

THE 1990 SURVEY OF THEOLOGICAL LIBRARIES IN AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND

I am preparing a directory of theological libraries and religion and theology collections in libraries in Australia and New Zealand. By mid-1989 I had been working on this directory for about eighteen months, and then the work took a completely new turn because of conversations I had with Dietrich Borchardt (ex-La Trobe University librarian) and Dr Lawrence McIntosh (Joint Theological Library). They both questioned me about my decision to limit the book to Judeo-Christian collections. I then had a sleepless night which I spent worrying about repeating all the work I had already done (which turned out not to be the case), the difficulty of finding the information I needed (another unfounded fear), and the extra work I would have to do (which turned out to be even more than I imagined). The need for information on the libraries of non-Christian groups was obvious as was the lack of information on the libraries of small Christian groups, so I took heed of the advice and began work as quickly as possible to avoid future sleepless nights and to stop myself thinking of the enormous task ahead.

So where do you start looking if you need information on Islam, Hinduism the Christian Israelites or the Brethren? I quickly found that there was little information in existing directories and few people who could help, but much enthusiasm for seeing the results of my work. The most useful source was Ian Gillman's 'Many faiths, one nation'^a which describes faiths in Australia and gives contact addresses. So I began by writing to the state representative (or the national representative if there was not a state branch) of each group listed by Gillman. I omitted the Uniting, Lutheran and Liberal Catholic Churches because I have sufficient contacts with these groups. In fact, I had already compiled a list of more than 300 collections, many of which belonged to the groups I wrote to, but I decided to re-cover some of the same ground. Then I went

^a Gillman, Ian 'Many faiths one nation. A guide to the major faiths and denominations in Australia.' Sydney: William Collins, 1988.

to the yellow pages of the phone book of every capital city in Australia, also Wellington and Auckland, and wrote to groups listed under 'organizations - church and religious'. Then I wrote to the head of every diocese and order in the Roman Catholic Church in Australia^b, and to those Anglican dioceses in Australia and New Zealand not listed in Ian Gillman's book. By this time I had written (using the word-processor) more than 500 letters (including about 50 to New Zealand: I still hope to find more New Zealand addresses to write to) and realized that, de facto, I had carried out 'The 1990 Survey of Theological Libraries in Australia and New Zealand'. I realize that this title is not strictly accurate because, as you can see from the example, I have not asked for details of the library but only for an address and a contact name: the result of the survey will be a list of all libraries I will contact regarding entries for the directory.

I am grateful to the people who have replied to my letters. So far (Easter 1990) I have received about 200 replies, including some wonderful (literally) letters which could have been written by John Updike's 'S'.^c

The replies will be useful for the directory and indicate many collections not listed in any library directory. Some examples are: Assemblies of God, Brethren, Christian Revival Crusade, Church of the Nazarene, Hindus, Muslims, Brethren, Quakers, Saints Church.

I hope to complete the directory by late 1990 and see it published early in 1991.

^b Using addresses listed in the 'Official directory of the Catholic Church in Australia 1988.' Sydney: E.J. Dwyer, 1988. I am grateful to the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference and the Conference of Leaders of Religious Institutes who paid for the postage of these letters.

^c Updike, John 'S. A novel.' London: Andre Deutsch, 1988.

SAMPLE LETTER

7/2 Edward Street
Hawthorn Vic 3122
January 1990

Dear Sir

I am writing a directory of theological libraries and religion and theological collections in libraries in Australia and New Zealand and would appreciate your assistance.

I would like to know the addresses of all libraries in Australia. Please only include libraries which can be used by the public.

I would like the address of each library with the name of a person I can write to for further information. I don't need other details about the library nor the titles of books. Please enter the addresses of libraries and the names of contact people on the reverse of this letter and return it to me as soon as possible.

I enclose a self-addressed envelope.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Yours sincerely'

Coralie Jenkin.