that not all degree awarding partners have established religious departments. In these cases the provision of theological resources is left to the partner theological college (see section 6.5). Thus the findings of the study suggest that some partnerships were more favourable than others. Although the training emphasis is on parish ministry it should be remembered that courses with a high academic content are still required for those wishing to progress through the church hierarchy.
Since evidence could not be found to show that additional funding has been provided to support increased student numbers and the larger range of academic abilities, it must be inferred that any resource purchases would have to come from existing budgets. Whilst much time and effort has been spent in developing the flexible courses, no evidence could be found to suggest that funding for additional library resources had been considered (see section 5.5.1.1).

One solution to the issue of insufficient numbers of books would be for the libraries to purchase the more basic introductory texts at a discounted rate and re-sell them to the students at the discounted price. This would ensure that they all had the basic core texts. As noted most students receive a book grant during their training period (see section 6.4.2). This could be of particular benefit to the part-time students and might help to overcome the problems of library access for them (see section 6.9).

Whilst the academic staff believed that the libraries were well resourced (see section (6.4.2), these views were contradicted by the focus group participants who believed that insufficient resources were a problem, despite the measures instigated to overcome the shortages (see section 6.4.2). The study revealed that book resources had not kept pace with the increased number of students studying at the three colleges and that there was a lack of basic introductory texts and insufficient multiple copies of key readings (see section 6.4.2). The focus group participants and librarians believed that having insufficient book resources had resulted in a high level of missing books and the late return of books (see section 6.8.2). It was their opinion that such practices reduced the availability of resources and limited the effectiveness of the library provision. The church inspectors expressed similar concerns (see section 6.8.2). However, as no action has been taken by the college management to rectify the situation, this suggests that these issues are not seen as a priority. Although the colleges have funding constraints (see section 5.4), the college managements’ reluctance to solve the library security issues and invest in their libraries demonstrates a lack of understanding of the students’ resource needs. It also implies that the colleges are disinclined to question the morals of their faith based communities (see section 6.8.2). Unless the colleges are able to show leadership in this area and condemn the theft of book resources it is unlikely that the situation will be resolved.
The findings of the research suggest that the colleges under investigation have insufficient resources, therefore it can be concluded that the libraries have been slow to respond to the changing curriculum and the needs of their users. The study suggests that this is primarily due to limited library budgets; a lack of investment and insufficient understanding of the resource needs of students by the parent institutions. From this it may be inferred that, since academic learning is only one element of ministerial training, the more practical aspects of the training receive a higher priority.

7.5.2 Other resources

The research found that, unlike other typical higher education institutions, the value of IT had neither been appreciated nor had it been integrated into the curriculum within the colleges during the research period (see section 4.6). This confirms the findings reported in the review of literature (see section 2.4.1.1). It is therefore possible to conclude that the library resources used reflected the traditional methods of curriculum delivery such as printed books and journals. However, the librarians believed that the colleges should embrace electronic resources, as it would ensure a fairer distribution of limited resources to both on-site and off-site users. Whilst there is some truth in this, the findings of the study suggests that both the academic staff and students prefer printed books and that many lacked the basic IT skills to access electronic resources (see section 6.6.2). Furthermore, the findings show that the existing electronic resources are under used (see section 6.4.3.2). These findings confirm the views found in the reviewed literature that suggests most students prefer to use the printed format (see section 2.4.1).

Evidence obtained from the focus group participants and the librarians identified time constraints, the lack of library staff support and insufficient IT training facilities as being deterrents to electronic resource usage (see section 6.6.3). The findings suggest that part-time students, who are rarely on-site, experience the most difficulties in using the electronic resources (see section 6.6.2).
Whilst the purchasing of electronic resources, such as e-journals and e-books, could overcome many of the stated problems, this was found to be beyond the means of the three colleges under investigation because of the investment, staffing and hardware that it required (see section 5.4). Since academic learning is not the main priority of ministerial training the library was found not have the same importance placed upon it as in other typical higher education institution (see section 4.2.2). Furthermore, insufficient support for electronic resources in general was detected amongst the majority of the academic staff interviewed (see section 6.7.1). The academic staff were unconvinced as to the benefits of electronic resources and linked their use to targeted reading, which they disliked. For these reasons they did not recommend them to their students (see section 6.6.3). These views are not uncommon as the published literature testifies (see section 2.4.1.1).

It is however fair to note that the colleges had tried to ensure equality of provision through other methods, such as course packs and digital readings. However these methods were deemed to be too costly by some of the colleges (6.3.3). Moreover the digitising of course readings, while providing equality of access for all, does transfer the cost of printing from the college to the student.

Whilst funding priorities affect library resource provision it should be noted that the lack of vision shown in regard to the potential of IT must be seen as a missed opportunity as technology now plays a major role in everyday life. Providing ministerial candidates with good IT and information literacy skills training should be seen as an investment in the future. For, as methods of communication change, these transferable skills can be used and adapted for the furthering of the mission of the church.

7.5.3 Funding

The question of funding was one that often arose during the course of the research. The findings suggest that the needs of part-time students have not been sufficiently understood by the college management and that, as a consequence, the funding allocated does not facilitate library development. Although part-time students are
often considered in terms of a full-time equivalent when funding is apportioned, it
must be remembered that these students have the same needs as their full-time
equivalents even though they are not always on-site. Thus funding should be
calculated in terms of the number of students rather than the full-time equivalents in
order to ensure sufficient resources are available. There is much published literature
to suggest that part-time students actually require more books, support and guidance
because they are infrequent library users (see section 2.4.1). The data derived from
the focus group discussions and the librarian interviews confirmed these views (see
section 6.6.2).

