

World Catholic Federation for the Biblical Apostolate

No. 2
February
1987

Bulletin

*Sei
verbum*

*** * * Annual Report of the general
secretary for 1986 (pages 4 – 7) * * ***

**Biblical apostolate in Zaire (pages
9 – 10 * * * A Guide to Catholic Bible
Translations (pages 11 – 12) * * ***

**First national workshop on the
biblical apostolate in Sri Lanka
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framework for gospel reading (page
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around the world (pages 16 – 20) * * ***

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).

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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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Conditions of subscription for 1987:

- Ordinary subscription: US\$ 12
- Supporting subscription: US\$ 25
- Third World countries: US\$ 8
- Students: US\$ 8

(US\$ 2 must be added if the
4 issues are to be sent airmail)

In order to cover production costs we request
all those who can to pay the supporting
subscription rate.

Do not forget to indicate in which language
you wish to receive the Bulletin: English,
French or German.

All subscriptions run annually from January
to December. Persons requesting subscription
in the course of a year will also receive the
past issues of that year. (No. 1 of BULLETIN
DEI VERBUM is part of the 1986 WORD-EVENT
subscription.)

For full and associate members of the
Federation the price of subscription is
included in the annual membership fee.

Please send your subscription fee to the
General Secretariat of the Federation
(address opposite).

Bank: Liga Bank, Speyer
Acc. No. 59820 (BLZ 54790300)

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EDITORIAL

"Since the Federation is worldwide, congratulations on producing the Bulletin in several languages!...". "The II Vatican Council document DEI VERBUM still forms the basis of our Federation; the name of the new Bulletin appears very fitting...". These two reactions sum up the different responses received since the appearance of the first number of BULLETIN DEI VERBUM. You encourage us to continue.

On reading this second number, you will doubtless be surprised at the increase in biblical activities within the Catholic world. The past year has seen a palpable rise in the number of meetings held on all levels - local, national and regional - between pastoral leaders for the biblical apostolate. This development may well continue in future years. Such initiatives originated, in the majority of cases, from Federation members. We cannot but rejoice in this, but there is still plenty of work to do in implementing the pastoral goals set down in DEI VERBUM.

Thanks to the detailed report of the general secretary (pages 4-7) you can verify that here and there dynamic structures are coming into being inside the Federation. Their purpose is not only to improve distribution of the Bible within the communities, but also to accompany the reading of it. Information concerning the latent danger of a fundamentalistic reading of the Bible and the damage resulting from this reach us from the four corners of the earth.

You can also see from this Bulletin that the biblical apostolate is developing very fast in French-speaking Africa (pages 9-10) and that cooperation between biblical animators in Sri Lanka is intensifying (page 13). You will also discover how a simple method of unknown origin enables the faithful of Oceania to understand biblical texts (page 15), and how a parish in Ireland prepares the celebration of Bible Sunday (page 16-17).

You will then be introduced to two of the Federation's full members: Thailand and Zimbabwe (pages 17-18).

Finally, items of information on work being done in the field of the biblical apostolate have been selected from reports sent to the General Secretariat (pages 17-20).

We are grateful for your participation in BULLETIN DEI VERBUM. Please send us regularly:

- reports on your activities;
- samples of your publications (translations, bulletins, reviews, study courses, correspondence courses, bible games, songs, etc.);
- descriptions of biblical events in your country.

Marc Sevin

GENERAL SECRETARY'S ANNUAL REPORT
 - 1986 -

At the outset it must be said that the scope and extent of this report cannot be but limited. Ideally, it should cover the biblical-pastoral work carried out by the Federation members. Furthermore, it should cover the activities of all the members in 85 countries! Since this is clearly an impossible task it must restrict itself to summarizing the activities of the General Secretariat, which is at the service of the members, and will deal, therefore, with organizational rather than pastoral matters. Furthermore, it concerns only those areas of activity in which the General Secretariat has been directly involved.

I. MEMBERSHIP

In 1986 the number of Federation members reached a total of 65 full members and 143 associate members. Full members accepted upon official request during the year were: New Zealand, Spain, Syria, and the Scandinavian Bishops' Conference. During the Executive Committee meeting in April, 1986, seven new associate members were admitted.

The complete list of members with addresses has now been published in the WCFBA DIRECTORY.

II. EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE AND ADMINISTRATIVE BOARD

1. EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

The Executive Committee held its 1986 annual meeting in Nemi, near Rome (7-11.4). Since a detailed report was included in the general secretary's letter of May 1986 to all members it will be sufficient to summarize the more important aspects here.

Issues emerging from the Executive Committee members' reports comprised the following:

- The realization and recognition of diversity and plurality within the biblical apostolate;
- Regional structures;
- The importance of formation.

Five official visits were made in Rome:

- To the Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity;
- To attend an audience with the Holy Father, Pope John Paul II;
- To the Pontifical Biblical Commission, which held its annual meeting during that week;
- To the Pontifical Biblical Institute;
- To the Generalate of the Divine Word Missionaries.

In his address to the EC, the Holy Father underlined what had been said by the Fathers of the Extraordinary Synod of Bishops in November 1985, namely that the Constitution on Divine Revelation DEI VERBUM had been too much neglected in the past. This fact, he pointed out, should be seen as a challenge to the Federation. In answer to this challenge the EC wrote a letter to the Holy Father, bringing to his attention the concern for a Synod on "Sacred Scripture in the Life of the Church" as resolved upon during the III Plenary Assembly in Bangalore.

The resolutions drawn up by the EC, which are intended as recommendations for all Federation members, were as follows:

- The members should promote a reflection on the nature and pastoral consequences of FUNDAMENTALISM and INTEGRISM in the use of the Bible.
- The members should assist in the development and use of Catechisms (to suit the particular age group and cultural situation) BASED ON THE BIBLE and illustrated by it.
- The WCFBA, through its members and various officers, should continue to press for the realization of a Synod on "The Bible in the Life of the Church".
- The WCFBA, through its members and various officers, should find ways to have the Bible included in the agenda of the Synod on Laity.

WCFBA President

The activities of the president, Bishop Alberto Ablondi of Livorno, Italy, who is an ex-officio member of the EC, deserve special mention here. He arranged the audience with the Holy Father and the visit to the Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity. On two occasions (24.6 and 12.12) he participated in meetings at this Secretariat dealing with the Second Edition of the Guiding Principles for Interconfessional Translations of the Bible. He likewise graced two meetings of representatives of the WCFBA associate members in Rome with his presence (21.1 and 11.12). In order to make the Federation and its biblical-pastoral concerns better known in Rome, Italy and beyond, he directed a letter to all the Italian bishops and wrote articles on the Federation and biblical apostolate for publication by the Vatican and Italian press.

Bishop Ablondi's activities, however, were not limited to Italy. On February 21st he participated in a meeting of the United Bible Societies regional secretaries in Lisbon, when he also visited the Difusora Biblica, an associate member of the Federation, and the Patriarch of Lisbon. In May (4-5) he participated in a celebration held by the French Bible Society, Paris, also visiting our member Evangile et Vie and other institutions of interest to the biblical apostolate. On August 25th, following a visit to the tomb of Cardinal Bea ("founder" of the WCFBA) in Riedböhringen in the Black Forest, he visited Archbishop Saier, Bishop of Freiburg and chairman of the Pastoral Commission of the German Bishops' Conference. The following day he

met with the members of the Scandinavian Bishops' Conference during their annual meeting, held this time in Germany. There can be no doubt that the Federation's president has the cause of the biblical apostolate very much at heart.

Regional Coordinators

Recognition must also be given to the activities and endeavours of our regional coordinators:

- Fr. César Herrera, Latin America
- Fr. Paul Puthanangady, South Asia
- Fr. Wim Wijtten, Southeast Asia
- Sr. Annuntia Im, Northeast Asia
- Bishop Antonios Naguib, Middle East.

Particularly worth mentioning are the journeys made by Fr. Wim Wijtten through Malaysia, Singapore and Thailand, and Bishop Naguib through the countries of the Middle East (Jordan, Irak, Syria, Lebanon and his home country, Egypt).

2. ADMINISTRATIVE BOARD

The Administrative Board, which is competent for financial and legal matters, met twice during the year (7.2 and 26.9). In order to relieve the precarious financial situation of the General Secretariat, Administrative Board member Frère Ferdinand Poswick made a special journey to the United States (9-17.10).

III. GENERAL SECRETARIAT

1. STAFF

The General Secretariat, situated since 1972 in Stuttgart, is the action arm of the Executive Committee and central information and service centre for the entire Federation. In 1986 it had eight full-time staff members: five senior staff members and three secretaries. The areas of responsibility are divided as follows:

- Fr. Ludger Feldkämper, svd, general secretary: contacts, coordination and promotion;
- Fr. Piet Rikjs, cssp and Fr. Günther Firlus, svd: project evaluation and finances;
- Abbé Marc Sevin and Mr. Heinz Köster: communications and publications.

