

World Catholic Federation for the Biblical Apostolate

No. 1
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1986

Bulletin

*Sei
verbum*

The Biblical Apostolate in Brazil

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Opening of the International Centre for Formators in the Biblical Apostolate (p. 9–10) ·

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English Edition

The World Catholic Federation for the Biblical Apostolate (WCFBA) is an international fellowship of Catholic organizations involved in biblical pastoral work. The members foster mutual service among all local churches.

Translation and distribution of Catholic and interconfessional editions of the Bible in simple language, in cooperation with bible societies throughout the world, is part of this service.

Furthermore, it is the intention of the WCFBA to promote biblical studies, to support the production of pedagogical aids for a better understanding of biblical texts, and to assist in the formation of ministers of the Word, such as biblical animators, lectors and catechists, suggesting ways to form bible groups and recommending the use of both mass and group media to facilitate their encounter with the Word.

The Federation wishes to promote a dialogue also with people who believe only in human values, as well as to encourage an encounter with the sacred writings of other religions. Through such encounters the revealed Word of God can offer a more profound understanding of God and of human life.

The Federation appeals to everyone to add their personal and community support to this great task.

*+ Alberto Ablondi, Bishop of Livorno
President of the WCFBA*

*"Easy access to Sacred Scripture should be provided for all the Christian faithful"
(Dei Verbum, 22).*

GENERAL SECRETARIAT
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The World Catholic Federation for the Biblical Apostolate
is an "international Catholic organization of a public
character" (cf. Code of Canon Law, 312.1.1).

WORD-
EVENT

DEI
VERBUM

BULLETIN DEI VERBUM is a quarterly publication in English, French and German. The Spanish edition will continue to be produced by the WCFBA Regional Office for Latin America under the title "La Palabra Hoy".

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Dear Members and Friends of the World Catholic Federation for the Biblical Apostolate,

As you can see, our publication "Word-Event" has completely changed its appearance and now has the form of a simple bulletin. This change enables us to publish it simultaneously in four languages: English, Spanish ("La Palabra Hoy"), French and German, and enhances the "worldwide" character of our Federation.

The change is only an outward one; the new Bulletin pursues the same aims that Word-Event did - the main one being to serve the members of the Federation. It hopes to encourage an exchange of experiences and information, and to make new contacts which might stimulate and assist the members in their biblical-pastoral work.

This year marks the 20th anniversary of the publication of DEI VERBUM, the Vatican Council document which led to the founding of the Federation. The main purpose of the Federation is to realize the practical guidelines laid down in DEI VERBUM, and the idea came to us to name our new bulletin after this document. These two Latin words now belong to the heritage of the Federation and may help to remind us of its reason for being.

In this first number of BULLETIN DEI VERBUM you will find information sent to the General Secretariat. The Bible is no luxury object in Brazil: it gives life to a whole people (p. 4-6). The lively presentation of various methods for introducing bible reading to groups could be an impulse to biblical animators in many countries (p. 11-14). The opening of a Biblical-Pastoral Centre in Nemi is a very significant event. A leaflet containing further information on this centre has been included with the bulletin, and you will also find this information printed for photocopying purposes (p. 9-10). We would be grateful for any further reflections and ideas on the theme Bible Sunday (p. 8).

As you see, BULLETIN DEI VERBUM is composed of contributions sent to us by you, the members of the Federation. Its future depends on your interest and on the support which you can provide.

Thank you for the goodwill with which you receive this first issue. Please let us know how it can be further developed and improved upon.

The Editorial Team

THE BIBLICAL APOSTOLATE IN BRAZIL

At the present time our Federation has 61 full members - biblical organizations delegated by the bishops' conference of their country - and 143 associate members comprising other organizations. It is represented in 78 different countries.

The editorial team of Bulletin DEI VERBUM has composed a questionnaire directed at all the members of the Federation in order to collect all possible information on their biblical activities. The answers to this questionnaire will be published in the next few numbers of Bulletin DEI VERBUM. Our aim is to help members to get to know each other better, and to further their contacts and exchange of experiences.

Members of the Federation have already agreed to provide reports of their biblical-pastoral and biblical apostolate activities for Bulletin DEI VERBUM. To start this new series Fr. Gilberto Gorgulho, op, of the Department of Catechesis of the Episcopal Conference of Brazil (full member of the Federation) has sent us the following description of the biblical apostolate in his country.

In the new Bulletin we wish to report on some of the characteristic work done in our biblical apostolate during the past year.

First of all, however, an indication of the way in which the World Catholic Federation for the Biblical Apostolate (WCFBA) is linked with the Church of Brazil. The Department of Catechesis of the Brazilian Episcopal Conference (CNBB) is the central organ and driving force of the entire biblical apostolate. This department also maintains contact between the CNBB and the Federation. It has a representative in the Executive Committee. Coordination of the biblical pastoral organizations and institutions has been temporarily taken over by the Serviço do Animação Bíblica (SAB).

Biblical apostolate work is included in the pastoral plan and evangelization task of the various dioceses. One of our typical endeavours is to try to read the Bible in such a way that it sheds light on our pastoral work and gives it depth. The reading of the Bible by the poor, living in basic communities and fighting for their human dignity as God's Children, is the explanation of all our efforts and exertions to interpret God's Word and to pass the whole message on to God's People.

In this connection, I wish to list some of the initiatives started this year.

MONTH OF THE BIBLE

In Brazil, September is the Month of the Bible. It is a month of intensive prayer and petitioning. It creates a link with the "Action of Brotherhood" which we hold during Lent. During the Month of the Bible we try to continue this action and to deepen one of its major points.

The SAB has been in charge of coordinating the aid and activities of the Bible Month for years now, and we give it great recognition and consider it an important element of the biblical apostolate.

1. The realization of this month of intensive biblical apostolate is, first of all, the result of the encouragement and bringing-together of various endeavours. It unites the efforts and preparatory work of the SAB and CEBI (Centro de Estudos Bíblicos, directed by Fr. Carlos Mesters, oc). These two bodies bring the contributions made by biblical scientists and biblical leaders onto the same level. Through united efforts, resource material has been worked on and prepared for distribution to the basic ecclesial communities (CEB).
2. The main theme of each Bible Month attempts to provide answers to the most burning problems of our time. This year, the most important issue for our people is the working out of a new constitution. The pastoral planning offices are trying to get the people to work together on a constitutional reform decisive for the future of both the individuals and the nation. The text chosen for this year, therefore, was "The Law of the Covenant" (Ex 20-23). The SAB directed all the preparation work; meetings and study courses. It also produced a brochure in which the origin and meaning of the ancient laws of Israel are explained. The brochure shows how the law came from the lives of the people and aimed at forming a people in which justice and solidarity reigned. Israel's laws did not come from "above", nor did they come from the power of the state. They came from "below", from the people. They are an expression of the support of human dignity and human rights, and they are the personification of the living God who comes to liberate and unite his people (Ex 3:7; Ex 22:17-30; Is 1:17). This brochure can be obtained from the SAB in Belo Horizonte.