Evidence was found to suggest that limited library budgets are having a detrimental
affect upon the library collections. For example, the librarians reported that missing
key books had to be replaced from existing budgets (see section 6.8.2). It can be
inferred that at some point more will have to be spent on replacement items than on
new titles. Thus important decisions regarding course readings will have to be
undertaken by the academic staff. In the light of the gathered evidence regarding
resource budgets it can be concluded that it may not be possible to replace all books.
This would be to the detriment of the college library users and to the collection as a
whole.

Although the library represents many years of investment and is a significant on-
going cost to the institution, the library’s funding allocation and levels of
investment are a true guide to the priorities of a theological college (see section
5.4.2). With regards to IT resource provision the literature reviewed (see section
2.4.1.1) and the evidence found implies that not only would the implementation and
continual maintenance of IT be costly for many small theological colleges, but the
skills level and training required would also add to the financial burden (see section
6.4.3.2). As IT training is not a requirement of ministerial formation, acquiring such
skills has not been seen as a priority by the churches and, therefore, by the colleges.
In many respects this explains why theological college libraries have not responded
to the developments in IT as quickly or as effectively as other higher educational
establishments in terms of resource provision and facilities.
7.5.4 Collaboration

Evidence of collaborative projects being undertaken in order to overcome restricted library budgets was found in the three colleges under investigation. The benefit of collaboration with other theological institutions was highlighted in the US Peterson Report and was seen by Peterson as the way forward (see section 2.3.2). Similar initiatives have been facilitated by ABTAPL and, as members, all three colleges have benefited from these such as the loaning of resources and the establishing of journal co-ordination schemes and electronic resource consortiums (see section 5.5). This cooperation could be extended to printed resources. Those colleges that are geographically close to each other could consider a collaborative purchasing model in which each library would collect a specific subject area, other than key reading texts, and share these resources with the other reciprocal colleges. For example such a scheme would work in areas such as Oxford where there are several theological colleges in close proximity. This would spread the cost of providing resources and increase their users’ access to resources.

Another area that could be explored is greater collaboration with existing partner institutions in terms of postgraduate resources. For example, those partner colleges without religious departments could consider either the joint purchasing of resources that would be of benefit to both partners, for example an electronic religious database such as ATLA\textsuperscript{52}. In return a college could offer the postgraduate students of the partner institution access to their resources. This would benefit both parties in terms of the breadth of resources available to their users.

7.6 College management

In order to assess the effectiveness of the library service the college management structure was first examined. Appendix Three shows the college management reporting structures and indicates where each library sits within the institution. These structures clearly illustrate the influence that the academic staff have on the

\textsuperscript{52} The American Theological Library Association produces a both an online religious abstract database (ATLA) and a full text serials version (ATLAS).
management of the library, with all library decisions going before the academic boards. The evidence suggests that these structure ties are historical as in the past academic members of staff have managed the libraries (see section 5.7.1). Although each college now has a professionally qualified librarian, the academic staff continue to influence library affairs by virtue of having representatives on each library committee and within the reporting structure (see section 5.3.2). The evidence gathered from the interviews undertaken suggests that the academic staff have a very conservative view of the library and that they only view it in terms of a collection of books (see section 6.4). This makes library development difficult to implement since the academic staff are involved in the management of the college.

The study revealed that the college librarians work under many constraints and that their sphere of influence is limited. Although the need to employ a professional librarian is recognised, there appears to be some reluctance on the part of the college management to take advantage of the professional advice and leadership they offer. The implications of this are that informed decisions that are in the best interests of the library user may not be made as the management do not fully understand the needs of library users, particularly of those that are part-time. Whilst the college management often overrule the opinions of the librarians they are sometimes unwilling to provide leadership themselves. An illustration of this was found in the college managements’ attitude towards library security and their incomprehension of the frustrations that the loss of stock causes to both the students and library staff (see section 6.8.2). Here the college management was clearly reluctant to take a lead on this issue, preferring to ignore it.

The evidence also suggests that the librarian’s professional expertise is often over ruled or disregarded when attempts to implement changes to the service are discussed. An example of this was found at College B when a previous librarian suggested introducing an automated issuing system (see section 5.5.2). From this, it can be concluded that the librarian has little influence in the development and management of the college library other than in the day to day running of the service. Similar examples were found in the other colleges under investigation that suggests that in practice, the college librarians do not have overall responsibility for their college library unlike other higher education institutions. Whether this attitude
was due to the low status afforded to librarians in the three theological colleges (see section 5.7.3) or if it had more to do with the “cavalier” treatment of the library as reported by the Principal of College A (see section 5.4), is unknown.

The research also found some underlying tensions between the academic staff and the librarians in regard to status and their place within the college structure (see section 5.7.3). These tensions were more noticeable where the academic staff failed to consider professional advice (see section 5.5.2). From the evidence obtained it is can be concluded that the academic staff exerted undue influence in the management of the library. Much of the academic staff’s influence in library matters stems from the period when a member of the academic staff managed the college library and their opinions were not questioned. Now, the librarian, usually the only qualified information professional, would expect their view to be considered. Resentment appeared when there was encroachment into the each other’s territory. Examples of this was found in regard to resource provision at College A and the librarian’s lack of specialist knowledge (see section 4.5) and the librarian’s belief, at College B, that the academic staff did not fully appreciate the differing needs of all users (see section 6.8). Such findings would account for the difficulties between the academic staff and the librarians.