Fr. Günther Firlus is a newcomer to the office, and Abbé Marc Sevin has taken over the editorship of our publications since Dr. Robert Delaney left to take up a new position with Franciscan Publications in Los Angeles, USA (Cf. last edition of WORD-EVENT and first edition of BULLETIN DEI VERBUM).

For effective coordination and collaboration within the office the staff held 12 "house meetings", with an additional "senior staff meeting" (21-23.12) in order to assess work done in 1986 and to plan for 1987.

2. VISITORS

The fact that the General Secretariat is at the service of the Universal Church can be seen from the visitors' list which, although not very long

(about 25-30), covers a great number of countries. Visitors arrived from Africa (Cameroon, Kenya, Togo, Chad), Latin America (Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Peru), Asia (India, Indonesia, Philippines) and Europe (Austria, England, Germany, Italy, Rumania).

3. JOURNEYS AND VISITS

Complementary to the visits made by representatives of WCFBA members and other people involved in biblical apostolate are the journeys and visits undertaken by members of the General Secretariat, in particular of the general secretary. We are convinced that personal contact is the most effective way to discover the true situation of the biblical apostolate, to animate biblical-pastoral activities and to promote the Federation. The following is a short summary of journeys and visits with this aim.

AFRICA

Following an invitation, Fr. Rikjs and Fr. Sevin visited Ruanda and Zaire (1-15.9)

AMERICA

Fr. Sevin and Fr. Tricard, former and present directors of Evangile et Vie, visited SOCABI and the Canadian Biblical Association in Canada (22.10-8.11)

ASIA

Fr. Feldkämper, Fr. Puthangady and Fr. Wijtten attended a meeting at the East Asian Pastoral Institute in Manila, a new associate member of the Federation, held for members of 15 national pastoral institutes of Asia/Pacific (18-23.5).

In order to investigate possible ways in which the Federation can help to meet the need for biblical apostolate in the People's Republic of China, Fr. Feldkämper and Fr. Rikjs met with Bishop Jin Luxian, Auxiliary Bishop of Shanghai, while he was visiting Germany (24.4 and 29.4). Fr. Feldkämper also attended a meeting of people concerned with China (14-16.11).

OCEANIA

Fr. Feldkämper made an extensive tour of Oceania, visiting the Pacific islands of Samoa, Fiji and Tonga as well as New Zealand and Australia (25.5-21.6). In addition to several applications for membership, both full and associate, the net result of this journey was the plan for an All-Oceania Meeting on the Biblical Apostolate sometime in the not too distant future.

MIDDLE EAST

As a follow-up to the First Regional Meeting for the Middle East in 1985, Bishop Naguib and Fr. Feldkämper visited the following countries: Jordan, Irak, Syria, Lebanon and Egypt (5-22.10).

EUROPE

AUSTRIA. The annual assembly of biblical-pastoral organizations of Central Europe (Arbeitsgemeinschaft Mitteleuropäischer Bibelwerke) held this year in Innsbruck, Austria (7-9.9) was attended by Fr. Feldkämper and Fr. Firlus.

FRANCE. On several occasions Fr. Sevin, formerly director of *Evangile et Vie*, made special efforts to introduce the Federation and its concerns to interested people in France. Particularly worth mentioning are the annual meetings of the French Catholic Federation for Biblical Studies ACFEB. Furthermore, following the Executive Committee meeting in Nemi a special meeting was held for French-speaking members with the aim of fostering better coordination.

GERMANY, DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC. Fr. Feldkämper and Fr. Rijks made a special visit following an invitation from the coordinator for biblical-pastoral work of the Berlin Bishops' Conference (3-8.11).

GERMANY, FEDERAL REPUBLIC. Fr. Feldkämper attended the annual meeting of Katholisches Bibelwerk (28-30.9). In order to make the Federation better known and to solicit financial support, he also had several meetings with members of the German Episcopate, with the secretary of the Bishops' Conference and with the chairman of the Pastoral Commission of the German Bishops' Conference. (Some of these meetings were also attended by members of Katholisches Bibelwerk and Katholische Bibelanstalt as well as a representative from the funding agencies.)

Our concerns were also brought to the attention of the German Catholic Mission Council by way of a visit to its general secretary made by Fr. Feldkämper and a presentation on the occasion of its annual meeting given by Mr. Köster.

ITALY

The importance of Rome for the Federation cannot be denied. In addition to what has been mentioned above (Cf. Executive Committee and Bishop Ablondi), Fr. Feldkämper made four further trips to Rome (one with Fr. Rijks) for visits to the Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity, the Pontifical Biblical Institute and associate members, and to attend conferences related to the biblical apostolate and the Federation, etc.

The necessity of a Rome liaison office or Federation staff member becomes more and more evident. Fr. Pietro Sessolo svd (Collegio del Verbo Divino, Via dei Verbiti 1, C.P. 5080, 00154 Roma) has not only accepted this responsibility until a better arrangement can be found, but has already provided great assistance as contact person in Rome for the Stuttgart office.

POLAND

At the request of the Arbeitsgemeinschaft Mitteleuropäischer Bibelwerke, Fr. Firlus made a special journey to Poland to survey needs and possibilities concerning the Bible.

PORTUGAL

On the occasion of a meeting with the United Bible Society regional secretaries (21-22.2)

Bishop Ablondi and Fr. Feldkämper visited the Patriarch of Lisbon and the Difusora Biblica of the Cappuchin Friars, an associate member of the Federation.

SCANDINAVIA

A journey to Scandinavia planned by Bishop Ablondi and Fr. Feldkämper became superfluous when the opportunity arose to meet the Scandinavian bishops on the occasion of their annual meeting held this year in Germany (26.8).

SPAIN

Fr. Feldkämper visited the associate members of Spain and met with representatives of the Bishops' Conference (19-20.2).

In addition to the addresses given during these journeys, several seminars/workshops dealing with biblical-pastoral work and the Federation deserve mention. These were arranged for groups of people working in various countries: missionaries on home leave in Germany (one-week seminar conducted in collaboration with a staff member of Katholisches Bibelwerk by Mr. Köster); two three-day seminars for international groups of priests and religious in Nemi near Rome (Fr. Feldkämper); a one-day seminar for students at the Pontifical Biblical Institute and Regina Mundi in Rome (Fr. Feldkämper). In this connection I may mention the planned Biblical-Pastoral Centre in Nemi, which has been presented in the first number of BULLETIN DEI VERBUM.

4. COMMUNICATIONS

During the past year the General Secretariat has published the following:

- The quarterly newsletter BULLETIN DEI VERBUM, now in English, French and German. This succeeds WORD-EVENT which was only available in English, and is intended mainly as a forum of exchange among the members of the Federation. The Spanish counterpart, LA PALABRA HOY, will continue to be published in its previous form.
- The WCFBA DIRECTORY/HANDBOOK, which presents the Federation, its members, activities, aims, structures, and a brief history complete with the relevant documentation. The English and German editions were published in 1985 and 1986, the French and Italian ones are in the press, and editions in Spanish and Portuguese are in preparation. The DIRECTORY is available to members free of charge and to anyone else who wishes to order it for a small charge to cover the production costs.
- The GUIDE TO CATHOLIC BIBLE TRANSLATIONS published by Fr. Piet Rijks. This is a catalogue of all Catholic and Interconfessional translations of the Bible, lectionaries, presentations of the life of Christ, salvation history, etc. The first volume, covering the Pacific (150 pages, US\$ 10), was published in 1986 and the second, dealing with Africa, is in preparation.

5. PROMOTION OF PROJECT SUPPORT / EVALUATION OF PROJECTS

One important service of the General Secretariat is the evaluation of biblical-pastoral projects received by the European Catholic funding agencies and sent on to the WCFBA office for evaluation.

In connection with this work we have continued to foster close relationships with the funding agencies:

- The annual funding agencies' meeting, attended by Fr. Feldkämper, Fr. Rijks and Fr. Firlus, was held in Vienna (24.10) and sponsored by the Austrian youth agency Katholische Jungschar Österreichs.
- Fr. Rijks again attended three meetings of the Selection Committee of the Katholische Jungschar Österreichs. These were also attended by representatives from other funding agencies (Missio München, Swiss Lenten Fund, etc).
- The following funding agencies were also visited during 1986: Church in Need (Fr. Rijks); Swiss Lenten Fund (Fr. Rijks and Fr. Firlus); AMA Holland (Fr. Feldkämper). Through these contacts we hope to be at the service of Federation members and others involved in biblical-pastoral work who are in need of subsidies.

6. INTERCONFESSIONAL COOPERATION

Five meetings were held between Fr. Feldkämper and Dr. Ulrich Fick, general secretary of the United Bible Societies which also has its headquarters in Stuttgart.

