

The object of subjects : some common theological subject heading problems

Part Three : Architecture, Bible, Conversion.

Philip Harvey

1. Church buildings and church architecture pose special tests. When ascribing the heading 'Church architecture' from the Library of Congress subject headings we need always to be aware if the material deals with a particular style or period (e.g. Architecture, Gothic, Architecture, Cistercian), if it is architecture of a particular place (e.g. Church architecture - Sweden & Architecture, Swedish), and if it deals in special forms or details (e.g. Narthex, Baptisteries). These more specific facts are sometimes overlooked but are crucial for better subject access. Church buildings has a blurry relationship with Church architecture. The given subdivisions for Church buildings (e.g. Heating and ventilation, Recreational use) suggest the heading is used for everything to do with upkeep and use of those buildings.

The list of narrower terms however is full of names for the materials used to build them (e.g. Brick churches, Half-timbered churches) and the names of the denominations that constructed them (e.g. Huguenot church buildings, Presbyterian church buildings), suggesting also a special distinction is being made between architecture in its design and construction sense and buildings in their factual entity. There has recently been a need to propose a new subject heading for UCA churches with the elongated appearance: Uniting Church in Australia church buildings. This would seem to scrape in, judging by the examples given, though it would be worth knowing if some technicality should disallow it.

2. People in the Bible create their own problems. The Rule Interpretations state: " When the heading for a mortal mentioned in the Bible conflicts, and the conflict cannot be resolved by the addition of another qualifier (e.g.AACR2Rev. 22.8A1, 22.13A), add in parentheses the term "Biblical" plus the designation of the major Biblical category that fits the person (e.g. "(Biblical prophet), "(Biblical patriarch)"). If the person does not fit one of the major Biblical categories, use "(Biblical figure)."" This raises the question, what are the major biblical categories? No list of these is available. The catalogue at the Joint Theological Library currently has six that are known of: (Biblical judge), (Biblical leader), (Biblical matriarch), (Biblical patriarch), (Biblical personification), and (Biblical prophet). If a new mortal in the Bible requires a subject heading it means there are these six to use as models, or else the cover-all (Biblical figure). If anyone knows of others we would all be grateful to hear about them.

3. Converts have gone through a universal conversion. The heading 'Converts' now refers to anyone converted from one thing to anything else, where once it referred specifically to Christian converts. That very large group of people is now represented by 'Christian converts' and has the scope note once attached to 'Converts': "Here are entered general works on converts to Christianity." This is going to involve cunning global changes on some systems. It is one more example of the equalising of religion in LC, so that 'Christian converts' is the equivalent of 'Jewish converts', 'Muslim converts', and so on. In keeping with this change, we now have 'Christian converts from Buddhism' or whatever, where once we had the simpler 'Converts from Buddhism'. For conversion from one branch to another of Christianity itself the headings remain as they were, the scope note stating: "Works on persons affiliating upon conversion with a particular denomination are entered under headings of the type Anglican converts; Catholic converts; etc." In like fashion, the heading 'Proselytes and proselyting, Jewish' has been replaced by the more effective 'Jewish converts'. The heading 'Converts' itself now represents "general works on persons who have changed their religious affiliation or adopted a new religious affiliation." (Theology cataloguing bulletin, v.8, no.1, Nov. 1999).

Philip Harvey
Joint Theological Library
Melbourne, Victoria



A review

New Norcia studies journal no.8, 2000 is a journal of papers celebrating the fascinating history and lifestyle of the New Norcia area. Professor Peter Spearritt, Director of the National Centre for Australian Studies at Monash University has written:

New Norcia studies is one of Australia's most intriguing annuals, reflecting on both the activities of the monastery and its impact on the surrounding community. Issue no.8 ranges from an account of the Aboriginal Studies programme at the New Norcia Education Centre to Kevin Seasoltz's article on "A Monastic geography of time and place". Readers interested in Australia's social and cultural history will find much to engage them in this issue.

An article on the "mission Farm" by former Farm Manager, Keith Hunt, gives an insight into the farming practices in the area over the past 28 years, while the story of a young Belgian who wished to enter the Benedictine Order at New Norcia makes interesting reading. The effects of the Spanish Civil War on the Spanish monks of New Norcia is dealt with in a sympathetic manner by Isobel Perez-Molina. Daniel O'Connor's paper on "Biography as history and Abbot Salvado of New Norcia" may change your expectations of the next biography you pick up.

The journal is available from the Archivist, Benedictine Community of New Norcia, New Norcia WA 6509 (email: archives_nn@hotmail.com) priced AUD20.00 plus postage \$4.00 within Australia and \$9.00 overseas.