

Blessing or curse?

Library manager: Library Week?

Library staff: [Silence]

Library manager: Library Week!

Library staff: Too busy.

Library manager: Library Week!!!

Library staff: What do you want?

Library manager: Something more than balloons.

Library staff: [Silence and deep reflection]

At Löhe Memorial Library in North Adelaide, Library and Information Week in the past had been something to which we had given a perfunctory wave but to which we had given no real acknowledgment. Struggling for recognition and funding, perhaps it was time for the wallflowers to put on their party dresses and join the dance. But as a theological library, we needed a party theme reflective of our distinctive nature. Hence — *Libraries are a blessing.*

After some thought and much work, Library and Information Week at Löhe Memorial Library consisted of:

- posters and banners proclaiming 'Libraries are a blessing';
- a quiz involving questions such as

'what was the name of Martin Luther's dog?' with a prize for the winner from The Open Book;

- bookmarks with a distinctively biblical theme and cartoon — 'Blessed are they who return their books on time';
- a monastically-themed invitation to morning tea in the library for faculty and staff with Dr Philip Davies from Sheffield Academic Press as a surprise guest speaker;
- daily e-mails initially to campus staff and subsequently to Australian and New Zealand Lutherans giving, in intercessory form, reasons why we should count our blessings for our library;
- a display of a variety of the library's 'blessed' resources. A keyword search came up with gems such as Matthew Fox's *Original blessing*, Carol Ochs' *The Noah paradox: time as burden, time as blessing* and a video on Bach featuring Brian Blessed; and

- a 'blesséd' policy, highly popular with students of 'forgiving' fines and welcoming lost books back to the fold.

The feedback to our efforts was positive and gratifying.

One of our ex-seminarians responded by e-mail with a touching tribute to our work. 'Thank you for the info on Australian Library Week and the celebrations at Löhe. Thanks also for the wonderful prayers. We are certainly blessed to have such a resource at our fingertips.'

One of our faculty asked when the next morning tea in the library was scheduled. One of our patrons gave us a packet of cream biscuits as thanks for our efforts.

Small blessings maybe but we feel that we are truly blessed to be able to serve, educate and inform. Thanks to our Library Week initiatives, we are convinced that libraries are a blessing. Thanks be to God.

Lavinia Gent

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