

ABSTRACT

CO-OPERATION AMONG CARIBBEAN THEOLOGICAL LIBRARIES:
A CASE STUDY

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This study set out to determine whether co-operation exists among the libraries of six theological colleges in the Caribbean, four of which are in Jamaica, one of which is in Barbados and one of which is in Trinidad and Tobago. The second purpose of this study was to identify potential areas for further co-operation. The third purpose of the study was to fill a gap in the literature since very little has been written on theological libraries in the Caribbean.

The objectives of this study were:

- (1) to ascertain whether co-operation exists among the selected theological libraries;
- (2) to identify the areas in which there may be co-operation;
- (3) to ascertain the opinions of librarians and administrators of the selected theological colleges towards co-operation;
- (4) to identify the existing factors in the libraries under study which are liable to promote or hinder co-operation;
- (5) to make recommendations on possible areas of (further) co-operation.

The study is based on the qualitative method and takes the form of a case study. Data was gathered via documentary analysis, a questionnaire and unstructured interviews.

Co-operation exists at a national level, namely among the four libraries in Jamaica. On the other hand, there is no co-operation at the regional level.

In general, those interviewed (librarians and administrators of the theological colleges) were in

favour of co-operation, though librarians seemed to be more attuned to opportunities for co-operation. The factors which foster co-operation are: geography, strong links between parent institutions, the use of CDS-ISIS software as a common platform and a vibrant national information system. The barriers to co-operation appear to be geography, finance, the small number of research students in the colleges comprising CATS, preference for an alternative network, the use of incompatible software, denominationalism, the absence of librarians from CATS meetings and a focus on preparing students to become ministers rather than on theological education more broadly-speaking.

Keywords: Library co-operation; Institute for Theological and Leadership Development; United Theological College of the West Indies; Jamaica Theological Seminary; Caribbean Graduate School of Theology; Zenas Gerig Library; St. Michael's Theological College; Codrington College; Regional Seminary of St. John Vianney and the Uganda Martyrs.