

World Catholic Federation for the Biblical Apostolate

No. 3
2/1987

Bulletin

*Sei
verbum*

** * * Bible reading in France*

*(pages 4-7) * * * Events leading
up to the founding of the*

*Federation (pages 7-11) * * **

Praying the Rosary (pages 11-13)

** * * Getting to know each other*

*(pages 13-16) * * * Bible Sunday*

*(pages 16-17) * * * General*

*information (pages 17-21) * * **

Books and other publications

*(page 21) * * **

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, lecturers 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
Mittelstr. 12, P.O. Box 601
7000 Stuttgart, West Germany
Tel. (0711) 609274 or 604099

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).

BULLETIN DEI VERBUM, No. 3

April - May - June

2/ 1987



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".

Editorial Board:

Anton Steiner, François Tricard,
Ludger Feldkämper, Marc Sevin.

Editorial Team:

Heinz Köster, Marc Sevin, Carola Tress.

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)

REPRODUCTION OF ARTICLES

We invite our members to reproduce in their
own publications any articles printed in
BULLETIN DEI VERBUM which they consider to be
of interest to their readers, unless a
statement to the contrary is given.

* * * * *

CONTENTS

* * * * *

* BIBLE READING IN FRANCE.....	4
* EVENTS LEADING UP TO THE FOUNDING OF THE FEDERATION.....	7
* PRAYING THE ROSARY.....	11
* GETTING TO KNOW EACH OTHER.....	13
* BIBLE SUNDAY.....	16
* GENERAL INFORMATION:	
- Interview with Bishop Ablondi.....	17
- Bolivia.....	18
- Brazil.....	18
- Chile.....	18
- China.....	19
- Colombia.....	19
- Great Britain.....	19
- India.....	19
- Italy.....	19
- Japan.....	19
- Malaysia.....	19
- Malta.....	20
- Mexico.....	20
- Pakistan.....	20
- Papua New Guinea.....	20
- Peru.....	20
- Philippines.....	20
- Portugal.....	21
- Thailand.....	21
* BOOKS AND OTHER PUBLICATIONS.....	21

EDITORIAL

You are members or friends of the World Catholic Federation for the Biblical Apostolate. This bulletin wishes to keep you regularly informed about one another's activities and to strengthen the contact between us all in order to assure better service of that which some call "the biblical apostolate" and others "biblical-pastoral".

Each country, on account of its geography, history and economic and human situation, has its own way of seeking out and living the Word of God. Who would complain of such rich diversity? Even if biblical-pastoral experiences within a country are difficult to understand outside its cultural and linguistic borders, they still serve to provide new ideas and to stimulate research and practice in other countries. Following Brazil and Zaire (cf the last two numbers of the Bulletin), we now present a reflection on the situation of the Bible in France. This shows how, through the great efforts made during recent years to find new reading methods, the Bible has become increasingly important on the ecclesial and cultural level in France (pages 4-7).

Where does the need to "federate" come from, this tying together in an institutional way of the different Catholic biblical apostolate and biblical-pastoral organizations? How did the idea of a "Catholic Biblical Federation for the Biblical Apostolate" become reality? One of the founding members of the Federation answers these questions from his own viewpoint (pages 7-11). Thus we are better able to measure the ground covered since 1969 as well as the road still to be followed in order that "easy access to sacred Scripture be provided for all the Christian faithful".

The Marial Year just proclaimed by Pope John Paul II is an occasion for throwing light on the biblical roots of the devotions to the Mother of Our Saviour. We invite all our members to inform us about their own activities and research in this area so that we can share them with others. The Philippines have contributed an interesting experience in biblical resource concerning the popular practice of praying the Rosary (pages 11-13).

Since many members have sent us reports on the activities of their organizations we are happy to continue our series "Getting to know each other" (pages 13-16).

From the various news items received at the General Secretariat we have put together an overview of biblical apostolate activities in various countries. This reflects the great diversity of biblical work presently being done (pages 16-21).

There is still time to reply to our questionnaire on "Bible Sunday" (BULLETIN DEI VERBUM No. 1) ... so please don't forget us!