As mentioned above, two meetings also took place at the Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity in order to finalize the Guiding Principles for Interconfessional Translations of the Bible. It is our firm hope that these will be published during 1987.

Also previously mentioned was a meeting between Bishop Ablondi, Fr. Feldkämper, Dr. Fick and the four United Bible Societies regional secretaries.

Together with Fr. Toni Steiner of the Swiss Catholic Biblical Association, Fr. Feldkämper contacted Dr. Hans-Ruedi Weber who holds the Portfolio for Biblical Study at the World Council of Churches in Geneva.

the following two reasons: First, what was of real value in the past year only time, namely the future, will tell. Second, we would like to invite our members and all other persons interested and involved in biblical apostolate to give a critical evaluation from their own point of view. It is true that the main concern of the members is the biblical apostolate in the concrete pastoral situation, whereas our concern here at the office is the Federation. Yet also our members should have the growth and development of the Federation at heart since their reason for their joining it is to provide and obtain help for the biblical apostolate.

2. Prospects

The year 1987, which we have just begun, will certainly bring its own challenges and opportunities also for the biblical apostolate. I would like to mention the following two facts:

a) 1987 marks the halfway point between the Third Plenary Assembly and the Fourth (which will take place in 1990). Is it too early to start considering and preparing for this Assembly? On the other hand, what better preparation can there be than our continued efforts at local, national and regional/continental levels to implement the Bangalore recommendations? Thus, it would be good to make an assessment of the implementations at this time.

b) The Bishops' Synod of this year on the Laity should certainly have implications for the biblical apostolate. The Federation was founded in 1969 in order to implement the Council's directives that easy access to sacred Scripture be available to all. In this connection, i.e. with this directive of the Council and with the forthcoming Synod, is it not necessary to reflect more on the special competence of lay people regarding sacred Scripture - a competence that is theirs not only in discovering the treasures of God's inspired Word (we may here consider the teaching of the Church on the *sensus fidei fidelium*), but especially in transforming the realities of this world through gospel values as "gospel-inspired lay people"?

LUDGER FELDKÄMPER, SVD
GENERAL SECRETARY

CONCLUSION

1. In retrospect

What has been written so far is a report: main events have been recorded according to time, place, people and purpose. I have refrained from giving an evaluation here, not because we do not approach our tasks in a critical way, but for

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BIBLICAL APOSTOLATE IN FRENCH-SPEAKING AFRICA, ESPECIALLY IN ZAIRE

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In the first number of BULLETIN DEI VERBUM Fr. Gilberto Gorgulho agreed to a presentation of the biblical apostolate in Brazil. For this number we asked Fr. Gerard Lesch, a Divine Word Missionary living in Zaire, to give us a general picture of the biblical apostolate in French-speaking Africa based on his own experiences. Fr. Lesch has complied with this request, adding greater detail to his description of the biblical apostolate in Zaire, the country with which he is particularly familiar.

A look at the past

Several French-speaking African countries have just celebrated the one-hundredth anniversary of their evangelization. The missionaries who announced the good news in Africa did it as men of their time. They drew up their first proclamation in a way fitting for that culture in the light of the signs of that time. Thus, the faith grew and the first Christian communities were born.

The Bible did not play the important role it does today. The Holy Scriptures were used in liturgical readings. The catechism contained only a few biblical texts. In general, the Church was reticent about putting the whole Bible into the hands of Christians. Only a few Christians in the mission countries could read, and the first missionaries faced a multitude of languages which had as yet hardly been studied.

Only after Vatican II were lay people invited to open the whole Bible: "All of the preaching of the Church must be nourished and ruled by the sacred Scriptures... Easy access to sacred Scripture should be provided for all the Christian faithful" (DV 21f). This text from DEI VERBUM is one of the rare ones from Vatican II which gives a formal order to the Church as a whole.

This order, given at the end of one hundred years of evangelization, has been taken by the Young Churches as their programme for the second hundred years: go to the sources of the revelation and the faith the missionaries transmitted to them, to implant and elaborate them in African culture. This effort has sometimes been accompanied by the fear that the missionaries could have been hiding something essential. Therefore, this programme is two-fold:

- To provide access to the Holy Scriptures by translating and diffusing them. In 1982, the Divine Word Missionaries in Zaire took the initiative of publishing Bibles and relevant literature for explaining the Bible in Africa. The Standing Committee of the Bishops of Zaire "encouraged and blessed this project which should efficiently contribute towards a thorough evangelization". (Letter of 27.6.1981 from the president of the Episcopal Conference of Zaire.) Since then VERBUM BIBLE, centre of publication and distribution of the Bible, has annually published several new titles in French and in various African languages, e.g. La Bible de Jérusalem, Liliba lya Nzambe (the Bible in Lingala) and Biblia Takatifu (the Bible in Swahili).
- To explain the biblical text and make it understood so that it can nourish the faith of engaged Christians and help them to live as Christians in an African culture and environment. On 24th June 1983, the Symposium of Episcopal Conferences of Africa and Madagascar (SECAM) announced the foundation of the "Centre Biblique Catholique pour l'Afrique et Madagascar". The purpose and aims of this centre were to fulfil the decree of DEI VERBUM that "easy access to sacred Scripture should be provided for all the Christian faithful" (DV 22), to provide guidelines for the biblical apostolate in Africa, and to take on and promote biblical study and research contributing towards the incarnation of the evangelical message in the African culture.

In December 1975 the WCFBA sent a letter and questionnaire to all the bishops of French-speaking Africa and Madagascar to find out how much was known about the biblical apostolate in these countries. The purpose was to create an "African Service" to promote this apostolate throughout the continent. This ten-page questionnaire contained the following:

- Languages and translations used in the dioceses. Collaboration with other religions.
- Diffusion of Holy Scripture.
- Biblical formation for catechists and other evangelizers.
- Bible groups and other forms of Bible study.
- Publications in the biblical field.
- Possibilities, difficulties and needs in the biblical apostolate.

Most of the churches contacted answered this questionnaire. Cardinal Paul Zoungrana, Archbishop of Ouagadougou, stated: "Our various communities are at different stages of development, but the Word of God calls us to cooperation and concerted activity in a unique way. It is in this way that the WCFBA is called to be instrumental in recreating an awareness in the People of God of the commonality of their scriptural roots with those of the communities encountered in the Bible which, during their time, also gave witness to the Word of God".

A Word of Life

African pastors are convinced of the power of transformation in the biblical message: "If the Word of God were known and lived by all who believe in Christ... the face of the world would change", wrote Msgr. Etsou, Archbishop of Mbandaka. He became convinced of this during his fifteen years of biblical apostolate. He still conducts a biblical session every year, during which he develops the following themes for the faithful:

- Bible, Word of God and Word of Life
- How does one read the Bible?
- How does one pray with the words from the Bible?
- The Bible in our families
- Diffusion of the Bible
- Receiving the sacraments of reconciliation, "The covenant with God in the Bible"

During these fifteen years of biblical apostolate he also distributed thousands of Bibles and excerpts from the Old and New Testaments.

At the celebration of the hundredth anniversary of the second evangelization in Kinshasa, Pope John Paul II ordained seven bishops for Africa, four of them for Zaire. In the sermon he gave on this occasion, the Holy Father drew a portrait of the episcopal ministry in Africa: "You are firstly responsible for preaching the Gospel... Here in Africa, the men of the Church are first requested: give us the Word of God! Yes, it is a marvellous thing to see your compatriots hungry for the Gospel: they know that it is a message of life..." (4th May 1980). On 3rd March, 1979, Pope John Paul II declared: "The first priority for seminarians today is the teaching of God's Word in all its purity and integrity, with all its exigencies and in all its power. The Word of God - and the Word of God alone - is the basis for all ministry, for all pastoral activity, for all priestly action".

On 31st December, 1982, Cardinal Malula, looking towards the coming year for his clergy, stated these outstanding facts: "In October we experienced a very important event for our local Church in Kinshasa and particularly for the Church of Zaire: the publication of the Bible in Lingala, ... It is a book for reflection and meditation and is a valuable working instrument for our Christian meetings, for an in-depth biblical formation of large numbers of our faithful. ... As from next year, we demand better biblical formation of all active lay people: catechists, those in charge of C.E.B. (Communauté Ecclésiale de Base), members of parish and deanery committees. Our aim is to give our local Church active lay people who are responsible and competent in the Word of God in view of the year 2000. (Diocese of Kinshasa, Pastoral Life No. 13, March 1983, p.20.)

News

The Word of God has an important place in all Christian assemblies: firstly in the liturgy of the mass with the actualization of the Word announced, not just on Sundays but also in the

liturgy of the sacraments, especially baptism by steps which is done using the Word over several years. Every meeting begins with an appropriate reading from the Bible, whether in a group of "Bilenge y mwinda" (Youth of the Light of Zaire), the Legion of Mary, pastoral councils or others.