BIBLE COMMENTARY

For about five years now a group of exegetes, who are also active in the biblical apostolate, have been meeting to deepen the bible work done in seminaries and theological institutes. This group also tries to make biblical science accessible to the popular biblical apostolate.

The group of exegetes has met once annually during the past few years. One book or one part of the Bible was worked on during each meeting. On these occasions the attempt was made to explain the Bible from the viewpoint of the "option for the poor". In this way, various books were dealt with: Proverbs, Genesis, Deuteronomy, Philemon, Ruth, Judges and the Gospel Parables.

Before long the need was felt for an organic integration in the people's biblical apostolate, and this was brought about by the biblical animators, particularly those from the CEB. The first concrete goal was based on this: the publication of the "Biblical Studies" (Estudos Biblicos, Editora Vozes, Petropolis). This has taken the form of brochures intended for biblical animators. Nine brochures have appeared since then. Again, the themes are orientated towards a Bible reading based on the option for the poor and on the discipleship of Christ (cf. Mk 8:27ff).

This work was accompanied by a growing recognition of the need to provide the biblical apostolate and the basic communities with good resource material, as also suggested in DEI VERBUM 21-26. In this way the project of a biblical commentary was brought into being: a commentary based on the option for the poor who are the carriers of the Good News and the concerns of Jesus (Cf. Mt 11). In the basic communities today, the Bible is read, listened to, studied, explained and lived. It helps the poor to find their self-confidence and allows them to understand their reality and to correct and influence society. It also permits them to find their place in this world. It gives a voice to those who couldn't be heard and lived on the edge of society. The poor used to have to say "yes" to everything: they were unfamiliar with the word "no". The Bible taught them the word "no", and they use it, too. Thanks to the Bible, they have learned to differentiate and to take the good and leave the bad. Thanks to the Bible, the poor know that they are a people. They are no longer unknown and nameless creatures who cannot move or orientate themselves in this world. They have the confidence given by their great numbers, their solidarity. They suffer together and must free themselves together. For

them, the Bible is the book of hope for liberation.

This new Biblical Commentary draws its support from the already existing ones. However, it takes the side of the "receiver" of the Bible to a greater extent, the side of the poor and the basic communities. An ecumenical group of exegetes took over the work of editing the Commentary, and its scientific part is incomplete and faulty in the way that every science is provisional and one-sided. Yet the series of Commentaries is on a level with Church standards as well as with modern science.

Still to be mentioned is the fact that the experts who edit these Commentaries have all had a long spell of practical experience with basic communities. Their popular interpretation of the Bible may be faulty and incomplete. The group cannot, however, be accused of lacking contact with the basis. Its teachings are also in keeping with those of the modern Church.

At the present time, the poor of Latin America have few of their own biblical animators, taken from their own people. Hardly any of the qualified specialists are natives of the country, blacks, poor women, farmers or workers. We hope, however, that a time will come when the Bible is commented on and made known by the poor themselves, without the help of the "mediators".

The authors of the Commentary have never considered producing a new, independent bible course. Their Commentary is only a work tool and an aid. It does not replace the other Commentaries: this was not the intention of the authors. Its purpose is to help all those who run bible courses in the Church and in the basic communities.

The following commentaries have been published since then and have received a very positive echo:

- INTRODUCTION TO THE BIBLE COMMENTARY: (Bible reading from the viewpoint of the poor). Rev. José Comblin, the publisher, describes the thoughts and intentions of the ecumenical group.
- The Book of ZECHARIAH (The coming of the poor Messiah). Rev. Gilberto Gorgulho, op, shows how Zechariah portrays the synthesis of the faith of the poor and of a hope for the coming of the poor Messiah. When reading the Bible, it is necessary to take as point of departure the poor Messiah who proclaims the dominion of the poor in the course of history.

- The Book of HAGGAI: The Lutheran professor Dr. Milton Schwantes introduces the work and message of the prophet Haggai at the time of the Persian rule. This is intended to strengthen the will of resistance, and to draw a picture of a free people after the liberation as well as of the search of God's People for their ideal at the time of the exile.
- The NEW TESTAMENT COMMENTARY by Rev. José Comblán. We have begun with the publication of those books which assist the poor in reading the Bible: Philippians, Philemon, Colossians.
- The Books of RUTH and ESTHER will appear soon. These two books intend to show the importance of the role of women in the history of God's People.

The publication of the Commentaries will be accompanied by an offer of other biblical aids. In this connection, mention should be made of a dissertation on Sarah and Abraham by Pastor Dr. Milton Schwantes as well as of a new interpretation of Genesis. This Commentary is a challenge for the reader. Is a sociological reading method for the stories about the patriarchs of Genesis possible? The examples given (Gen 12:1-4; 12:10-20; 13; 17) are very promising for this new method of interpretation. The book can be obtained from Editora Vozes, Petrópolis.

The same group also brought about a meeting of Latin American exegetes interested in the new form of Bible interpretation and in popular biblical apostolate. The meeting took place at the Theological Faculty of the Methodists in São Paulo from 5-7.6.1986. It was the first attempt at an exchange of thoughts and experiences on the Latin American level. The project of starting up a larger organization with a view to widening popular biblical apostolate was conceived here, as was the idea of a South American review for Bible interpretation. We will report on all this at the first opportunity.

THE BIBLE AND THE BASIC ECCLESIASTICAL COMMUNITIES

In order to understand the importance and meaning of the biblical apostolate in Latin America one must incorporate this into the people's movement and into the Church life of the CEB of Brazil. Without these vital connections, bible interpretation as well as the biblical apostolate itself would remain meaningless and powerless. We believe, therefore, in the necessity of a precise knowledge of the Sixth Meeting of the Brazilian CEB for a better understanding of the tasks and aims of the biblical apostolate. The theme chosen for this meeting was

a matter of great concern to all the CEB in Brazil: the problem of land-ownership! Hence the motto of the meeting, which was held in Trindade, Estado de Goiás, was "God's People in search of the promised land".

The theme for the first day was "A new outlook on being a Church". Emphasis was made that the Bible is a true companion and assistant in the fight for law and justice. The second day had as its motto "The fight for a new society": a society in which all people and all races are equal and have equal rights. A point was made of the important role of Christians in political work. Other important matters such as the problem of the Indios in Brazil, the Blacks, and the liberation of women were dealt with.