However, in areas that the academic staff have proved to have little expertise the college management are happy to listen to advice, for example, professional activities such as collection management. The documentary evidence clearly shows that the academic staff had not managed the libraries successfully and that the professional librarians had raised the standards of the library service in areas of bibliographical control, organisation, support and resource awareness within the libraries (see section 5.7.1). In this regard their contribution is recognised, with the Dean of Studies (College B) stating that their librarian was an important resource (see section 4.5). This would suggest a lack of understanding of the role of the college librarian and what librarians are able to offer to the college. It is clear that both sides need clear parameters to be defined. These misunderstandings could be overcome by greater trust, dialogue and co-operation between both the librarians and academic staff in the areas of curriculum development and resource provision that would be to the benefit of the college as a whole.
The gathered evidence revealed that the college managements have an ambivalent attitude to both the libraries (see section 5.2) and the librarians (see section 4.5). Whilst it is claimed that the library is at the heart of the college (see section 5.2), this is not reflected in the level of funding or investment. IT development is a good example of this. The low priority given to IT by the churches is often seen as a reason for its slow development (see section 2.4). The evidence suggests however, that the conservative nature of the colleges is an influential factor together with the antipathy found towards IT amongst some of the academic staff (see section 6.4.3.1). Since many of the academic staff have a traditional view of the college library it is not unsurprising that a resistance to change was detected (see section 5.3.3). Moreover, the independent nature of the colleges and the lack of guidelines or incentives to change from the churches regarding library development provide some understanding as to why the college managements have been reluctant to develop their libraries. It also confirms the views stated in the review of literature regarding the slow development of theological college libraries (see section 2.3.1).

### 7.7 Library users

The study sought to gauge the effectiveness of the library service for its users. According to the Oxford English Dictionary the term effective is defined as being “Powerful in effect; producing a notable effect; effectual” (Oxford English Dictionary 2010). Effectiveness in this context is therefore understood as the library fulfilling its role to support the education and training needs of its community. The research findings show that the focus groups and the questionnaire surveys indicate that the libraries are well used and central to the academic needs of the students (see section 5.2). On the basis of the evidence obtained it can be concluded that on one level the traditional nature of the college libraries under in investigation worked well and were effective, providing all that was asked of it by the college management although the services were modest. For example the personal approach and service was greatly valued by the users (see section 6.6.2). However, in terms of resource provision and access to resources it was found to be only partially effective, with many part-time students reporting library access difficulties, a lack of library staff support and study space (see sections 6.4.2 and 6.4.1).
Although the students are represented on the library committees of each college and are encourage to submit book suggestions, little documentary evidence could be found to suggest that their views are taken forward (see section 6.8.3). The reality was found to be that the users had little influence and generally accept the situation (see section 6.8.3). Neither the focus group participants nor the questionnaire survey provided comments in regard to improvements to the library service. Such reticence was also found in the published literature, which suggests that theological students are grateful for what they receive (see section 2.4.1.1).

The three college librarians reported that they had little time to regularly assess the effectiveness of their services through the use of library questionnaires and instead relied on personal feedback that they actively encourage through conversation and engagement with the students. They revealed that they rarely receive negative feedback from their users (see section 6.8.3). This confirms the published literature’s assessment of feedback received by theological librarians (see section 2.4.1). Furthermore, the librarians felt that the acceptance of the status quo by the students and a general lack of complaints, particularly in regard to library provision, made their advocacy of the library difficult (see section 6.6.3). It was the opinion of all the librarians interviewed that the students generally tended to accept their training and the pressures placed on them without much complaint because it was viewed to be part of the suitability test for ministry (see section 4.6.2).

The librarians also believed that the users had low expectations of the library service (see section 6.8.3). Since the students are aware of the funding difficulties of the churches, their expectations are modest. The fact that few comments were received from the anonymous questionnaire survey gives credence to these opinions as do the views found in the published literature (see section 2.4.1.1). Thus the subsequent complaints raised in the focus groups appear to contradict this. Whether these comments were made because the participants felt that they were more able to discuss their views with an outsider, is not known. It could be concluded that the focus group participants used the opportunity provided to indicate their frustrations in the knowledge that their views would not be reported to the college management.
It has already been established that ministerial students have many time pressures placed on them, some of which limit their use of the library (see section 6.4.2). This questions the theological college students’ need for a physical library. It could be suggested that a virtual library would be of more use. Although a virtual library would overcome some of the prevailing issues and provide a library service at the students’ time of need (see section 6.6.2), the reality is however, that the very essence of ministerial training is firmly rooted within a community setting. Whilst some aspects of ministerial training can be imparted at a distance the majority of the training revolves around the sense of community and is something that cannot wholly be abandoned. Libraries are part of the community in that they are the physical location of the curriculum resources and provide valuable study space for part-time students when they are on-site (see section 6.4.1).

The physical library also acts as a reminder to the user of the historical traditions of the church. For example the book is an important symbol within Christian tradition (see section 1.2). In addition the library was also found to bring prestige to the colleges and helps to generate valuable income (see section 5.5.1.2). This was of particular importance for College C as the historical development of the denomination could be traced through its collection (see section 5.5.1.2). Moreover the research found no evidence that the user community did not want a physical library or that the college management were committed to a digital library, in fact the library was held in high regard (see section 5.2). Since all the users expressed a preference for books, whilst this view remains, it is unlikely that the theological college library will disappear.

### 7.8 Conclusion

This chapter discussed the results of the study in light of the literature review and illustrated how the aims and objectives of the research have been addressed. The discussion of the findings suggests that the introduction of the Hind Report has had a major affect on the recruitment and training of men and women for ministry. A new kind of theological education was found to be emerging whereby the training
was more professional, intense and condensed into a shorter time frame. This has implications for resource provision.

The evidence suggests that a number of issues have arisen regarding the delivery of the flexible training pathways that need to be resolved by the churches. Although the evidence shows that the professional nature of ministerial training has affected the way in which libraries are used, it was found that they are still organised around the full-time student and that the current provision should be reviewed in order to consider the needs of all users.