We have been told that in Bukavu, practically every day men and women go from room to room of the hospital with the New Testament in their hands, to instruct and encourage the sick without overlooking the events of everyday life.

Almost everywhere there are biblical sessions around the whole Gospel, or one-day prayer retreats based on a biblical theme. These retreats are accessible to all: religious and lay people, men and women.

In spite of its young age, Christianity in Zaire and other African countries shows a profound craving for the Word of God. Even in isolated villages where only a few people can read and write there is a Bible. Many people request and buy a Bible in spite of the expense this means for them. Often, however, they cannot distinguish between the New Testament and the whole Bible.

The Bible has its place in new catechisms. There are two models: First, to begin with an experience and look for an answer in the Word of God. A few contest this method because the Bible hasn't an answer for everything. The other model is to start with the Bible and apply it to life. Both methods are used.

Concerning biblical research, G. Mudiso, professor at the faculty of theology in Kinshasa, answers that this is reduced almost to nothing owing to lack of means and personnel. African exegetes have too many courses and cannot find the working facilities needed for in-depth research.

The number of books available which give assistance in reading the Bible has increased in recent years. For example, a new edition of the book Lire la Bible - Mais comment? (Read the Bible - but how?) by Werner Bach was published in Ouagadougou in 1982/83 by the Commission for Liturgy and Catechesis of CERAO. Translations in Ciluba and Kikongo are being prepared. In 1984 VERBUM BIBLE distributed 5000 copies of P. Charpentier's book Pour lire l'Ancien Testament (Reading the Old Testament) and 5000 copies of Pour lire le Nouveau Testament (Reading the New Testament) in Zaire, all specially printed for this country.

These books are published in French and translated, little by little, into local languages. Note here the book by Pierre Spanjers mhm, Kotanga Bible lisanga, and its translation in Kikongo y Leta (Kituba) under the title Kutanga Bible na kimvuka by VERBUM BIBLE.

The excerpt version, the Childrens' Bible, is the most widespread. It exists in Lingala,

Swahili, Tshiluba and Kituba (Kikongo ya Leta). Translations are being prepared in Kikongo and Kiluba.

Concerning the main language groups of the country, the liturgical texts are translated first and these are followed, little by little, by the New Testament and the entire Bible. In Zaire, for example, the four main languages have their own translation teams: Lingala - ABL B.P. 1800 Kinshasa; Swahili - Biblia na Liturja B.P. 162 Bukavu; Kituba - Centre St. Irénée, Kikwit; Ciluba - P. Mestdagh, coordinator, B.P. 127 Mbujimaye. For a long time the UBS has been translating the Bible into different languages. With the exception of interconfessional projects, the actual language used does vary in some cases with that of the Catholic liturgy.

A Challenge and a Response

One of the biggest challenges for Catholics in Africa is undoubtedly that of sects, all of which are based on the Bible. This challenge has caused an awakening and an awareness among Catholics who want to know and understand the Bible better in order to be able to respond to the arguments of the sects. Since the level of scholarship is relatively high in Zaire, the Bible could be the most widely used book. Religious education is given in schools; catechism after school prepares for the sacraments, and in each case the Bible has its place.

The Old Testament mentality is very close to that of the people in Africa. In biblical apostolate, it is important to explain the two covenants: in that the Old Testament is a book of promise and Israel's vision of the past, it prepares for the New Testament which is the fulfilment through the acts and words of Jesus himself. The Greek world in the New Testament is something unknown to Africans.

Wishes for the future

The most urgent need is undoubtedly for qualified personnel to explain the Bible. It is not enough to offer the Bible if there is no introduction and no explanations. For example, in the liturgy it would be preferable to take only one text and to explain it well. Two books in African languages which contain explanatory notes are Yezu Mwini ya ke temuna (Gospel of St. John), prepared by the Centre St. Irénée, Kikwit and published by St. Paul-Afrique in 1985, and Agano Jipya, the New Testament in Swahili published by Verbum Bible in 1985.

The coordination of the biblical apostolate must also be improved at parish, diocesan and interdiocesan levels. We need manuals and introductions adapted to the African mentality. A scripture professor emphasized that they could never be simple enough. Good examples here are Pierre Lefebvre's Pour bien comprendre la Bible published by Saint Paul-Afrique in 1984; P. André Roster's Connaître et vivre Saint Marc published by Jeune Chrétien in 1982; E.D. Skweres' L'Evangile selon Saint Marc published

by Verbum Bible in 1985. See also E.D. Skweres' Bibelpastorale Publikationen im frankophonen Afrika und ihre missionsstrategische Bedeutung in VERBUM SVD, 23(1982) pp. 177-186.

The clergy is aware of the importance of biblical apostolate, but help often has to be looked for in the form of people and materials. Also, they are often snowed under by daily work. They are waiting for the help of a team formed in biblical apostolate that could solve a frequently encountered problem in Africa: the magical use of the Bible. Often in Africa the biblical message and the Bible itself carry an enormous force which the person in charge of the rites tries to manipulate - in favour of an obligation, in the struggle against witches and fetishes, in performing exorcisms, in efforts to heal, in pardon and reconciliation, in soothsaying and even in witchcraft.

The pastors insist that publishers add a commentary to any text they produce. This is to avoid an individualistic, arbitrary reading. The biggest effort must be made for a reading as a Church, followed by a second effort which would be an approach to biblical thought in relation to African thought. Two publications pursue this goal: Ta parole - Ma lumière published by Edimba Bandundu (30 booklets on the Old Testament and 20 booklets on the New Testament), and Ecoutez et annoncez, Cebilo-Lomé, a series on the liturgical texts for the years A,B,C.

Msgr. Monsengwo Pasinya, president of CEBAM, recently underlined this idea for his diocese. It is true for all Africa: "Above all else, brothers and sisters, I want to remind you that sacred Scripture is not a matter for personal interpretation (Cf. 2 P 1,20). The Holy Scripture is the 'book of the Church', bound to the Church by the apostolic tradition so as to announce to men of all time and all races the Good News of Jesus Christ, the Son of God (Mk. 1:1). Do not take on a great many leaders who turn your ears away from the truth given us by our Lord Jesus. This Church is built on Peter, the rock (Mt. 16,18)" (a communication from the Archdiocese of Kisangani on 20th October 1985).

Gérard Lesch, svd
Verbum Bible
B.P. 7463
KINSHASA 1
ZAIRE

NOW AVAILABLE



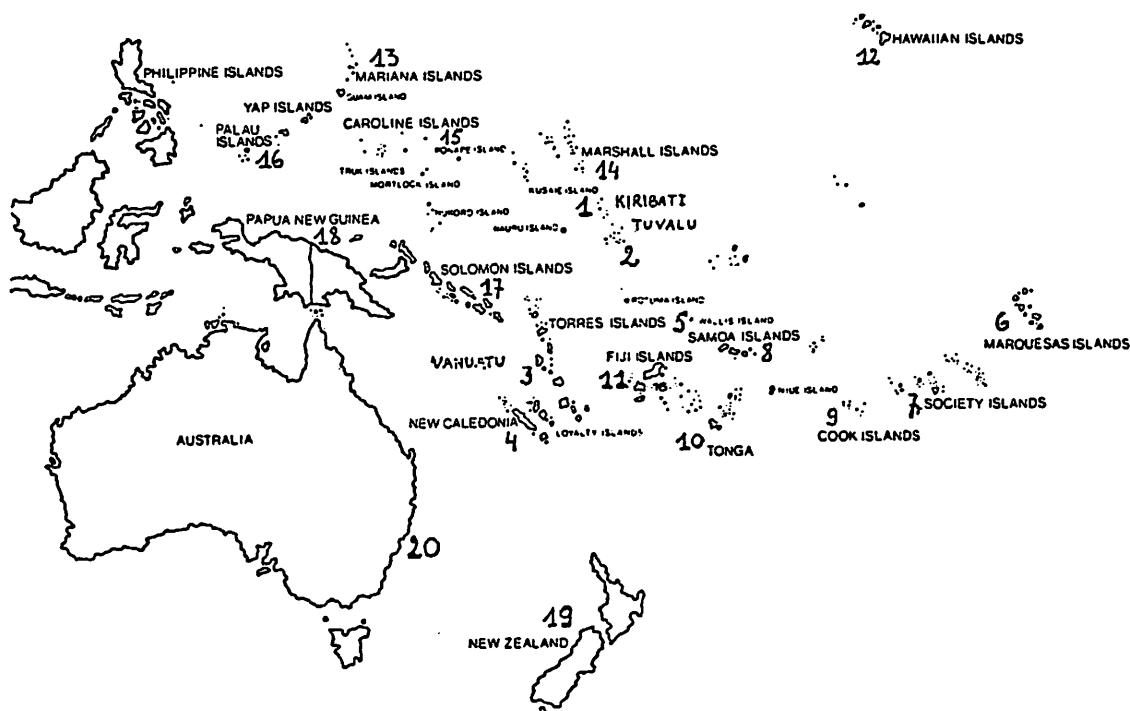
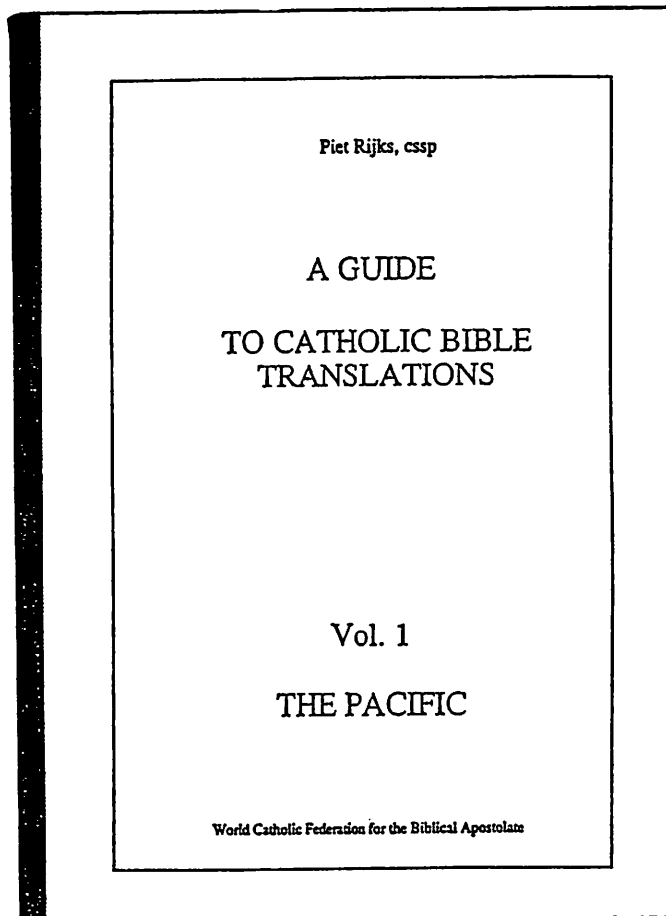
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- **"THE PACIFIC"**
-
- **volume 1 of**
-
- **A GUIDE**
- **TO CATHOLIC BIBLE**
- **TRANSLATIONS**
-