For many, the CEB are like a new empire, the heart of a new society, a piece of God's promised land. It was notable that a great many Protestant Christians and Christians from other churches took part and were full of praise for the ecumenical spirit of the meeting.

A detailed report of the meeting can be obtained from us.

*

We hope that this first activities report will open the way to a greater exchange of experiences helpful for the liberation and life of a people whose path leads on from hope to hope.

Rev. Gilberto Gorgulho, op
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CEP 01235
São Paulo
Brazil

NEWS FROM THE GENERAL SECRETARIAT OF THE FEDERATION

THANK YOU TO ROBERT DELANEY

Robert Delaney is leaving the General Secretariat after spending 12 years in the service of the Federation. He is well known to our readers as the editor of our review WORD-EVENT, for which he has been responsible since its very beginning. Now he is returning with his family to his homeland where he will work for Franciscan Communications.

It is unnecessary to recall to what extent "Bob" has influenced the Federation and its development through his personality and activities. Our heartfelt thanks go to him for all that he has done to further the growth and expansion of the biblical apostolate throughout the world. We know that he will not forget the Federation, and also that the Federation can still profit greatly from his advice. Anton Steiner, op, a member of the Executive Committee who has worked together with Bob for the Federation for many years, has been asked to express gratitude in the name of all.

Dr. Robert Delaney ended his term of employment at the General Secretariat of the WCFBA, Stuttgart, in November 1986. In 1974 John van der Valk, sdb, general secretary at that time, gained him as the first qualified staff member apart from a secretary. Since then he has untiringly supported the concerns of the Federation and contributed to their growth. The staff members at the office now total eight. At the time of his arrival in Stuttgart, this California born theologian had just completed his dissertation at the Catholic Department of Theology in Münster University, West Germany. His interest in the Bible was not of the intellectual sort; he was rathermore concerned with its relevant pastoral use. While serving the Church in Mexiko and Panama (1965-1968) he had experienced the effects of an all-encompassing and liberating pastoral care oriented on the Bible.

At the General Secretariat of the Federation, Delaney was given the task of editing a quarterly revue, and thereby of making a substantial contribution towards communication between the Federation members. The editing and production of this publication, which was originally called "The Biblical Apostolate" but since 1979 has appeared, in a grander form, under the name "Word-Event", were mainly his responsibility, and he never tired of planning concepts, looking for authors, collecting material, compiling folders, writing, designing, collecting drawings and photographs, making corrections and following the entire work process into the smallest detail.

Delaney served the Federation with the fire of his enthusiasm, and this was felt by everyone who came within his radius. He was led by a vision: Study of the Bible should free Christians to discover the Kingdom of God and to work, even in social, ecological and political spheres, towards its coming. The importance of this vision to him made him call for priorities and led him to wish that some things could be of a more distinct and decisive nature. He kept trying to categorize projects and programmes in a systematic way.

Through all the meetings and gatherings at which I met Robert during the last few years I particularly came to treasure his open and sincere brotherliness. No service was too inferior for him, and none too exhausting. He

often received the thankless task of taking the minutes at meetings, a task which he carried out with the utmost concentration and reliability. I have, however, also seen him listening attentively to his conversation partner, enlivening others, doing the washing-up, and sunk deeply in prayer. Like many others, I have had a good laugh at the magic tricks which he sometimes performed of an evening.

I see his wish to take on a new assignment as an expression of his youthful faith. He has selflessly given much to the Federation, and it is my hope that also he goes on much the richer for it.

ANTON STEINER
Member of the WCFBA
Executive Committee

VISITS TO FEDERATION MEMBERS

* General Secretary Fr. Ludger Feldkämper spent four weeks from 27.5-22.6 promoting the Federation in Oceania/Pacific. He also made use of this occasion to introduce the Federation to the bishops and persons specially concerned with the biblical apostolate in Samoa, Fiji and Tonga as well as in New Zealand and Australia. This was the first time that a general secretary of the WCFBA has visited the Pacific and New Zealand. The concern of the Federation must extend itself also to these countries which, owing to their small populations or to their great distance, tend to be forgotten. A regional meeting on the biblical apostolate, to take place in Oceania in August 1987, has been planned.

* From 29.8-16.9 Frs. Piet Rijks and Marc Sevin of the General Secretariat in Stuttgart made a journey, going first to Ruanda on the invitation of the full member of this country to attend a seminar on bible translation organized by the United Bible Societies. They then went on to Zaire to consult with three associate members: Verbum Bible in Kinshasa, the Centre Saint Irénée in Kikwit and the Centre for Biblical Apostolate in Bandundu. Meetings on biblical literature and one meeting on the biblical apostolate, to which also the General Secretariat in Stuttgart and Evangile et Vie in Paris will contribute, will be held in Ruanda in August/September 1987. A course on bible translation according to the principles of Catholic translators is envisaged for the same period in Kinshasa.

QUESTIONNAIRE.....QUESTIONNAIRE.....QUESTIONNAIRE.....QUESTIONNAIRE

BIBLE SUNDAY

We are making a survey concerning the organization of "Bible Sundays". Before considering ways in which the Federation can lend its support on a larger scale to the different countries, we need to know what has already been done in this area. We would therefore be very grateful if you would assist us by answering the following questions.

1. Does your country, region, diocese or organization hold a Bible Sunday? If so, since when has this been held?
2. Is this Bible Sunday held on a fixed date or on a special occasion?
3. How is this Sunday organized?
4. Is didactic material prepared especially for the celebration of Bible Sunday? If so, who prepares it? Please describe this material or, even better, send a copy of it to the Stuttgart Office.
5. Is this Sunday organized by the Catholic Church alone, or by a Protestant Church, or ecumenically?
6. How would you evaluate the experience of Bible Sunday?

Please send your answers, at your earliest convenience, to: WCFBA General Secretariat, Mittelstr. 12, Postfach 601, 7000 Stuttgart 1, West Germany.

These questions are only intended as a guide. You are welcome to formulate your reply in any way you wish and to give any additional information which you consider useful.

QUESTIONNAIRE.....QUESTIONNAIRE.....QUESTIONNAIRE.....QUESTIONNAIRE

PROGRAMME

The programme will cover the following main areas:

1. The Bible, Word of God in the Life of the Church, in her pastoral ministry and in evangelization:
 - Faith building (interiorization of the Word of God, “lectio divina”, etc);
 - Liturgy;
 - Catechesis.
2. The Bible, Word of God in the world-wide Church:
 - Africa (e.g. oral cultures, inculturation);
 - Asia (e.g. search for Indian hermeneutics, sacred scriptures of other religions);
 - Latin America (e.g. basic ecclesial communities, liberation theology);
 - Oceania... Europe... North America...
3. The Bible, Word of God in theological reflection:
 - Word of God and sacred Scripture;
 - Word of God in the Church;
 - Word of God in the world.