It was found that the conservative and independent nature of the colleges has meant that the organisational and cultural values of the colleges are influential in determining library policy and that the librarian often has little influence. Moreover the general acceptance of the library services by the student body does little to encourage the further development of the service. The results of the study suggest that the users are partially happy with the services provided but that part-time users are disadvantaged in terms of access to resources, support and training.

It is quite clear that in order to make the libraries more effective the colleges need to make changes. No evidence could be found that the college management committees have the will or vision to undertake this. The independent nature of the colleges indicates that this is unlikely to happen unless encouraged by the churches. Since funding appears to be the biggest obstacle for change the library must explore ways of fully utilising their existing resources by raising resource awareness amongst its community and through collaboration with their partner institutions and other theological colleges.

Although the study provides evidence that each college has developed differently and has implemented their own policies and practices it was felt that sufficient commonality could be found that would enable some conclusions to be drawn that are of relevance to other theological institutions. This is considered in Chapter Eight.
CHAPTER 8: CONCLUSIONS

8.1 Introduction

This final chapter considers how far the aims of the research have been fulfilled and outlines the conclusions that have been reached. It also reflects on the contribution that the study has made to the understanding of the theological library sector and makes some recommendations that may be of use to other theological college librarians and theological institutions that train men and women for ministry. The chapter concludes with the research limitations and some proposals for possible areas of future research that would extend the understanding of the theological college library sector.

8.2 Restating the aim and objectives

The rationale for the study was to identify current issues and trends that are prevalent within theological college libraries and make recommendations, where appropriate, that might enable other theological colleges to enhance the support and resource provision given to their library users.

The aim of the study was therefore as follows:

- To investigate the role of the theological college library within theological education and to establish the extent to which theological libraries are meeting the perceived and unperceived needs of their user communities.

In order to achieve the aim the following objectives were set:

- To investigate the nature and delivery of theological education in order to ascertain the implications for library provision.
- To assess the current provision of library and information services within theological colleges.
• To examine the effectiveness of theological college libraries in meeting the ongoing needs of their users.
• To make recommendations, where appropriate, that would enhance the provision of information resources in the support of theological teaching and learning.

It should be noted that the data and subsequent research discussion only provides a ‘snapshot’ of the three college library environments during a particular period of time and should not be seen as a definitive account of all theological college libraries.

8.3 Summary of conclusions

The themes and issues identified in the literature review were explored in each college and a number of commonalities were identified that made it possible to suggest that the introduction of flexible training pathways had succeeded in fulfilling the needs of the denominational churches; however some unforeseen consequences were revealed. The following paragraphs provide a summary of the conclusions drawn from the research findings:

1. Increased student numbers, the widened range of academic abilities and readership levels have placed pressures on the existing resources. More resources, additional study space and flexible access arrangements are required.

2. The evidence suggests that the colleges have been slow to recognise the changes required to the management and development of their collections in order to satisfy the needs of their users. Thus the theological college libraries are still organised around the full-time residential student and that the needs of the part-time, off-site, users are only partially satisfied.
3. The data suggests that a lack of funding and investment has resulted in modest library services, inadequate IT provision and training and staffing levels that are inadequate to support users effectively.

4. Although some of the highlighted issues could be resolved by a greater use of electronic resources, existing electronic resources are not fully utilised since both academic staff and students prefer books. Despite the fact that IT does not have a high priority in theological colleges it should be noted that since the research data was gathered IT has progressed. It now plays a major role in everyday life and has become an important tool. Although little evidence could be found to indicate that the colleges have embraced IT in their teaching and learning, it is acknowledged that within most other higher education institutions IT has become embedded in the curriculum and now forms an important part of the students’ learning experience. Web 2.0 technologies in particular have been incorporated into teaching thus enabling students to explore, create, share and communicate information themselves.

5. The college management, although having ultimate control of the college library, did not fully understand the resource needs of their students and failed to provide the necessary leadership to resolve the identified issues.

6. Since both the college and the user community had low expectations of the library service it was therefore seen to fulfil its role. Although the findings revealed some dissatisfaction with the library service, the evidence suggests that the users are generally satisfied with it.

7. As users rarely complained, it can be concluded that the quiet acceptance of the lack of resources and insufficient support actually perpetuated the situation and contributed to the inaction by the three colleges, as there is no perceived justification for change.

8. Due to the independent nature of theological colleges, unlike other higher education institutions, they have not been obliged to update their curriculum delivery methods or their libraries.
9. Since academic learning is only one aspect of ministerial training it can be concluded that this has affected the status of the library within the college and its funding allocation. This has contributed to the slow pace of development in the college library and information service.

10. As the funding for theological colleges, provided by the churches, is not generous, the evidence suggests that poor budgets and a lack of investment are the root cause of many of the issues facing theological college libraries. Therefore the funding for additional staffing, resources and facilities would have to be obtained from other sources.

11. The evidence suggests that the college management neither understands the potential the library has for taking a more prominent role in the academic life of the college nor does it appreciate the professional expertise of the college librarian.

12. Since it was found that some students struggled academically and others lacked sufficient underpinning theological knowledge it can be concluded that these students required greater teaching support if the situation was to be improved.

The conclusions that can be drawn from these findings are that theological college libraries have been slow to change and that the developments found in the typical higher education college library are not reflected in theological college libraries. The consequences of this are that the theological college library is unable to deliver a fully effective service to all its users and meet their ongoing needs.

8.4 Contribution to knowledge

This study has contributed to an understanding of UK theological college librarianship about which little was known. It provides evidence of the environment in which theological college libraries operate, how they are managed and the professional issues surrounding them.
The research findings provide evidence of the effects that the new training methods have had on curriculum delivery and the consequences of their failure to address the identified issues. It has documented the impact of the new flexible ministerial training methods on college library services and the subsequent implications for resource provision.