This guide is the work of Fr. Piet Rijks, cssp, a member of the General Secretariat staff of the Federation.

Volume 1 on THE PACIFIC consists of 150 photocopied pages and is available from the WCFBA. An order form giving more information is provided overleaf.

Volume 2 on AFRICA is currently in preparation.

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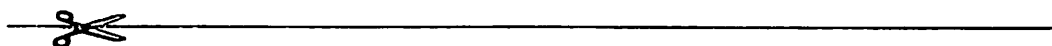
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**"Easy access to sacred Scripture should be provided
for all the Christian faithful"
(Vatican II, DEI VERBUM 22)**



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**FINAL STATEMENT OF THE FIRST NATIONAL WORKSHOP
 ON THE BIBLICAL APOSTOLATE IN SRI LANKA**

At the Bangalore Plenary Assembly (1984) the representatives from Asian countries conceived the idea of an Asia workshop for biblical-pastoral leaders. This workshop, which was attended by representatives from 13 countries, took place in Hong Kong in October 1985 (cf. WORD-EVENT No. 61). Here, the request was made for further workshops on the national level where feasible, and it was in answer to this request that the First National Workshop on the Biblical Apostolate in Sri Lanka was held from 14th to 17th October 1986 by the National Catechetical, Liturgical and Biblical Commission of Sri Lanka, a full member of the WCFBA. The theme of this national workshop for biblical-pastoral leaders was "The Bible in the life of the Church in Sri Lanka". Among the subjects addressed were: "The Bible, the treasure of the People of God", "Pastoral use of the Bible", "The Fundamentalists' approach to the Bible" and "The role of the Bible Society". Here we present the final statement of that workshop.

PREAMBLE:

The Special Synod of Bishops, held in Rome in November/December 1985 to evaluate the 20 years of post-Vatican renewal, in its final statement regrets that the II Vatican Council Constitution on Divine Revelation, DEI VERBUM, had been too neglected by the People of God. It is to remedy this short-coming that the National Catechetical, Liturgical and Biblical Commission (NCLBC) of Sri Lanka organized this national workshop on the biblical apostolate.

Moved by a sincere desire to implement the directives of Vatican Council II and the Bishops' Synod, 32 delegates representing 7 dioceses, formation institutes, religious congregations and lay apostolate movements, consisting of priests, religious and laity, assembled at the Holy Family Retreat House, Wennappuwa, from 14-17 October 1986, under the guidance of His Lordship Bishop W. Don Sylvester, president of NCLBC, for the First National Workshop on the Biblical Apostolate.

As we listened to the talks given and reports presented and joined in the group discussions under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, the words of Baruch "You have forsaken the fountain of wisdom. If you had walked in the way of God you would be dwelling in peace for ever" (Baruch 3:12-13) became very real, especially in the historical context of Sri Lanka today. It is to be regretted that Catholics as a whole have not paid sufficient attention to the Word of God as found in the Scriptures. We therefore need to rediscover the place of the Bible in the life of the Church in Sri Lanka.

THE BIBLE IN THE CHURCH

1. The Bible is the Word of God in the words of men written down, speaking to us of the experiences of a people of the liberating action of God. It has to be re-read according to the experience of the people of today. The whole Bible, both Old Testament and New Testament, including the deuterocanonical books, offers rich nourishment for the people of God. The sacred Scriptures are therefore to be abundantly and frequently used. However, they are to be seriously studied in the light of modern scholarship and in a spirit of faith.
2. The history of the Church shows that the Fathers of the Church have made abundant use of the Bible in their homiletical preaching and catechetical instruction. "Ignorance of the Scriptures is ignorance of Christ" said St. Jerome. That all Christians be imbued with a deep love of the Scriptures so that they use them frequently in their family prayers and popular devotions, and engage in group study, is a task that all pastors should undertake very seriously.
3. However, the faithful are to be safeguarded from the fundamentalists' approach to the Scriptures which accepts an exaggerated personal inspiration by the Holy Spirit and a literal interpretation of the Word of God. Ignorance of the Scriptures on the part of the majority of our faithful has made them an easy prey to the onslaughts of the new sects which cause an ever increasing pastoral problem in all parts of Sri Lanka.
4. The attempts made by various renewal movements from within the Church, inspired by the power of the Word of God and strengthened by the gift of the Holy Spirit, are to be highly recommended and encouraged. They have shown that a vigorous and massive organization of the biblical apostolate is the positive way of checking this unhealthy phenomenon.
5. We have also come to realize that the Bible takes man in his totality and speaks of the wonderful plan of God for the salvation of the entire person. His special concern for the poor and the oppressed is manifested through His actions and the prophetic teachings in the Old Testament and in the life and ministry of Jesus. The gospels show his identification with the poor, and thus God is available to us in Jesus who has become our neighbour in the poor. The Bible, therefore, invites the Church to make the option for the poor whether it be in their material poverty, in their deprivation of fundamental human rights or in their struggle for social justice. Fidelity to our baptismal covenant demands this.
6. The Word of God is to be communicated, and thus, in this age of the explosion of mass media, its power to change and shape society is to be fully recognized and all forms of

communication media are to be harnessed to spread the most sublime message of all, i.e. the message of the Good News of salvation. A serious evaluation must be made of the present use of communication media for communicating the Good News through our homilistical, catechetical teaching and liturgical services, and this communication media must be used effectively and extensively.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Keeping the foregoing reflections in mind we wish to make the following recommendations:

1. "A Bible for every family" crusade to be launched in all the dioceses on the occasion of the Ter-Centenary of the arrival of the Apostle of Sri Lanka, Ven. Joseph Vaz (Jan. 1987).
2. Promote the compilation of popular biblical commentaries and make them easily accessible to the faithful.
3. Organize basic bible seminars and other training programmes for the biblical formation of the entire people of God.
4. Sri Lanka Biblical Association of biblical scholars be organized to function in an advisory and consultative capacity so that the Bible may penetrate all pastoral activity.
5. Seminaries and houses of formation for religious and laity be given appropriate programmes for the biblical apostolate.
6. The biblical message be put into easy, popular and effective forms of communication v.g. viridu, badjan, street drama, folk arts, visual aids and low cost publications, pictorials, etc, meeting the needs of various groups and age-levels.
7. The Annual Bible Week be recognized as a major annual event by the Bishops' Conference and fittingly celebrated everywhere - preferably ecumenically. The collections on this occasion be utilized for the biblical apostolate. Closer collaboration with the Ceylon Bible Society to be encouraged.
8. That in the midst of today's social, political and racial upheavals the prophetic role of the Christians be exercised with courage by all Christians.
9. That the liturgy of the Word in the eucharistic celebration be given its due importance and celebrated with proper decorum and solemnity.
10. The involvement of the laity in the ministry of the Word be highly appreciated and efforts be made to involve more laity in this task to which they have been called as the people of God, to exercise its prophetic role by their baptism.