4. Methods for understanding and communicating the Word of God:
 - Bible translation;
 - Exegetical methods;
 - Hermeneutical methods;
 - Communication methods.

FEES

The course fees, including board and lodging, will amount to approximately US\$ 2.700 for the 18-week course.

APPLICATION

Interested persons should write for further information / inscription before 30th April, 1987, to:

Fr. John Füllenbach, svd
Biblical-Pastoral Course
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00040 Nemi (Roma)
Italy Tel. (06)-937.83.66

Biblical-Pastoral Centre

DEI VERBUM

Course for formators in biblical apostolate and biblical-pastoral work

Nemi (Rome), 8.8. – 12.12.1987

Biblical-Pastoral Centre

DEI VERBUM

The great need for the solid formation of ministers of the Word of God immersed in the Scriptures was underlined by Pope John Paul II in his address to the Executive Committee of the World Catholic Federation for the Biblical Apostolate (WCFBA) on 7th April, 1986.

The Society of the Divine Word (SVD), as an associate member of the Federation, wishes to answer this need by sponsoring courses for 25–40 animators in biblical apostolate and biblical-pastoral work.

The courses will take place in the SVD house in Nemi. Located about 30 kilometres outside Rome in the Albano Mountains, this house has hosted international groups for renewal courses ever since 1962.

The first course will run from August 8th to December 12th, 1987, and will be in English. From August 1988 onwards, two courses of four to five months' duration are planned each year. These will be held in English, French and Spanish alternately.

AIM

The aim of the course is twofold:

1. To further the formation of those who have been involved in the biblical apostolate or in biblical-pastoral work on the local, diocesan, national or regional level;
2. To bring about an exchange of experiences in bible reading "in context" of the local Church for the benefit of the entire Church.

PARTICIPANTS

The course is generally open to both male and female biblical animators under 45 years of age.

Conditions of acceptance:

1. At least two years' involvement in the biblical apostolate or in biblical-pastoral work and an assignment from their bishop, religious superior or a person responsible for the formation of ministers of the Word to continue working in this field as formators;
2. An educational attainment of at least a Bachelor's degree;
3. A good command of the language (English for the 1987 pilot course).

DIRECTOR AND RESOURCE PERSONS

Fr. John Füllenbach, svd, who has directed the Nemi renewal courses for the past eight years, will also direct the 1987 biblical-pastoral course.

Resource persons from Rome and around the world have been invited to deal with the envisioned subject matter "in blocks". So far, the following have been contacted:

- Fr. Oswald Hirmer, Lumko Missiological Institute, Delmenville, South Africa;
- Bro. Enrique García, fsc, National Catechetical Office, Santiago, Chile, and Lumen Vitae Catechetical Institute, Brussels, Belgium;
- Fr. Paul Puthanangady, sdb, National Biblical Catechetical Liturgical Centre, Bangalore, India;
- Dr. Hans-Ruedi Weber, Portfolio for Biblical Studies, World Council of Churches, Geneva, Switzerland;
- Professors of the Pontifical Biblical Institute, Rome, Italy.

**EXPERIENCE: A COURSE FOR LEARNING HOW TO TAKE
PART IN BIBLE GROUPS (INDONESIA)**

The biblical formation of lay people, especially those engaged in responsible pastoral work, is still an important need today. In BULLETIN DEI VERBUM we wish to report regularly on endeavours undertaken in this area. Our thanks go to the Centre for Lay Formation of the Archdiocese of Medan, North Sumatra, Indonesia, for providing the following most interesting concrete description of their Basic Bible Group Course. We take this opportunity to appeal to all biblical leaders and animators to send us descriptions of their concrete experiences in order that we may put them at the service of our readers.

**REPORT ON THE BASIC BIBLE GROUP COURSE AS GIVEN
AT THE CENTRE FOR LAY FORMATION OF THE
ARCHDIOCESE OF MEDAN, NORTH SUMATRA, INDONESIA**

INTRODUCTION

The Bible is one of the foundations and guides for Christian living. For many of the faithful in the Archdiocese of Medan, however, the Bible is still a rather closed book. In order to improve this situation, the archdiocesan Bible Apostolate Team began in 1983 to set up a Bible Group Course. Its main purpose is to help the faithful to have access to the Bible in such a way that they can discover the Bible and be nourished by it in everyday life, individually as well as in groups.

The Bible Apostolate Team has already given this course quite frequently, both at the archdiocesan Centre for Lay Formation and in the parishes. The Bible Group Course consists of two parts each lasting for five days: the Basic Bible Group Course and the Advanced Bible Group Course. Since our efforts may be of help to our colleagues who are involved in the Biblical Apostolate, we would like to report our course activities, more precisely the first part, i.e. the Basic Bible Group Course, as it has been practiced in the Centre for Lay Formation.

SOME PRACTICAL NOTES

First, we would like to enumerate some practical matters:

- Every day starts with a Liturgy of the Word and ends with an Eucharistic Celebration. After supper there is a slide show which is connected with the teaching of that day.
- So that less desirable matters will not be repeated during the following days, an oral evaluation is held on the second day.
- Every day there are three sessions, each of them containing two elements, namely an individual approach to a Bible text and a sharing in groups.
- On the last day a written evaluation is made of the whole course.

STEPS OF THE BASIC BIBLE GROUP COURSE

Usually the course starts on Sunday evening. In the opening session some practical instructions are given as to the use of the Centre's facilities. Some further information is given concerning the daily programme of the course. This first session is closed with the participants introducing themselves.

THE FIRST DAY (MONDAY)

The first day begins with a brief introduction by the course leader of the meaning and purpose of the course. This is followed by a short explanation as to what will be done during the course.

The theme of the first session is: "LISTENING TO A MESSAGE". The participants hear a message, after which some questions have to be answered in order to check whether they have listened carefully or not. This exercise is meant to foster an attitude of attentive listening by way of being aware of the limitations in receiving and passing on a message. A deepening of this experience constitutes a preamble for the next session.

The second session we call: "READING THE BIBLE WITH ACCURACY". After having read Lk. 1:1-4 several times, the participants are asked to answer some questions about this text. This will help them to become aware of the fact that they often read the Bible and tend to give an explanation based more on what they already think and feel than on what the text intends to say. There is the danger that one adheres to one's own opinion and doesn't get the message that is implied by the text. This causes a distortion: the reader teaches the Bible, whereas the Bible is supposed to teach the reader.