The study has identified theological college librarianship as a sub-section of librarianship and has shown that for a number of unique reasons, these specialist higher education libraries have been left behind with regard to development and new technology.

8.5 **Recommendations for theological colleges and their libraries**

The findings of a small scale study such as this should to be treated with caution. However the results show that important common issues exist in all three of the ministerial training college libraries investigated. The research established that each theological college library studied was distinctive. However, sufficient similarities were detected that enable some general recommendations to be made that would be of use to the college libraries investigated as well as those in other theological institutions.

The findings of the research suggest that there were a number of areas where improvements could be made that would enhance existing practices. Rather than targeting any specific institution, the following general recommendations are presented:

- More consideration should be given to the differing needs of both full-time and part-time users. It is recommended that a greater emphasis be placed on the evaluation of library services in order to ensure that the services provided match the requirements of the library users.

- It is recommended that library opening hours be extended to enable off-site users greater access to resources and facilities. This would increase resource
usage and reduce the need to provide postal loans. Although this may have funding implications, it is recommended that the use of student helpers, who could man the library outside normal library staff hours, be explored.

• Ways should be explored of ensuring that existing resources are fully utilised. For example, increasing resource awareness by highlighting the available resources to both staff and students. Library security should be tightened to reduce the number of missing books and ensure the continued circulation of recommended texts. Setting a shorter loan period with greater penalties for non-compliance that would encourage a faster return of course books by students. Not only would this reduce the frustrations reported by the focus groups and ensure a greater circulation of important texts, it would also increase user satisfaction levels.

• The research concludes that the current level of IT provision is inadequate and recommends that there should be investment in both the college IT infrastructure and the provision of IT support. Such development of IT within the colleges and the introduction of a college intranet would not only benefit the college community but also enable future development in VLE and some distance learning modules to be considered. This would enable the colleges to expand their ministerial and independent student base.

It is important that theological colleges are aware of new curriculum delivery methods and they must design courses that reflect the way in which students are now taught in schools and colleges in order to anticipate the expectations of their future student intake. Although there would be some initial cost implications, it would prove cost effective in the medium to long term as online courses could be provided to students both at home and abroad. A programme of fundraising could be considered in order to provide the initial capital investment.

• It is recommended that the libraries should take a leading role in facilitating the use of Web 2.0 applications in order to enable the students to enhance
their learning. This would provide them with a wide range of new skills for future ministry and encourage communication and networking. The libraries should therefore provide a platform whereby Web 2.0 applications, such as Blogs, Facebook, Social Bookmarking, Podcasts, Wikis and YouTube, can be used to foster better communication and to create and disseminate information. Whilst it is recognised that this would be difficult for some colleges to achieve, it should be seen as something to aspire to.

- The research recommends that portable training facilities should be considered, such as the provision of a small number of inexpensive computers, for example reconditioned Netbooks. This would remove the necessity for a permanent training area and existing space could be used, for example a classroom or a library. Alternatively students should be encouraged to buy laptops during their training period rather than wait until they have completed their training so that these could be used during an IT training session.

- An organisational structure should be developed to provide greater parity of status between the academic staff and the librarian. The professional expertise of the librarian should be recognised and they should take a greater part in the management of the college library. Furthermore, it is recommended that they become more involved in curriculum development and delivery in order to ensure that sufficient resources are provided to support the courses on offer and that are properly co-ordinated. As more resources become available in electronic format the librarian should raise the awareness of the academic staff to the potential of new formats for curriculum development and delivery and how this could enhance the programmes offered.

- Consideration should be given to ceasing comprehensive stock collecting and partnerships could be formed with other theological colleges where possible. This would release more funding to purchase multiple copies of texts. Moreover it is recommended that there should be greater co-operation
between theological colleges and their partner institutions in regard to collection development and resources sharing. For example, if the validating institution provided some of the recommended readings and gave electronic resource access to both undergraduate and postgraduate students, the theological college could in return offer reciprocal access to their collections. This would benefit both groups of students.

Furthermore, collaboration on a regional basis, through organisations such as ABTAPL, would enable the colleges to enhance their collections through the sharing of resources within specific specialisms.

- Since ministerial training has now become more professional, the churches should explore ways of providing some form of ministerial certification that is not reliant on a theology degree, as this would overcome the current problems of academic ability and underpinning theological knowledge.

8.6 Research limitations

The research aimed to investigate the role of the theological college library and establish to what extent it was meeting the needs of its user community. Three colleges were identified that represented the diversity found within theological colleges. Inevitably there are limitations to the work that could have influenced the findings obtained. These are as follows:

- By limiting the number of theological colleges investigated, only a broad generalisation could be made that was pertinent to those libraries during the research period. The researcher acknowledges that as libraries are continually evolving the situation in the three theological colleges examined may have changed and improvements may have already been implemented.

- The research may have benefited from a greater access to college records. Some data was not publicly available, such as financial accounts and church inspectors’ reports. In addition, some academic members of staff refused to
discuss sensitive issues such as the colleges’ relationship with their partner institutions or the role of the librarian within the college. This limited the researchers’ ability to follow up these questions.

8.7 Areas for future research

Whilst the study has contributed much to the understanding of how theological college libraries operate and function, the findings indicated that the libraries are still going through a period of transition as a result of the 2003 Hind Report. It is recognised that the study is limited in terms of the number of colleges investigated and that further detailed research would be useful. Several areas are identified as being worthy of future research. These are as follows:

- An investigation into the current role of user education and information skills training within ministerial training and future ministry. This would include an examination of the current provision of user education and information literacy skills training that would identify the changing pattern of need and ensure that future training could be targeted at specific points within the curriculum. Also the adoption of a longitudinal survey of students from a specified number of theological colleges for the duration of their course and the first two years in ministry. This would enable an evaluation of the benefits, if any, of information literacy skills training during the period of ministerial training and transference into ministry.