PLAN OF ACTION

1. A joint pastoral letter by the Bishops' Conference of Sri Lanka on the biblical apostolate on the occasion of Bible Sunday 1986.
2. Basic Bible Seminars at national / diocesan / parish level.
3. Formation of bible facilitators and study groups.
4. Bible correspondence courses, national bible quiz, etc.
5. A permanent biblical exhibition.
6. Celebration of the Bible Week.
7. Formation of the Sri Lanka Biblical Association.
8. Production and distribution of attractive and cheap literature.

24th October 1986

NATIONAL, CATECHETICAL, LITURGICAL BIBLICAL
CENTRE
No. 11, Borella Cross Road
Colombo 8
SRI LANKA

* * * * *

* PLEASE DO NOT FORGET *

* TO SEND US YOUR *

* ACTIVITIES REPORT *

* FOR 1986. *

* THANK YOU *

* * * * *

"WATCHING JESUS"

A SIMPLE FRAMEWORK FOR GOSPEL READING (OCEANIA)

The number of simple methods for approaching biblical texts is increasing. None of them are universal, and it would doubtless be damaging to transpose a method adapted to the special situation and mentality of a particular country into a different cultural context without making the necessary alterations. Knowledge of such methods, however, enables the biblical animator to construct a framework for gospel reading suitable for the various groups which he encounters. The following plan was used with some success in Oceania.

We're gathered together this evening because we share with Paul his deep desire: "All I want is to know Christ Jesus...". One way of growing together as a community in this knowledge of Jesus is to take time, as a group, to keep our eyes on him and to listen with care to his voice. All we need is a heart that knows how to watch. If we watch Jesus like this frequently, then something of his attitudes and personality will begin to penetrate us.

Our text is: _____. (Check that all have Bibles. Wait till everyone has found the text).

STEPS: (an opening hymn helps to create atmosphere and focus attention).

1. PRAYER to the Holy Spirit for enlightenment.

2. READING OF THE TEXT (perhaps twice, or in two languages if mixed group).

3. SILENCE (5 minutes).

During the reading and silence, quietly focus on Jesus: listen to his every word, watch his actions and gestures; see what he says and doesn't say, what he does and doesn't do; his relating to other people in the story. We can also look at the effect Jesus has on other people, but always in relation to him. Something in particular will probably strike you. Stay with that. Don't feel you have to cope with everything in the text.

4. OBSERVATIONS

- At the end of the period of silence, the leader will invite the group to tell of something they have noticed about Jesus.
- When explaining what you saw, it's good to mention also the words of the text that triggered this off. This helps the others to follow better.
- As each person speaks, listen carefully. Don't be getting what you want to say ready then. The Holy Spirit often speaks to us through others' insights as well as through our own.

- After a person finishes speaking, it's good to have a short pause to let their observation sink in. We're in no hurry.
- If someone else has expressed a similar insight to what you originally wanted to say, don't worry. You still say what you wanted to say. Perhaps the Holy Spirit wants us to hear that three or four times!
- A person may speak more than once.
- Very important: When you're speaking, don't make any applications to yourself of the message you have received, e.g. "I'm going to try and have a stronger faith in the future". It's enough just to say what you saw or heard.
- Use the words "I" and "me". Don't use "we" and "us" because that can lead to generalizing.
- We can thank people for what they've told us but we don't comment on or discuss what has been said. What each person says is like a gift put into the centre of the group. We can quietly take or leave it.
- Each person is free to speak or not. Our very presence is a contribution.

5. READ THE TEXT AGAIN (optional)

6. FINAL PRAYER by leader, leading into a closing hymn and/or group prayer.

CHOICE OF POSSIBLE TEXTS

- | | |
|-------------------|------------------------------|
| 1. Mark 2:1-12 | The paralytic |
| 2. Mark 4:35-41 | The storm at sea |
| 3. Mark 8:1-10 | Feeding of the four thousand |
| 4. Luke 7:11-17 | The widow's son |
| 5. Luke 17:11-19 | The ten lepers |
| 6. Luke 24:13-35 | On the road to Emmaus |
| 7. John 20:1-18 | Mary Magdalen meets Jesus |
| 8. Luke 5:1-11 | Call of the disciples |
| 9. John 4:1-30 | The Samaritan woman |
| 10. John 11:17-44 | Lazarus |
| 11. John 5:1-18 | Paralysed man |
| 12. Luke 2:1-20 | The birth of Jesus |
| 13. John 13:1-20 | Washing of the feet |
| 14. Luke 7:36-50 | The anointing of Jesus |
| 15. John 4:43-54 | The centurion's son |
| 16. Luke 22:7-23 | The Last Supper |
| 17. Mark 1:1-11 | The baptism of Jesus |
| 18. Luke 23:1-25 | Jesus and Pilate |
| 19. Luke 23:26-49 | Calvary |
| 20. Matt 26:36-46 | The agony in the garden |
| 21. John 21:1-14 | Appearance of the Risen Lord |
| 22. John 20:24-31 | Thomas and Jesus |
| 23. Mark 1:40-45 | The leper |
| 24. Matt 9:18-26 | Jairus' daughter |
| 25. Luke 5:17-26 | The paralytic man |
| 26. Luke 19:1-10 | Zaccheus |
| 27. Luke 6:17-26 | The beatitudes |
| 28. Luke 9:28-36 | The transfiguration |
| 29. Luke 11:1-13 | The Our Father |
| 30. Luke 15:11-32 | The prodigal son |
| 31. Matt 19:13-15 | Jesus and the children |
| 32. Matt 19:16-22 | The rich young man |
| 33. Luke 10:38-42 | Martha and Mary |
| 34. Matt 21:1-11 | Palm Sunday |
| 35. John 8:1-11 | The adulteress |
| 36. Mark 4:1-20 | The Parable of the seed |
| 37. John 21:15-19 | Simon, do you love me? |
| 38. John 6:16-21 | Jesus walks on the water |
| 39. Matt 12:9-15 | Curing on the Sabbath |
| 40. John 1:35-51 | Call of the disciples |

**PARISH GUIDE TO PREPARING A
 "BIBLE SUNDAY" (IRELAND)**

Our questionnaire concerning the celebration of "Bible Sunday" (cf. BULLETIN DEI VERBUM No. 1) has so far received only little response. However, an Irish priest has sent us his parochial paper in which he makes concrete recommendations and invites his parishioners to take part in the preparation of Bible Sunday. We are publishing this modest contribution as an example which we hope will be followed by others.

Can we do something more about the Bible?

Our renewed Liturgy reminds us of the presence of the Lord in the proclamation of the Word. I wonder how many of my parishioners have begun to discover this for themselves; and how many actually have a Bible at home, whether they ever read it or not! A member of our congregation recently told me that a suggestion I made at Mass, that they might like to look at a reading again at home in their Bibles, was out of touch with reality. (I knew this when I made the suggestion, but wanted to convey the idea that it should be normal.) And yet we read so much about how Scripture has had such a profound influence on the life of our church in "Basic Christian Communities".

On 18th November 1965, the Second Vatican Council issued its Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation. Among other things, the document said:

"Such is the force and power of the Word of God that it can serve the Church as her support and vigour, and the children of the Church as strength for their faith, food for the soul, and a pure and lasting fount of spiritual life (Ch. 21).

Access to sacred Scripture ought to be open wide to the Christian faithful (Ch. 22).

All clerics, particularly priests of Christ and others who, as deacons or catechists, are officially engaged in the ministry of the Word, should immerse themselves in the Scriptures by constant sacred reading and diligent study. For it must not happen that anyone becomes 'an empty preacher of the Word of God to others, not being a hearer of the Word in his own heart' (St. Augustine) when he ought to be sharing the boundless riches of the divine Word with the faithful committed to his care, especially in the sacred liturgy. Likewise, the sacred Synod forcefully and specifically exhorts all the Christian faithful ... to learn 'the surpassing knowledge of Jesus Christ' (Phil 3:8) by frequent reading of the divine Scriptures. 'Ignorance of the Scriptures is ignorance of Christ' (St. Jerome) (Ch. 25)."

If I can judge from my own experience, one of the best ways of bringing about deepening of faith is by learning to make the Bible part of their normal life. One simple and very encouraging incident for me was when I visited a home some years ago to see a woman who had left school at the age of 11. There she was, sweeping the floor, with the Bible open on a table so that she could read a little bit each time she passed by!