The third session is called: "GIVING AND RECEIVING". The participants are invited to meditate on 2 Pet. 1:19-21 and to share with the group members experiences related to the verse in the text which strikes them most. They are also invited to ask for clarification of the verses which are not yet clear to them. This exercise encourages the participants to share their insights with the members of their group and to be open to the insights of others.

THE SECOND DAY (TUESDAY)

All the activities of the second day form a whole. These are meant to help the participants to know the order and form of the books of the Bible as well as to know how to look up parallel verses and texts. The second day's activities can be divided into four sections:

- To know the order and abbreviations of the books of the New Testament.
 - To know the order, abbreviations and literary forms of the books of the Old Testament including the Deuterocanonicals.
 - To look for a particular passage.
 - To look for parallel verses and texts.
- Because these activities are rather theoretical, we feel they need to be supplemented by a

meditation and a deepening. For this purpose the Liturgy of the Word in the Eucharistic Celebration is replaced by an activity which we call "sharing verse by verse". The text chosen is Mt. 7:1-5. The participants in their respective groups meditate this text verse by verse and share with the members of the group the experience of God's revelation through those verses. After this meditation the participants gather together to continue with the Liturgy of the Eucharist.

THE THIRD DAY (WEDNESDAY)

On this day, two of the activities can be said to "kill two birds with one stone". While participants are taught methodology, they are also asked to meditate on the main theme of given texts.

The first activity of this day is called "LOOKING FOR THE MAIN THEME". Participants are led to know how to look for the main theme of a given text from the Bible through the "STAR MARKING" method. Each participant is asked to make a verse by verse summary of Lk. 6:47-49. Then, in groups, they are asked to make a verse by verse summary which is agreed upon by the whole group. After that each participant is asked to mark with a star two verses which most support the theme of the text. The two verses which get the most stars are then chosen for a brief and clear statement.

The second activity uses the "READING THE BIBLE ACCORDING TO THE PPA" method. Through this method participants are asked to consider the text of 1 Pet. 2:21-25. Each participant reads the text verse by verse to see what is said there about Jesus. Then each one chooses the verse which most strikes and strengthens him/her. The results of this meditation are then shared in groups. This method encourages participants to be active, assists them in finding messages for themselves and helps them to concentrate their attention on the text.

For the next activity, participants are invited to use their heads more than their hearts. They are helped to see the composition of the text and to understand its context. For this, participants are invited to consider Lk. 2:1-21 as a play text which needs to be divided into sections or paragraphs, keeping in mind:

- the various main points,
- the various main actors,
- different places,
- different times.

This division is first attempted privately, then in groups. This method forces participants to read the text carefully so that they can discover its composition. Thus they are better able to understand the meaning of the text.

THE FOURTH DAY (THURSDAY)

In the first activity, participants are invited to "OBSERVE THE CHARACTERS" of a given text. This method can be said to form part of the method of considering the composition of a text, because the attention of the participants is

directed towards the characters in the text. Participants are asked to form groups and each person chooses to observe one character from Lk. 8:40-56. This observation is done by reading and writing what is said about and particular character, what this character does, feels and experiences. This is then read to the whole group. Thus participants are led to understand more fully the meaning of a longer text.

In the next activity, participants are asked to consider Mk. 10:46-52, using the "IDENTIFYING ONESELF WITH A PROMINENT FIGURE" method. Each participant reflects on a text, paying attention to the behaviour of each prominent figure mentioned in the text. After observing the behaviour of each prominent figure, each participant reflects on himself/herself and chooses one prominent figure whose behaviour comes close to his/her past behaviour. Based on an awareness of their behaviour, participants then privately make a resolution as to how to improve themselves and their way of life.

The third activity repeats the "STAR MARKING" method, using Mt. 13:24-30 in order to find the main theme. Our experience shows that this method is rather difficult, especially for those participants who are not used to writing, so that if it is only used once the participants' attention is directed more towards the process of executing it than to living the message. But because this method greatly helps participants to concentrate on the text, to take part in a democratic process in groups and to think about and decide upon a theme from a given text, we feel it is necessary to repeat it so that they can master it better and at the same time deepen their understanding of the message they have discovered.

THE FIFTH DAY (FRIDAY)

The first activity on the last day repeats the "identifying oneself with a prominent figure" method. The reasons for repeating this method are the same as those for finding the main theme. However, if the participants do not need this repetition, we use another method. For this repetition we use the text of Lk. 2:36-50 in exactly the same way as for the second activity of the fourth day.

In the second activity on this day, the participants are asked to consider Acts 2:42-47 using the "two signs" method. Each participant is asked to put a question mark (?) after each sentence or verse which is not clear to him/her, and to underline each sentence or verse which has struck him/her in a special way. Then the participants are divided into groups where they share questions which may arise and the result of their meditation on the verses which have struck them. The aim of this activity is that through these two signs participants may better understand the meaning of the text and also be enriched by the sharing and experiences of their fellow participants, thus drawing inspiration from the life of the Early Church.

The last activity is similar to the second activity above, but this time three signs are used and it is therefore called the "THREE SIGNS" method. Each participant is invited to consider 2 Tim. 3:14-17 and to read it several times. The signs used are: a question mark (?) after each sentence or verse which is not clear to them, an exclamation mark (!) after each sentence or verse which reveals some new understanding to them, and an arrow (→) after each sentence or verse which encourages them to perform some good action in accordance with the text. The participants then share in groups questions which may arise and the results of their meditation. Thus, participants are helped to deepen their understanding of the given text so that they may become aware of the importance of the Bible in their lives as Christians or as baptized people.

Thus ends the Basic Course on the Bible. Hopefully through this course the participants will no longer talk about the Bible or talk to the Bible, but will rather allow the Bible to talk to them and will be able to echo the Bible in their lives.

The evaluation and opinions of those who have done this course lead us to believe that the course is of great help to the participants as well as to the leaders. After each course, most participants ask that there be a follow-up course. From this it is clear that their desire to read the Bible is greatly aroused. Hopefully the Bible imbues their daily lives more and more.

Such then is our explanation of the way we carry out the Basic Course at the Centre for Lay Formation of the Archdiocese of Medan. This is our effort to foster the desire of people to read the Bible, so that they may grow ever closer to the Bible and truly make it the guide of their Christian life.

Note: We carry out this Basic Bible Group Course in two ways:

The Five Full Days System

We use this system when participants can come to the Centre for Lay Formation, or in parishes where participants can give five full days of their time. For this system we give three activities a day. (See Appendix I).

The Six Nights System

We use this system in parishes where participants cannot give five full days of their time but can attend afternoons and evenings. For this system we give two activities a day (about four hours), for instance, from 18:00 to 22:00 hrs. (See Appendix II).