- A wide-ranging examination of the current role of the theological college librarian within curriculum development and delivery. This research would assess whether the increased involvement of the theological college librarian in curriculum development and delivery could enhance the overall learning experience of ministerial students.

- An examination of whether a greater collaboration between theological colleges and the establishment of cross denominational resource sharing that
would enhance resource provision amongst theological college libraries and reduce unnecessary duplication.

8.8 Concluding remarks

Although the findings of this study can only present a snapshot of the views and opinions of the user communities during the period of investigation, it does provide some recognition of the reality of the theological college library environment and the needs of their library users.

Whilst the findings of the research suggest that the library users are generally satisfied with the library services provided, a number of issues have been identified that indicate that greater satisfaction could be achieved if some changes were implemented. It is anticipated that this study will stimulate discussion and debate within the theological library sector and that this will lead to the adoption of good practices that will be beneficial to theological college library users.


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APPENDIX ONE

Personnel interviewed

College A:
Director of Studies
Postgraduate Director of Studies
College Principal
College Librarian
Previous College Librarian

College B:
Dean of Studies
Postgraduate Director of Studies
College Vice-Principal & Chair of the Library Committee
College Librarian
Previous College Librarian

College C:
Director of Studies
Director of New Testament Studies
Retired Principal & Chair of the Library Committee
Academic Librarian
Previous College Librarian

Although the above personnel had different titles, they held equivalent posts.
APPENDIX TWO

Access Letter

Address

09/03/04

Dear Revd Dr

My name is Carol Reekie and I am a part-time research student at Loughborough University. I am researching the changing role of the college library. As part of the research I shall be investigating three college libraries. ….. and ….. have already agreed to part in the study and I wondered if it would be possible for me to use ……… as the third library? Some of our lecturers have spoken highly of your college and would be happy to provide a reference if required, most notably Revd. Dr …….., Principal of …….. House.

Should you be agreeable, I would require access to the college/library archives in order to trace the development of the library. I would also like permission to interview the current librarian and his predecessor. The research is for my thesis and will therefore remain unpublished. The interviews and any information gained will of course remain strictly confidential. I hope that it will be possible for you to grant me access and I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely

Carol Reekie
Research Student
Loughborough University
APPENDIX THREE

The management structure of College A:

- Board of Governors
  - Academic Appointments Committee
  - Strategy Committee
  - Executive Management Committee
  - Equality and Diversity Committee
    - Principal
      - Academic Board
      - Core Staff Group
      - Library Committee
The management structure of College B:
The management structure of College C:

- Board of Governors
  - Senatus
  - Management and Finance Committee
  - Library Committee
Library usage questionnaire survey

My name is Carol Reekie and I am a research student at Loughborough University. I am researching the changing nature of theological libraries and I would be most grateful if you could spend a few minutes filling in this questionnaire on your usage of the library. Please note that anonymity is guaranteed.

Please return the completed form to……………………………………………………………

1. How often do you use this library?
(please choose one)

   Daily,  
   Weekly  
   Monthly  
   Termly  
   Never  
   Other (please specify)

………………………………..

2. Did you attend a formal introduction to the library?
(please tick one box)

   Yes  
   No

If No please go to question 4.

3. How would you rate the library introduction?
(please tick the answer that applies)

   Very informative  
   Informative  
   Not very informative  
   Of little use

4. What do you use the library for?
(please tick all that apply)

   Books  
   Journals  
   Videos  
   CD ROMs  
   Computers  
   Quiet study  
   Other (please specify)

………………………………………………………………………….
5. Which services do you use the library for?  
(please tick all that apply)

Inter library loans  
Advice from Library staff  
Short loans  
Other (please specify)

6. What other services or materials (if any) would you like the library to provide?


7. What do you use the library computers for?  
(please tick all that apply)

Searching the library catalogue  
Searching online databases  
Using electronic journals  
E-mail  
Internet  
Word processing  
Other (please specify)

8. How far do you agree with the following statement?  
*The library provides all the information that I need*  
(please tick one box)

I strongly agree  
I agree  
I slightly disagree  
I strongly disagree

9. Do you use other libraries for academic purposes?

   a) Regularly  
   b) Occasionally  
   c) Never

10. If you have answered a or b please give your reasons for this.


228
11. What did you use the library for today?

…………………………………………………………………………………………

12. Was your visit successful?

…………………………………………………………………………………………

13. Are there any comments about the library service that you would like to make?

…………………………………………………………………………………………

…………………………………………………………………………………………

About yourself

13. Are you:

Male
Female

14. Are you a

(please tick all that apply)

Campus based student?
Member of the academic staff?
Member of the non-academic college staff?
Distance Learner?
Other? (please specify)

……………………

15. If you work or study at the college, are you

Full time?
Part time?
Other? (please specify)

……………………

16. If you are a student

a) what course are you studying? ............................................................

b) what is your previous occupation? ........................................................

17. Which age category best describes yourself?

Under 24
25-34
35-44
45-54
55+

Thank you very much for taking the time to complete this questionnaire; your efforts are greatly appreciated
APPENDIX FIVE

Questionnaire Coding

Examples of preset codes for the questionnaire survey closed questions.