Some other Christian churches have for many years celebrated BIBLE SUNDAY each year on the second Sunday of Advent. Perhaps we could adopt this too? Could we do so in cooperation with those other churches? On 22nd February 1975, the Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity issued a document on Ecumenical Collaboration. Chapter 3 says:

"Many of the 56 national Bible Societies that make up the United Bible Societies, working in agreement with a number of episcopal conferences and diocesan bishops, have developed programmes of cooperation with Catholics in Scripture distribution and promotion of bible reading (joint national Bible Sunday, Bible Weeks, exhibitions, lectures, distribution training, seminars, etc.) ... The World Catholic Federation for the Biblical Apostolate has come into existence to promote in each episcopal conference an organization that will help to coordinate Catholic cooperation with the Bible Societies and to give priests and people all the help they need for understanding and using Scriptures!"

You might like to consider some of the following for Bible Sunday for this year - 7th December 1986.

IDEAS FOR BIBLE SUNDAY IN YOUR PARISH

1. The second reading of the Mass for the Second Sunday of Advent this year, 7th Dec. 1986, is eminently suitable: "Everything that was written long ago in the scriptures was meant to teach us ..." (Rom 4-9). You could focus on the Word of God and its significance in your own life as a disciple of Christ. Perhaps one or two of the congregation could speak of the effect of the Word of God in their lives. Speak of how to approach reading the Bible; let them know it's like a library - you don't go in and just start with the first book! Where possible, prepare relevant prayer, music, etc.
2. Encourage daily Bible reading - no shortage of such programmes available! - or the weekly preparation at home of the readings for the following Sunday - display the reading programme in newsletter or notice-board; put up Liturgical Calendar in the porch (remembering to turn the page each week!). Publicise and/or attend any local Bible group.

3. Get together with leaders of other churches in your area and plan an illustrated talk on the Bible, and/or a Bible Exhibition, or slide-show or film of the Holy Land.
4. Have a special display of Bibles and biblical material (perhaps in both Irish and English languages) available on Bible Sunday and for some days before or after. Audio tapes of the Bible and biblical talks, video cassettes, recordings of Scripture in song also available. (Some shops will supply goods on a sale-or-return basis.)
5. Approach local radio or television station for a spot.
6. Provide congregations with material and encouragement to come together in groups for Bible sharing and study: much material already available. A limited programme of four or five weekly meetings may be better for starting than "for ever and ever"! A group set up by the Ballymascanlan Inter-church meetings is preparing study notes on six passages in St. Luke for use in Lent 1987; they are intended to promote interchurch fellowship and dialogue. We could lay the groundwork for this now, and launch it in Christian Unity Week in January. Lent next year starts on 4th March.
7. A talk for children about the place of Scripture in their lives. It is possible! Some excellent cartoon format Scripture and other materials are available.
8. Have a shrine of the table for the Word so that visitors can read it: a lectionary open at the readings of the day; some Bibles and related material. There will be expense, and some books may disappear - but would it be well worth it? Your Bible study group or prayer group may offer to sponsor it.
9. If possible, ask schools to treat of Scripture this week; diocesan school personnel may help.
10. Speak of the Bible in developing countries. The World Catholic Federation for the Biblical Apostolate publishes a quarterly, BULLETIN DEI VERBUM, with a richness of information and ideas from around the world. The Bible Society in Ireland (formerly called the Hibernian Bible Society) at 41 Dawson Street, Dublin 2 - Tel. 01-773272 or 710040 has also plenty of material including attractive short illustrated leaflets with extracts from Scripture.
11. Set up a "Wayside Pulpit" with eye-catching scriptural messages on posters.

12. Local clergy of different churches could themselves get together for some prayerful scripture study - who will make the first move? There may already be such a gathering in your area.

PADRAIG MCCARTHY
31, Herbert Avenue
Merrion, Dublin 4
IRELAND

GETTING TO KNOW EACH OTHER

Today, our Federation has 65 full and 143 associate members. The General Secretariat has sent out a questionnaire to all members to find out more about their precise identities, their activities and their main concerns at the present time. We wish to thank all those who have already sent us their replies, and to express our hope that those who have not will do so as soon as possible.

In this second edition of BULLETIN DEI VERBUM we are starting a column entitled "Getting to know each other". With the aid of the completed questionnaires we would like to compose a brief presentation of each member. This column will be more extensive in future issues. Getting to know each other can only act to stimulate our common pastoral work in the biblical apostolate.

Full member:
THAILAND: CATHOLIC BIBLICAL COMMISSION,
Lux Mundi Seminary, Samphan.

(A full member is any Catholic organization for the biblical apostolate, one from each country and continent, which is designated by its respective episcopal conference.)

A member of the Federation since 1971, the Catholic Biblical Commission (CBC) has made continuous efforts to cooperate with the Bible Society of Thailand. The main concern of CBC is to promote the use of the Bible among Catholics.

The biblical apostolate is represented in all fields without marking one special sector. Activities are often based on the personal initiatives of individual priests and sisters. The need for greater cooperation and better organization in this field can be felt.

The CBC has started a correspondence course. Each year one specific book of the Bible is studied. Last year's course on the Acts of the

Apostles attracted over 800 correspondents and the present course, on the book of Genesis, has over 1000. This is an indication that quite a few Catholics would like to know more about the Bible. Having no regular publications, the CBC contributes occasional articles on the Bible to Catholic papers and reviews in Thailand. A very special effort is made to prepare the annual celebration of "Bible Sunday", and posters and special readings are sent out for this purpose. It is hard to assess the overall result, but a growing interest in the Bible can be felt in many parishes and communities.

The CBC is particularly concerned about the lack of interest in the Bible shown by many Catholics. It must be admitted that religious education for Catholics never was bible-oriented, so that many people do not see the vital importance of the biblical apostolate and consider it a second class issue.

There is need of a good Catholic Bible. The edition presently in use is not very satisfactory. Also lacking is literature in the Thai language for training lay people to become leaders of bible groups. Bishops and religious orders have already been requested to provide someone who could work full-time for the biblical apostolate, but no definite result has yet been forthcoming!

Information provided by:
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Thailand.

own biblical-pastoral programmes. These include a residential training course, a correspondence course and regular Sunday bulletins. Much "biblical knowledge" is passed on in secondary schools, and strong emphasis is placed on biblical studies in seminaries.

The biblical apostolate in Zimbabwe is poor in trained staff and resources. There is great need of biblical animators. Also greatly desired is the development of communication and cooperation between international and continental organizations for the biblical apostolate.

Among the challenges faced by the biblical apostolate in Zimbabwe are the problem of fundamentalism, the sects, the lack of adequate biblical formation for the clergy and the need of a bridge between the academic and pastoral use of Scripture. Zimbabwe needs good vernacular translations and better biblical formation on all levels. Chapter 6 of DEI VERBUM still awaits practical implementation.

Projects already undertaken will be continued, but the lack of resources makes an expansion of the biblical apostolate in this country unlikely.

Information provided by:
PETER EDMONDS, SJ
Regional Seminary
P.O. Box 1139
Harare, Zimbabwe

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GENERAL INFORMATION

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Full member:

ZIMBABWE: BIBLICAL APOSTOLATE COMMISSION
of the EPISCOPAL CONFERENCE OF ZIMBABWE

No formal organization or institute for the biblical apostolate exists within the country, nor is the appointment of a full-time biblical animator catered for in the national plan. Two of the six dioceses have "Biblical Promoters", but only in addition to their other work. Fr. Peter Edmonds, sj, has been appointed "National Promoter" for the biblical apostolate by the Zimbabwe Catholic Bishops' Conference, but he is also a full-time teacher and director of studies at the Regional Seminary in Harare! The main concern of the Biblical Apostolate Commission is to make the Scriptures known, loved and followed as the way to Christ.

Efforts made during the last years have mainly been directed at translating the Bible into the Shona and Ndebele languages, in collaboration with the United Bible Societies. Most years a four-day seminar on the "Gospel of the Year" is held for priests, sisters, catechists and lay people. Also worth noting is the popularity of a diocesan publication presenting the "Scripture for Sunday Liturgy". Some dioceses have their

NEW MEMBERS OF THE FEDERATION

A special welcome to four new members:

- **SPAIN.** Following a visit made by the general secretary, the Episcopal Conference of Spain, represented by the "CASA DE LA BIBLIA", has become a full member of the WCFBA. (Casa de la Biblia, Santa Engracia 20, 28010 Madrid, Spain).

- **NEW ZEALAND.** After the general secretary's journey to Oceania the Episcopal Conference of New Zealand designated the "NATIONAL CENTRE FOR RELIGIOUS STUDIES" to represent it as full member of the Federation. (NCRS, P.O. Box 28-388 Remuera, Auckland 5, New Zealand).

