

discuss with you what references/resources might be useful in your research work. The Information Services Section locates materials and answers reference queries received by telephone, letter or onsite visit, and will undertake online searches of overseas databases for a fee. There is a large reference collection in the Main Reading Room, 725 serial titles on open access(latest issue only) and an array of CD-ROMs. Special interest tours for groups of people can be organised, if arranged in advance. We would be happy to hear from members coming to Canberra and wanting to see the collections but please write or call first. The telephone number for the telephone information service is (06) 2621 434; 2621 266. Dawn Melhuish can be contacted on (06) 2621 316.

We are confident that this restructure will provide a better service to our users, both offsite and onsite. As the collections become more complex and the catalogues become larger it becomes more difficult for users to find easily and quickly the information they need. For the Library's collections and for referral to other collections, we hope that subject specialisation will be more effective for our users and will exploit the Library's riches for more people.

RELIGION COLLECTIONS IN THE NATIONAL LIBRARY

Dawn Melhuish, Subject Librarian

Within the Australian standard zero to five description of collection strengths, works classified at the National Library in Dewey class 200, Religion, are mainly at levels 1 and 2. While religious thought does not fall into the central aims of the collections, and so collecting is limited, this basic information collecting can support general inquiries and study in many fields of religious thought and history. Devotional and evangelistic writings are collected at a very minimal level (level 1) as are religious writings from or relating to areas of lesser geographical priority. From geographic areas of higher priority, the collecting is at basic information

level (2) rising to research level (4) for the social and historical aspects of religious life. Also at the research level is general material supporting the understanding of the development of the church in Australia.

The Library has a wide collection of Bibles from a facsimile of the Gutenberg Bible (Rbf093 BIB) to modern translations into a variety of languages, particularly those issued by the Bible Society. A facsimile of a magnificently illuminated Latin manuscript of the Bible was presented to the Governor General by Pope Paul VI in 1963. This bible with exquisitely detailed plates, some in rich colour, was produced between 1455 and 1461 before printing reached Italy. It was deposited in the National Library by the Governor General for all Australians. (Rbf 096 B582). Other Bibles of great interest include:

- A 1526 printed version of the Vulgate Bible with woodcut illustrations (RbfCLI 3823)

- A 1562 copy of the Great Bible (RBq MISC 296)

- Two original editions of the Douay Bible, the version used by English speaking Roman Catholics for over 300 years (RB 220,52 BIB and RB CLI 5618,520)

- A miniature bible (1895), 2cm high, in a metal case with a magnifying glass set into the front. (RS MIN 225.52 B582)

- A limited edition copy of the Four Gospels, published in 1931 by the Golden Cockerel Press, beautifully illustrated with 65 wood engravings by Eric Gill.

- A limited edition facsimile of the Mainz Psalter of 1457.

- A Latin version of the Psalms, published in Paris in 1587 (Rbf CLI 3824)

The Salvation Army recently donated two bibles to the Rare Books collection. Religious material from a wide variety of sources features strongly in Rare Books. Several formed collections have been purchased over the years, giving the Library sUP, ngth in 17th and 18th century religious history and theology. The Protestant De Vesci family collected their library in Ireland from the seventeenth to nineteenth centuries, and religion featms prominently. The oldest complete book in the National library, a 1478 Venice edition of the *Legenda aurea*, or lives of the saints, is in this collection.

The Clifford collection from the country house library of the noble English Catholic Clifford family of Ugbrooke Park, in Devon, shows the variety of the interests of the family from the sixteenth to the early nineteenth centuries. The Library has the legacy of their keen interest in religious debate and social and political issues. The Kashnor collection, the Oxford and Cambridge Clubs pamphlets, and the Irish pamphlets collection covering the 1800's are social history collections with religion very much a part of the political history. The Jesuit Collection, covering the sixteenth to twentieth centuries, deals specifically with Jesuit matters, the history of the Society, and works of theologians, philosophers and the Fathers of the Church. This collection is housed in both Rare Books (to 1800) and the general stacks. The Cross collection, an Anglican collection from the Library of Dr F Cross, with pre and post 1800 titles, is in the subject areas of patriotic studies, liturgy, church history, biblical studies, canon law and cathedrals.

The Ephemera collection contains several folders of pamphlets on a wide variety of faiths.

The National Library's religious collection of about 20,000 monographs and 100 serial titles should work well in conjunction with the more specialised theological libraries.