Qu.1

1 Daily
2 Weekly
3 Monthly
4 Termly
5 Never
6 Other

Qu.2

1 Yes
2 No

Qu.3

1 Very informative
2 Informative
3 Not very informative
4 Of little use

Qu.4

1 Books
2 Journals
3 Videos
4 CD Roms
5 Computers
6 Quiet study
7 Other

Qu.5

1 Inter library loans
2 Advice
3 Reserved shelf
4 Online journals
5 Other
Qu.7
1 Library catalogue
2 Databases
3 Electronic journals
4 Email
5 Internet
6 MS Word
7 Other

Qu.8
1 Strongly agree
2 Agree
3 Slightly agree
4 Disagree

Qu.9
1 Regularly
2 Occasionally
3 Never

Qu.14
1 Male
2 Female

Qu.15
1 Full-time
2 Part-time
3 External user
4 Academic staff
5 Non-academic
6 Other

Qu.17
1 Under 24
2 25-34
3 35-44
4 45-54
5 55+
APPENDIX SIX

Interview schedule for the Chair of the Library Committee, principals and librarians interviewed

How long have you been at the college?
Where were you before?
Have you always been involved in the library?
What was the library like when you first came?
What do you feel that you have achieved during your time as Chair?
What has disappointed you?
What do you feel are the main issues facing the library?

What do you see as the librarian’s role within the college?
Where does the library sit within the college structure?
What is the role of the library committee?
How is the library funded?
Does the funding of the library put strain on college resources?

Do the traditions of the college effect the management of the library?
To what extent have outside influences, such as Follett, affected the library directly?
And indirectly?
How much influence does the Church have in the management of the library?

How has the college managed to stay independent?
Are you under pressure to merge?
Do you know how the Hind report will affect the library?

The last few decades have seen an unprecedented amount of change in the way that libraries are used. How do you think that St Johns has been affected.?
How has the library responded to these changes?
Who or what has been the driving force within the institution?
How do you see the library developing in the future?

How would you define the needs of your users?
Do you feel that they are being met?
Why not?
What do they use the library for?
Are the students involved in the running of the library?
(Do they have a voice?)
Did you find that automation increase user expectation?

THANK YOU
APPENDIX SEVEN

Academic staff interview questions

1. How long have you been at the College?
2. How is the Curriculum developed here?
3. Who does this involve?
4. What consideration is given to library provision during curriculum development?
5. Are you involved in curriculum development? (depending on answer to qu. 3)
6. How is it delivered?
7. How are students assessed?
8. What do you expect from your students?
9. What information or skills do you think that students need to acquire for ministry at whatever level?
10. In your view, how should the library support the curriculum?
11. What happens in practice?
12. Do you think that the library has a wider role within the college?
13. What do you think that the role of the librarian is within the curriculum?
14. What do you think that the role of the librarian is within the college?
15. Is there anything more that you would like to add?

Thank you
APPENDIX EIGHT

Student focus group guide

Introduction:

Good Morning. Thank you for agreeing to take part in this focus group. My name is Carol Reekie and I am a PhD student at Loughborough University. I am investigating the role of theological libraries within ministerial training colleges. I would very much like to hear your views and opinions of the resource provision at the college and your experiences of using the college library.

This session is completely confidential and you will not be referred to by name. I shall not be reporting my findings to the college.

The session will last about an hour and I will start with some brief questions before moving onto the main topics, of which there are four. I will ask a question and listen to your answers so please speak freely. I would like to encourage everyone to partake in the discussions as I am really interested in your views. I will summarise the discussions at the end and provide you with an opportunity to make any additional comments.

There are no rules except I would like to ask that each person is allowed to finish speaking before someone else joins in. This is in order that all points of points can be clearly captured on tape.

Briefly outline what topics to be discussed. (2 minutes)

**Opening question:** Could you introduce yourself and say where you are from. (2 minutes)

**Introductory question:** What course are you pursuing? (6 minutes)
**Transition question:** What made you decide upon that particular course? (4 minutes)

**Key questions:**

1) Does the curriculum meet your expectations? (10 minutes)

   Prompts: How is it being taught? (Delivery)
   What do the assignments entail? (Delivery)
   What did you expect to learn? (Skills gained)

2) How do you prefer to study? (10 mins)

   Prompts: Does your course include different methods of study?
   Environmental factors.
   Priorities.

**Transition question:** Do you use the library? (1 minutes)

**Key question:**

3) How does the library support you and your studies? (10 minutes)

   Prompts: What Resources do you expect the library to provide?
   What services have you used?
   Priorities?
   Have you acquired any additional IT skills?
   What would you like to be able to use?

4) If you had the power to change things, what would you do? (10 minutes)

   Prompts: What’s missing?
   Library’s effectiveness?
   Electronic access?
Summary

Give summary of most important findings and then ask if it was an accurate.

**Final question:** Is there anything that anyone would like to add? (5 minutes)

Thank you for giving me your time, it is much appreciated. Your thoughts and views will be of great help to my research.
APPENDIX NINE

Example of the thematic grid used for the documents analysis from College A. Main theme broken into sub-sections