- **SCANDINAVIA.** Following a visit made by Msgr. Ablondi and the general secretary to the Scandinavian bishops during their last assembly which was held in Germany, the Scandinavian

Bishops' Conference decided to become a full member of the Federation.

(Scandinavian Bishops' Conference, Akersvejen 5, P.B. 8270 Hammersborg, Oslo 1, Norway).

- **SYRIA.** Following a visit made by Mgr. Naguib and the general secretary, the Assemblée de la Hiérarchie catholique de Syrie decided to become a full member of the Federation. A commission for the biblical apostolate has been set up. (Commission d'Apostolat Biblique, Kassa-rue Bagdad / Extension, Damas, Syria).

OUR QUESTIONNAIRE ON "BIBLE SUNDAY"

In the first number of BULLETIN DEI VERBUM (p.8) we included a questionnaire on Bible Sunday. Few replies have reached us as yet, probably owing to the delay in sending out the Bulletin. We will return to this matter in one of the following numbers. In the meantime, if you have not yet answered this questionnaire please do so without hesitation and send your answers to the Stuttgart office. We are counting on you!

AFRICA: A PUBLISHING HOUSE AT THE SERVICE OF THE BIBLICAL APOSTOLATE.

As a member of our Federation VERBUM BIBLE, the recently opened publishing house of the Divine Word Missionaries, dedicates itself to the service of the biblical apostolate by producing inexpensive Bibles in African languages, African editions of bible reading aids, etc. Among the projects realized last year we would like to mention translations of biblical texts in Swahili, Kikongo, Lingala and Djulà. For further information please contact "Verbum Bible", Maison Arnold Janssen, Kinshasa Lemba, rue de Lulo 22, Zaire.

BRAZIL: XVII NATIONAL BIBLE WEEK

Last years' XVII National Bible Week had "Woman in the Bible" as its theme. The theme of this years' Bible Week, which will be held from 12th to 22nd July, will be "Slavery in the Bible". (LEB, Padre Alcides da Silva, Caixa Postal 260, 13450 - Sao Carlos, SP, Brazil).

CAMEROON: WORKSHOPS ON THE BIBLICAL APOSTOLATE

CEBAM (Centre Biblique Catholique pour l'Afrique et Madagascar) plans to hold workshops from 2nd to 17th February 1987 in three dioceses of the country (Bamenda, Buéa and Kumbo). The themes chosen include:

- The animation of priests, catechists, pastoral collaborators, lay persons and youth representatives in the promotion of basic biblical apostolate.
- The creation of an effective bible study programme for the laity and especially for youth.
- The organization and celebration of a Bible Week to be held annually.
- Preparation of a pocket book on the biblical apostolate.

(CEBAM, B.P. 24215, Karen-Nairobi, Kenya).

CENTRAL EUROPE: MEETING OF BIBLICAL ORGANIZATIONS

From 5th to 11th November 1986 directors and collaborators of German-speaking biblical associations and organizations from the German Federal Republic, the German Democratic Republic, Switzerland, Netherlands and Austria met in Bad Urach (BDR). Subjects discussed were: The Bible in modern German, Bible Sunday, and biblical aids for the Third World.

FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF GERMANY: BIBLES IN BRAILLE

Deutsches Katholisches Blindenwerk (German Catholic association for the blind), an associate member of our Federation, endeavours to make sacred Scripture available to the blind. Together with the International Federation of Catholic Associations for the Blind, ways are studied of making the Bible known among the blind of the Third World. A braille Bible adapted to the Chinese language (Hong Kong) is planned. The Gospel according to Luke, the Acts of the Apostles and the Psalms have already been translated into this language using this procedure. Thanks to computer science the actual printing in braille of biblical translations in various languages is not only possible but also quite fast.

Together with Adveniat, the German funding agency for Latin America, the association has begun to make cassette recordings of the Bible in Spanish.

(Deutsches Katholisches Blindenwerk, Wirteltorplatz 12, 5160 Düren, W. Germany).

FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF GERMANY: CATHOLIC CENTRE OF EVANGELIZATION IN MAIHINGEN

During the year 1986 the Katholisches Evangelisationszentrum in Maihingen, a Federation member, organized three bible courses, each of three weeks' duration. These intensive bible courses were intended for lay people and were given in an atmosphere of spirituality. (Katholisches Evangelisationszentrum, Klosterhof 5, 8861 Maihingen, W. Germany).

FRANCE: NATIONAL CONGRESS OF BIBLICISTS

The Association Catholique Française pour l'étude de la Bible (ACFEB) will hold its next national congress from 31st August to 4th September 1987 under the theme: "Gospel Parables". It is possible, through meetings as well as the study of texts, to assess the research work recently carried out and to evaluate the pastoral contribution. The association wishes to contribute towards the remarkable renewal in the exegetical study of this topic and to increase the pastoral impact. For further information please contact: Congrès ACFEB, Institut Catholique, 25 rue du Plat, 69288 Lyon Cedex 2, France).

JAPAN: STUDIUM BIBLICUM FRANCISCANUM IN TOKYO

For the past 30 years the Franciscan centre for biblical studies in Tokyo has been working towards a better knowledge of the Bible in Japanese society by translating and revising biblical texts in Japanese as well as through publications, articles, workshops and conferences. Last year the centre published commentaries on the books of Job and Exodus and part of the Prophets. On 6th and 7th October last year the "New Testament Society" of Japan assembled at the centre for its annual meeting. Young exegetes joined the staff of the centre.

NEW ZEALAND: STATEMENT ON BIBLE STUDIES

In a special statement, the Episcopal Conference of New Zealand reminded the Catholics of the country about the important role of the Bible.

"One of the richest documents of the Second Vatican Council is the CONSTITUTION ON DIVINE REVELATION, which, as a source of nourishment for the Catholic community is still largely untapped. We wish to applaud the renewed interest of Catholics in the study of Holy Scripture and the increasing use of Holy Scripture for prayer and personal formation.

We are also grateful to those whose initiatives are making new opportunities for the study of Scripture more easily available.

The increased interest in the Scriptures makes it all the more necessary that the study of it be based on sound scholarship. God has chosen to speak to us through the human word and therefore we need to understand that word in all its human dimensions - including its cultural and historical contexts - in order properly to hear what God is saying to us.

At the same time, what we want is not a merely academic understanding of the Scriptures, but personal formation by the living Word of God, resulting in the ability to pray with the Scriptures and to share them with others.

It is also important that suitable courses for adults adopt the methods of adult learning, and promote the experience of adults learning with and from each other.

We commend our Youth Ministries for exploring methods of forming young people in the Word of God."

The bishops continue by indicating biblical formation programmes which they consider particularly suitable. They recommend the faithful to make use of the immense resources at their disposal for approaching the Bible (scripture study and prayer groups, booklets, liturgical commentaries, etc.).

MALAYSIA: BASIC BIBLICAL WORKSHOP

Biblical animators from the John Paul I Biblical Center in Vigan (Philippines) assembled in Malaysia to lead a "basic biblical workshop" from 13th to 16th November last year. 160 people participated, 110 of them being from the laity. The aim of this workshop was to support the very active renewal movement within the church of Malaysia, a country in which Catholics form a minority.

PERU: NATIONAL MEETING ON THE BIBLICAL APOSTOLATE

The first national meeting on the biblical apostolate took place near Lima from 7th to 10th October 1986. The participants tried to set up a national plan for the orientation of their work. (Department for Biblical Apostolate, Calle Rio de Janeiro 488, Lima 11, Peru).

PHILIPPINES: REGIONAL BIBLICAL MEETING OF MINDANAO/SULU

15 of the 21 dioceses of the region were represented at the Second Regional Meeting of Biblical Animators, held from 28th to 31st October 1986. One of the main questions to be dealt with was that of fundamentalism. In order to confront this problem, modern bible reading and study methods were presented. The animators at the meeting were surprised at the interest shown by lay people in such theoretical questions. Biblical-pastoral programmes were also discussed. All the participants voted for a resolution encouraging the practice of "enthronement of the Bible" in the parishes and communities of the Mindanao region. (Paul VI Biblical Center, P.O. Box 189, Davao City 9501, Philippines).

PHILIPPINES: REGIONAL BIBLICAL MEETING OF NORTHERN LUZON.

"The Word of God at the heart of pastoral ministry" was the theme chosen for the Eighth Biblical-Pastoral Meeting for the region of Northern Luzon which took place from 20th to 25th October 1986. This meeting, in which 84 people participated, was organized by the John Paul I Biblical Center, an associate member of the Federation. (JPIBC, Vigan, Ilocos Sur 0401, Philippines).

PHILIPPINES: BIBLICAL ACTIVITIES IN 1987

The National Bible Week, under the theme of Jesus' prayer "That all might be one" (John 17:20), was held from 26th January to 1st February.

The Second National Biblical Congress, which will deal with the Gospel according to Mark, will take place in San Jose del Monte from 23rd to 29th February.

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