

Book Review

McIntosh, Lawrence D. *Religion and theology: a guide to current reference resources*. Wagga Wagga: Centre for Information Studies. Charles Sturt University - Riverina, 1997. 251pp. ISBN: 0-949060-37-2. \$45.00 plus \$5.00 p&h per order from the Centre for Information Studies.

How often, as a librarian, have you had a student tell you : "but I don't know where to start!?" In his retirement Lawrence McIntosh continues his ever valuable contribution to theological librarianship in this, his latest publication.

Religion and theology "is designed to introduce students, teachers, librarians, and others to current reference resources in the fields of religion, religions, and theology" (p.vii). The appeal is broad - to the student of religious studies in university departments of religion, and to the theological student at seminary or theological college. Members of theological teaching faculties will use this volume to advise students on suitable resource materials for essays / research papers. For librarians it will become the first point of reference in assisting the 'fractious student' (as described by Andrew Hamilton in his 'launch' address, 16 April 1997) who doesn't know where to start when confronted by a bewildering array of resources. This volume will not only assist the librarian in reference work, it will also function as a current checklist for the development of reference and periodical collections.

Although thorough and broad-ranging in its scope, obviously a work such as this can never be comprehensive but the wisdom and insight of Dr McIntosh's long experience as a librarian is clearly seen in the calibre of his selectivity. With the objective of being informative, reliable and up to date, the author has concentrated on items published between 1980 and 1995. As stated, "some older titles ... are included simply because they have been neither superseded nor surpassed." (p.xi). While the coverage is international, useful both to local users and to overseas scholars and librarians, particular attention has been given to resources of significance to the study of religion and theology in Australia and New Zealand, with an emphasis on the nature, history and status of religions in this region.

The work is divided into two parts and into fourteen chapters. Part 1 lists general reference resources; Part 2 deals with specific subjects in religion and theology. Arrangement is therefore by subject, divided by types of material. The final chapter comprises a list of religious and theological periodicals.

Religion and theology will no doubt become a standard work in all theological and religious collections. Future generations of students, teachers and librarians will be indebted to Lawrence McIntosh for this valuable research tool.

Lynn Pryor