**Finance – Documents**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>IT</th>
<th>Library</th>
<th>Staff</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>LC 26/5/88 Need for computer cat.</td>
<td>CC 17/3/66 More library shelving needed.</td>
<td>CC 2/5/69 Stock needs sorting, need to appoint assistant to Principals secretary to help (shows status of job).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LC 11/5/89 Cardbox Plus used. Need money for retrospective cataloguing.</td>
<td>CC 29/9/69 More shelving needed.</td>
<td>CC 25/10/77 Need separate library admin assistant.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LC 4/11/97 IT to be considered as a separate issue (as involves college wide strategy).</td>
<td>CC4/05/79 Concern expresses with library budget, considered to be too small.</td>
<td>CC 5/5/82 Inspectors report need for p/t professional librarian.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LC 17/2/98 Librarian investigates cost of Heritage system - £6000, funding would be a problem.</td>
<td>CC 5/05/82 Inspectors report library budget too small, need for professional librarian., need for more shelving &amp; rationalisation of stock. More cooperation with local colleges &amp; the university suggested.</td>
<td>CC 7/11/84 Professional librarian. Needed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LC 27/10/98 IT development raised, concern about being left behind.</td>
<td>CC 8/05/84 More shelving needed.</td>
<td>CC 20/5/86 Inspection due – more shelving needed &amp; librarian.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LC 4/11/98 IT would have to wait, problem with technical backup.</td>
<td>CC 21/10/89 Inspectors suggest revision of library budget. (budget mentioned again, no action since 1982 report).</td>
<td>CC 7/6/90 SR now recognised as the Librarian. (SR had been working as assistant since 1980 and chartered as worked).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Memo 10/11/99 No funding available for IT yet.</td>
<td>CC 7/3/91 Inspectors comment on the lack of reading space.</td>
<td>CC17/02/95 Admin help needed (previous person left. Nature of relying on student help, only available for short periods, then have to train someone else. Help not always forthcoming as minutes show).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LR 2000 Foundation not able to afford com.man system for library.</td>
<td>LC16/10/97 Financial constraints prevents conversion. Sold Victorian glass case to fund rolling stacks.</td>
<td>LC4/11/97 Voluntary helper needed (obviously no funds for paid assistant).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LR 2001 Library suffering from a lack of capital investment. Need for Internet access and IT support.</td>
<td>LC 4/11/97 Expansion of library agreed. IT is a separate issue.</td>
<td>LC4/2/98 Need for admin help.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LCl/10/02 IT back on the agenda (new librarian &amp; principal).</td>
<td>LC 17/02/98 No funding for Heritage.</td>
<td>LC 1/07/98 Staffing a continual problem.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LC 4/02/03 E-journals introduced.</td>
<td>LC 27/10/98 Kitchen conversion to proceed (money must have been found). IT development</td>
<td>LR 1998 Helper left, reduction of library services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LR 2003 Money for Heritage system found.</td>
<td></td>
<td>(librarian must have been desperate – making a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IT</td>
<td>Library</td>
<td>Staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>raised.</td>
<td><strong>LC 4/11/98</strong> F &amp; GP insist on increase in external user fee to £30 (rather than librarian suggestion of £25).&lt;br&gt;<strong>LR 1994</strong> Financial constraints.&lt;br&gt;<strong>LR 1996</strong> Book &amp; Journal increases are placing strain on Library budget.&lt;br&gt;<strong>LR 2000</strong> Book budget cut by £15000, not able to afford an automated library. Management System.&lt;br&gt;<strong>LR 2001</strong> Library suffering from a lack of capital investment. Need for Internet access and IT support.&lt;br&gt;<strong>LR 4/03/03</strong> Study space an issue</td>
<td><strong>LC 23/2/99</strong> P/T library assistant appointed, 3 ½ hrs pw. Librarian had to reduce her time by 3 ½ hrs.&lt;br&gt;<strong>LR 1999</strong> More courses offered, more students therefore more staff required. (<em>none forthcoming</em>)&lt;br&gt;<strong>LR</strong> Difficult to recruit student helpers.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Example of an academic interview placed within a thematic grid. The interviewees own words are used

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>College</th>
<th>Professional matters</th>
<th>Library</th>
<th>Finance</th>
<th>Management</th>
<th>Achievements</th>
<th>Communication</th>
<th>Users</th>
<th>Issues</th>
<th>Quality control</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>College C</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>018: Became Academic Librarian immediately arrived – assigned it because no one else wanted it. Library much smaller.</td>
<td>097: Academic Librarian has control of budget.</td>
<td>040: Possibility of History Soc coming to college.</td>
<td>070: Sorted out the artefacts. Organised the sale of unwanted items. Organised the removing of unwanted books to the Tower.</td>
<td>570: students sit on the library committee so they have a say in how their library is run.</td>
<td>414: Library still a place of study.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>030: Stock scattered around the building.</td>
<td>169: Library accounts no longer separate, now in overall college accounts. Still some dedicating funding but not so easy to pin it down. Not a good thing.</td>
<td>055: Recognition that things had got lax, impetus – joining of the Union Catalogue project. Concern that the common memory was being lost. Need to create more library space. Role of Library.</td>
<td>491: Users needs are largely being met.</td>
<td>496: Users use to be more involved with the library, used to fill slips etc... all lost when computerised. They use to look after the library more, not needed now. 529: 1 student from</td>
<td>114: 114: We are not the sole arbiters, the college and the library collection belongs to the Church.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>084: No previous experience of libraries.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>090: Role was seen as very part-time, didn’t have much time.</td>
<td>182: Difficult now to get spending figures. This had been recommended</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>341: Electronic access not necessary a good thing, encourages target reading rather than discover &amp; explore.</td>
<td>379: Space problem.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>104: Library has an important role</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>238: Government reports have no influence. Courses validated by 2 universities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College</td>
<td>Professional matters</td>
<td>Library</td>
<td>Finance</td>
<td>Management</td>
<td>Achievements</td>
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<td>-----------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>within college Library Committee in theory has members of the church on it. Overseen by management Com. <strong>114</strong>: Lib. Com has become more complex. <strong>128</strong>: It all belongs to the church, “not a college that’s got any sense of independence”, integral part of the church. <strong>142</strong>: It is the Churches library and not the colleges’. <strong>163</strong>: Intro study carrels and better lighting. <strong>287</strong>: Library is a national resource for the church.</td>
<td>by Management Committee. It has not worked out as hoped – <strong>reluctant to talk about this</strong>. Library funded by endowments. Some library endowments for specific subject areas. <strong>254</strong>: Library places strain on finances because cannot come out of endowments</td>
<td>committee to monitor problems, etc.. it is a decision making body, reports to Management Committee for money etc… College academic staff sit on both. <strong>267</strong>: Hind will not affect the college.</td>
<td>each year group on library committee.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>407</strong>: IT has raised user expectations which cannot be met.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>