Pematang Siantar, Easter 1986

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**FOR BULLETIN DEI VERBUM WE REQUIRE INFORMATION
AND ARTICLES OF EVERY POSSIBLE SORT (activity
reports; leaflets; book reviews; descriptions
of courses, workshops, etc). PLEASE DO NOT
HESITATE TO SEND TO SEND ANYTHING YOU PRODUCE,
EVEN THE MOST MODEST PUBLICATIONS, TO THE WCFBA
GENERAL SECRETARIAT IN STUTTGART.**

THANK YOU VERY MUCH INDEED

APPENDIX ISCHEME OF BASIC BIBLE GROUP COURSE FOR FIVE FULL DAYS

DAY		ACTIVITY	METHOD	TEXT
<u>One</u>	1.	Listening to a message (an accident)	Filling in a form	---
	2.	Reading the Bible with accuracy	Answering questions	Lk. 1:1-4
	3.	Giving and receiving	A verse which strikes one	2 Pet. 1:19-21
		Eucharistic Celebration	Answering one question As usual	I. Neh. 8:2-10 II. Lk. 4:14-21
<u>Two</u>	4.	Abbreviations and New Testament Library	Filling in a form	---
	5.	Abbreviations, Deuterocanonicals, Old Testament Library	Filling in a form	---
	6.	Looking for verses	Filling in a form	---
	7.	Looking for parallel verses and texts	Filling in a form	---
	8.	Eucharistic Celebration: sharing verse by verse	Sharing	Mt. 7:1-5
<u>Three</u>	9.	Looking for the main theme	Star marking	Lk. 6:32-36
	10.	Reading the Bible according to PPA	Filling in a form	1 Pet. 2:21-25
	10x	Composition of Text	Sharing text	Lk. 2:1-21
		Eucharistic Celebration: sharing or as usual	Sharing/usual	Lk. 11:9-13
<u>Four</u>	11.	Observing characters	Noting down concerning characters	Lk. 8:40-56
	12.	Identifying oneself with a prominent figure	Meditation	Mk. 10:46-52
	13.	Looking for the main theme	Star marking	Mt. 13:24-30
		Eucharistic Celebration	Sharing/usual	Lk. 11:9-13 Mt. 5:13-16
<u>Five</u>	14.	Identifying oneself with a prominent figure	Meditation	Lk. 7:36-50
	15.	The Early Church	Two marks	Acts 2:42-47
	16.	The meaning of the Bible	Three marks	2 Tim. 3:14-17
		Closing Eucharistic Celebration	As usual	2 Tim. 3:14-17 Lk. 8:4-15

APPENDIX IISCHEME OF BASIC BIBLE GROUP COURSE FOR SIX EVENINGS

EVENING		ACTIVITY	TEXT
<u>One</u>	1.	Listening to a message	---
	2.	Reading the Bible with accuracy	Lk. 1:1-4
<u>Two</u>	3.	Abbreviations and New Testament Library	---
	4.	Giving and receiving	2 Pet. 1:19-21
<u>Three</u>	5.	The Deuterocanonicals, Library and literary forms of the Old Testament	---
	6.	Sharing verse by verse	Mt. 7:1-5
<u>Four</u>	7.	Looking for the main theme	Mt. 13:24-30
	8.	Reading the Bible according to PPA	1 Pet. 2:21-25
<u>Five</u>	9.	Observing the characters	Lk. 8:40-56
	10.	Identifying oneself with a prominent figure	Lk. 7:36-50
<u>Six</u>	11.	The Early Church	Acts 2:42-47
	12.	The meaning of the Bible	2 Tim. 3:14-17

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GENERAL INFORMATION

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BIBLE TRANSLATIONS

The first stage of biblical apostolate is to provide bible translations in places where these do not yet exist. Many Federation members are engaged in this work, and BULLETIN DEI VERBUM wishes to lend its support by regularly publishing reports and information on this most important sector.

STUTTGART. Following a long period of detailed work and research, Fr. Piet Rijks has just published the first volume of a catalogue comprising all bible translations made by (or in collaboration with) Catholic translators. This volume, entitled "The Pacific", is the first of a series dedicated to the countries of the Third World: Africa, Asia, North and South America, and Oceania. The second volume, which will appear in 1987, will cover Africa. Further information can be obtained from the WCFBA General Secretariat, Mittelstr. 12, P.O. Box 601, 7000 Stuttgart 1, West Germany.

MALI: Mopti. In the diocese of Mopti in Mali, Fr. Maurice Cadilhac, wf, is preparing a translation of the Sunday Gospels in the Dogon language. This is the first Catholic publication in Dogon, a language which has provided the basis for several quite different dialects.

In the same diocese, Fr. Marcel Kevran, wf, is working on a bible translation in Donnoso, which is actually one of the Dogon dialects and is spoken by about 150,000 people.

A translation of the Sunday Readings by Fr. Benoît Bernard, wf, in Tomakan, another of the twelve Dogon dialects which is spoken by about 90,000 people in and around the town of Ségué, was published at the end of 1985. The funding agency "Swiss Lenten Fund" has accepted the financial responsibility for these various projects.

OCEANIA: Kiribati and Tuvalu Islands. Fr. Joseph Kerouanton and his team have completed their translation of the Old Testament in Kiribati which is spoken by about 60,000 people on the islands of Kiribati and Tuvalu. The financing of this work has been taken on by Missio München.

KÖNIGSTEIN (West Germany). The Children's Bible, distributed by the international funding agency "Church in Need" together with the "Pontifical Mission Society for Children", is now available in 38 languages including Chinese and the two African languages Macua (Mozambique) and Kikongo (Zaire and Angola). 11 million copies of this 64-page book have now been printed.

Church in Need has also completed the English, French and Spanish translations of a "Youth Bible" prepared by German experts. The French translation was revised by Marc Sevin of the Stuttgart General Secretariat.

SOLOMON ISLANDS: San Christobal. P. Jerry Bruns, sm, is working on a translation of the Bible in Kahua, one of the 66 languages spoken on the Solomon Islands. He is trying to obtain financial support to buy a battery-powered computer which could also be used for other translation work in which the Catholic Church is engaged.

TOGO: Dapaon. Fr. Pierre Reinhard, ofm, has been working for several years now on a translation in Moba, the language spoken by about 95,000 people in the Northeast part of the country. He is also trying to finance the printing of the Sunday Readings in Anufo, which is spoken by about 60,000 Tchokossi in North Togo and in Ghana.

CZECHOSLOVAKIA: Prag. 100,000 copies of a Catholic edition of the Bible are soon to be printed, with the permission of the authorities, in Czechoslovakian. This is an ecumenical translation with the addition of the deuterocanonical books. The organization of Central European biblical associations (Arbeitsgemeinschaft Mittel-europäischer Bibelwerke - AMB) has already contacted many persons and organizations for financial assistance.

LITHUANIA: Kaunas. A Lithuanian translation of the New Testament, made by an ecumenical team, has been in existence since 1972. Now a revision of this is in preparation, publication of which has been approved by the authorities to cover the needs of Christians. Catholic experts in Lithuania have spent several years on a translation of the Old Testament, and this is now almost finished. The American Bible Societies are supporting this project.

USA: Washington. A revised edition of the English translation of the New Jerusalem Bible was completed in September this year in the United States. It will be available at the beginning of 1987. The "New Jerusalem Bible" of 1970 took the place of a version used by the English-speaking Catholic Church for over two centuries.

SCRIPTURE STUDY OFFICE OF THE DIOCESE OF LITTLE ROCK, ARKANSAS, USA. The Scripture Study Office is particularly concerned with the education of biblical leaders for the parishes. The radiance of this Centre reaches far beyond the borders of the diocese. Biblical material compiled by the Centre's team has been distributed to 1,300 communities in USA, England, Holland, Zimbabwe and other countries. For information on the Centre's publications please write to: Scripture Study Office, 2500 North Tyler Street, P.O. Box 7565, Little Rock, Arkansas 72217, USA.

REQUIREMENTS FOR BIBLE READING (Brazil)

The Sixth Inter-Ecclesial Meeting of the Basic Communities of Brasil took place from 21-25 July this year (cf. article from Fr. Gorgulho on page 6). This meeting emphasized the importance of the Bible for members of basic communities. Based on discussions which arose during this meeting, Fr. Carlos Mesters listed the following conditions under which the Bible can affect the lives of the people:

1. **Reading in the community.** The Bible must be read in the community; it should be read with a view to both individual and community life.
2. **Reading in faith.** A reading evolving from faith in the Risen Lord who lives in our midst.
3. **Reading based on daily reality.** During the bible reading one must be aware of the struggles of the people and of the conditions under which they live.
4. **Reading of an organized people.** Only to read the Bible is worthless; the people must organize themselves to defend life.
5. **Reading with participation.** Bible reading may not become the prerogative of certain officials.
6. **A liberating reading.** A reading which fails to expose itself to the people is useless; many are not interested in the liberating message of the Bible; the mass media make the liberating vision of the Bible more difficult.
7. **A reading which respects the text.** There are people who alter and manipulate the Bible to suit their own ends.
8. **A reading which respects the people.** We are continuously trying to win the people's confidence; it has become very difficult to speak about the Bible to the people owing to the oppressiveness of their situation.

(Por tras da palavra 35 - 1986.)

EGYPT: INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE "BIBLE AND AFRICA"

An international conference under the theme "Bible and Africa" will take place in Alexandria, Egypt, in April 1987. More than 50 experts will be present at this meeting organized by the Ecumenical Association of African Theologians.

The participants will concentrate on three main aspects:

- History: Israelites and Egyptians; the Egyptian civilization and the Bible; Ethiopia's place in the Bible.
- Pastoral theology: The Bible in the mission work of the Catholic Church, Orthodox Church, Anglican Church, Protestant Churches and Free Churches.
- Biblical theology: African reading of the Bible, African biblical spirituality.

BIBLE WEEK IN THE DIOCESE OF SHILLONG (India)

Bible Sunday has been celebrated annually since 1979 in the diocese of Shillong. In April 1986 a Bible Week was held for the first time in this diocese. The programme for this week was reflected upon by five people who tried to integrate all the sectors of Church life, and who then prepared the documentation accordingly. In view of this week, the archbishop directed a letter to the Christians in his diocese underlining the importance of a spirituality rooted in the Bible, and he appealed to them to make this week a success. The results of this effort were indeed encouraging: for example, 600 young people actively participated in a meeting organized on their behalf. This week also provided a new point of departure for the biblical apostolate. In the parishes, new bible groups have formed themselves. The decision was also made to revise the Khasi language bible translation.

FIFTY-YEAR JUBILEE OF THE CATHOLIC BIBLICAL ASSOCIATION OF SWITZERLAND

"Die Bibel lebt" (The Bible Lives) is the title of a small book celebrating the 50th jubilee of Schweizerisches Katholisches Bibelwerk (Catholic Biblical Association of Switzerland). This little book does not contain scientific reports, but rather the personal witnesses of men and women of different callings and in different life situations. Various experiences with the Bible are expressed in original form. Further information on the biblical apostolate in German-speaking Switzerland can be obtained from: Bibelpastorale Arbeitsstelle, Bederstr. 76, 8002 Zürich, Switzerland.

BIBLE AND INFORMATICS

The main objective of the "Centre Informatique et Bible", Maredsous Abbey, Belgium, is the comparison of contemporary bible translations with their original sources (Hebrew, Aramaic, Greek) and with the languages used for early translations (Latin, Syrian, Arabic, etc). The team at the Centre maintains a biblical databank (multi-lingual comparisons, special aids, biblical encyclopedias). The various publications of the Centre have now been reclassified under the heading D.E.B.O.R.A. (Documentation et Etudes Bibliques par Ordinateurs et Réseaux Automatisés). A list of the publications of the Centre can be obtained from: CIB-Maredsous, 5198 Denée (Anhée), Belgium.

BOOKS AND OTHER PUBLICATIONS

ESCAPING FROM FUNDAMENTALISM by James Barr.
S.C.M. Press, 1984. Pp. 195.

This is a fascinating book and it performs a useful and overdue task, which is indicated in its title. It is overdue because the remarkable revival of evangelicalism, deeply coloured by Fundamentalism, with which we are familiar at the present day, began soon after World War II. This, I believe, is closely connected with the dominance of the United States of America whence much of evangelicalism comes. Can one see a parallel here with the resurgence of Islam over the same period? Certainly, no one with an interest in religion can afford to ignore the evangelical movement, yet few outside that tradition have taken the trouble to analyse it and to question its many assumptions before the publication of Professor Barr's important work "Fundamentalism", in 1977.

He has now followed this up with the present, much smaller, book, which he describes as pastoral rather than controversial. He is conscious that there are many who, having tried Fundamentalism, have become disillusioned and, after losing the certainty of their earlier faith, now feel there is nothing left. Barr sets out on his task not in any controversial spirit, nor even to underline the wrongness of any particular position. What he is concerned to emphasize is that the inspired character of the Scriptures does not guarantee their immunity from ALL error, though of course the divine message is preserved; that many tenets of the Fundamentalist are not legitimately derived from the text of Scripture; that, in addition, the original kerygma was not based on written texts at all but on the words of Jesus passed on through the apostles. 'The touchstone of orthodoxy about the "doctrine of Christ" must be tradition rather than scripture,' p.16. In ch. 5 Barr deals with the Canon of the Bible - which books are canonical? It goes without saying that Fundamentalists consider Roman Catholics in error by accepting the Apocrypha (most of them) as inspired and canonical.

Wherever the evangelicals, or indeed Protestants generally, get their assurance from it is not from the Bible itself, but from tradition, as indeed do Roman Catholics for their own list of books. In ch. 8 Barr discusses the historical character of the Gospels and shows that though it can be said to be historical, it is not history as we now know it and to treat it as if it makes nonsense of the text. He goes on to treat of legend and myth, particularly in relation to miracles and other events. To admit an element of myth does not betray an intention

by the writer to water down or deny the reality of the event in question as an act of God but is simply an attempt to identify the particular literary form employed by the writer. We have to re-think our idea of inspiration to take account of the realities of the literature we are considering, with its many literary forms, multiple authorship and incorrect statements.

Far from destroying the divine character of the books and their message it will be possible, perhaps for the first time, to have a really clear picture that will provide a satisfactory harmony between our view of the books and secular knowledge. To do this is not to be untrue to the Bible because the Bible never claimed in the first place what it is said to have claimed. If, in the process, the searcher for truth finds himself moving away from the evangelical position this will be, perhaps, in the first place because Fundamentalism has a view of the Bible which cannot be substantiated in the light of all the facts.

While the searcher for truth may find himself moving away from evangelicalism, Barr does not make clear what he may be moving towards, as an alternative to loss of faith. But this must not be held against the book's aim. Barr has done a hatchet job, clearing away a tangled growth of misconceptions and that is not a bad start towards finding the truth.

R.C. FULLER, Scripture Bulletin Vol. XVI, No.2.

* Oswald Hirmer and Fritz Lobinger, **THE SUNDAY READER'S LECTIONARY FOR LAY MINISTERS**, Collins, London, 1986, 672 pp.

A clear, short and precise aid for preparing the Sunday liturgy. Its accent lies in the understanding and actualization of the bible readings in the liturgy. Prepared by the dynamic biblical animators of the Lumko Missiological Institute in South Africa, this practical book is available in English.

* Robert McAfee Brown, **UNEXPECTED NEWS**, Reading the Bible with Third World Eyes, The Westminster Press, Philadelphia, 116 pp.

This stimulating little book, the work of an exegete already well known in the English-speaking world, is only available in English. Ten bible texts, carefully chosen in accordance with specific considerations, are dealt with. The fundamental perspective of the author is that of the victims, the oppressed. If one uses this same perspective in one's approach to the Bible today - a perspective which is often that of the inhabitants of Third World countries - the old texts become new again.

* Terrance Callan, **FORGETTING THE ROOT**, The emergence of Christianity from Judaism, Paulist Press, New York, 1986, 128 pp.

The author describes the process through which Christianity gradually emerged from Judaism, showing how the present relationship came into being. He concludes his study with a look at the implication of this process of separation for Jewish-Christian relations today. Those involved in ecumenical dialogue will find valuable background information for their discussions.

* W. Gruen, **PEQUENO VOCABULARIO DE LA BIBLIA**, Ediciones Paulinas/Secretariado Nacional de Catequesis, La Paz, Bolivia, 1986, 78 pp.

This welcome booklet is the translation of a Portuguese edition which was published in Sao Paulo in 1984 ("Pequeno vocabulario da Biblia"). It offers indispensable information for those just starting to read the Bible; it clarifies difficult questions, redresses frequent and habitual distortions, and draws the reader's attention to particular words rich in theological meaning which are often passed over unnoticed.

* Ghislaine Salvat, **A LA RECHERCHE DE LA LUMIERE: l'évangile selon Saint Jean**, collection "de la parole à l'écriture", No 5, Socabi/Les éditions Paulines, Montréal, 1986, 72 pp.

This simple little book, with its special pedagogical qualities, invites the reader to an active initiation into the Gospel of St. John. Greatly influenced by its country of origin, this publication could provide valuable inspiration to biblical animators working in other cultural spheres. It is particularly suitable for school children.

* **"APOSTOLAT BIBLIQUE"** No 3/86 - Bulletin du Centre Biblique Catholique pour l'Afrique et Madagascar - B.P. 2415 - Karen, Nairobi, Kenya (published in English and French)

Taken from the French edition, an article by Abbé Pascal Quedraogo on "Mass Media and Biblical Apostolate" presents a method for "introducing the Bible to children in the family".

Taken from the English edition is "How to start a gospel group and keep it active". No. 4/86 of this review is dedicated to the Sunday homilies for Advent and Christmas.

* **TA PAROLE EST NOTRE LUMIERE**, BICAM, Karen, Nairobi, Kenya, 1986, 59 pp.

This publication presents a complete report on a workshop on biblical apostolate for families, children and youth. Organized by the Centre Biblique Catholique pour l'Afrique et Madagascar (BICAM), this workshop took place in Yopougon, Ivory Coast, from 6th - 11th May 1985. The reports of the 18 participants, who came from 8 French-speaking African countries, give an indication of the richness and variety of the work accomplished in the field of biblical apostolate. The participants also drew up guidelines for their future activities.

* Centre Biblique de Lomé, **L'EVANGILE SELON SAINT MARC**, Commentaire biblique, Lomé, Togo, Cerf/Verbum Bible, 1985, 176 pp.

This publication opens a series of biblical commentaries on spiritual life in the African context. The Gospel of Marc, taken from the Jerusalem Bible, is interspersed with short commentaries which permit a preliminary discovery of the second gospel.

* Jean Pierre Prévost, **PAROLES POUR PRIER**, La Prière à l'école de l'Ancien Testament, Socabi/Les Éditions Paulines, Montréal, 1985, 126 pp.

Apart from the Psalter, the books of the Old Testament contain over 90 original prayers. These are compiled and classified here in such a way as to permit understanding of and entry into the world of biblical prayer.

* **Le Numero 56 des CAHIERS EVANGILE.**

This 56th issue in the series Cahiers Evangile (Evangile et Vie, Paris, France) is entirely dedicated to the figure of Abraham in the Bible. The study was prepared by Fr. Matthieu Collin, osb. Like most of the numbers in this series, this one will soon be translated into Spanish, Portuguese and Italian.

* Marc Sevin, **UNE VISITE GUIDÉE DE LA BIBLE, I, l'Ancien Testament**, Société d'Édition de la Famille Educatrice, Paris, 1986, 32 pp.

This very simple but beautifully illustrated little booklet provides great incentive for reading the Bible. The "guided tour of the Bible" follows the various stages in the formation of the Old Testament. Available in French.