Marc Sevin

* * * * *

BIBLE READING IN FRANCE

* * * * *

The biblical apostolate and biblical pastoral take on different forms according to the countries in which they develop. There is no universal pattern in this field. A knowledge of what is going on elsewhere could serve to mutually stimulate and enrich both work and reflection. For this reason BULLETIN DEI VERBUM (BDV) intends to keep Federation members informed on ideas and activities all over the world concerning the Bible. Following a presentation of the biblical apostolate in Brazil (BDV 1) and in Zaire (BDV 2), here is a reflection on the situation of the Bible in France. Pierre-Marie Baude, one of the animators of Service Biblique Evangile et Vie, describes the evolution of Bible usage in this country. Evangile et Vie represents the French Bishops' Conference as full member of the WCFBA.

As far as we can see, the Bible in France is doing well. There are several good editions on the market. They often have introductions and explanatory notes which permit a serious minded approach. Of course, books are worthless if they are not read. It is easier to get an idea of the number of books sold than of the number of readers there are. Who really reads the Bible? In order to answer this question, it is necessary to obtain a global idea of where it is read. Some examples are:

- liturgical assemblies in different Christian religions, where it is proclaimed in public.
- learning institutions (universities of theology, various institutions ...) where students are initiated into a critical, exegetical and hermeneutical reading of the Bible.
- institutions which use an applied exegesis, e.g. those which train catechists and therefore establish permanent contact with the Bible.
- places of Christian life, often connected with parishes. We have already spoken about liturgical assemblies, but Bible, prayer, formation and Christian reflection groups must also be mentioned as the Bible always holds an important place in these.

Lastly, we must not forget the personal reading by the believer or non-believer who is interested in the Bible. In France, the Bible has practically no place in school programmes. Interest in this book is raised

through other channels. In a Jewish or Protestant family, the biblical world becomes familiar to children at an early age. For a Catholic, things are different: the impression given is often that one has heard about the Bible or bible history, the main characters and events, but one does not really know it. Some will get in touch with a bible group in order to continue developing their knowledge.

A LIBERATING EXPERIENCE.

All bible animators know that the Catholic who begins studying the Bible enters unknown territory most of the time, and this frightens him. He usually has a better knowledge of the New Testament than of the Old, but in either case he goes from one discovery to another. In the New Testament, for example, he never read a gospel from beginning to end (the liturgy, even though it takes one gospel per year, does not give the impression of a continuous reading). He discovers that the work of Matthew is not that of Luke; that each evangelist has his logic and his own project; that a gospel is a literary monument which is worth looking into in depth. Where the Old Testament is concerned, the discovery is even more obvious. Many people have told me, after studying the Old Testament for a year, that they had discovered a universe which was unknown to them, just as by travelling one discovers a foreign country and begins loving it.

"TALK ABOUT" OR READ.

Reading is, in fact, a difficult practice. Often, when beginning to study the Bible, one sees the text as only a simple matter. One speaks ABOUT the text instead of speaking OF the text, one speaks about oneself using the text. After hardly listening to the text it is already forgotten and one goes back to one's own problems. One has not come out of oneself.

Reading is an important act which supposes total asceticism. This means forgetting one's uncertainties for a moment to obtain the necessary receptiveness and to listen. As readers, we find that the text exists on its own, that it is not us, that it does not always think as we do, that it says things which we do not always understand and which sometimes disturb us. Reading is listening and receiving, and that is one of the first fruits of bible reading: we learn to listen to a word that comes from elsewhere; we learn to forget about ourselves.

A TEXT THAT RESISTS.

Reading the text is realizing that I cannot assimilate it in a few seconds and go on to something else without thinking about it any more. The text resists my interpretation. If

I have read it attentively it comes back to me, it asks me questions. I discover in it things I understand, and others which seem strange and disturbing. Take, for example, the phrase from the New Testament spoken by Jesus: "... the man who has will be given more; from the man who has not, even what he has will be taken away" (Mark 4:25), or the strange story in which Jesus ordered the pigs to throw themselves into the sea (Mark 5:1-20). On opening the gospel, I thought I was working on the text, but I have discovered that the text has been working on me and asking me questions.

This resistance of the text seems to me to be of great importance: it makes me stop and wonder, it makes me question myself, it makes me see the other's point of view.

READING METHODS

The reading methods that have been developed around the Bible help the reader to respect the text in front of him. There are many of these methods; let us look briefly at the main ones before risking an evaluation.

THE HISTORICAL-CRITICAL METHOD:

Along the same lines as the great 20th century research, historical-critical reading of the Bible took the lead at first. This began, in fact, very early: remember the work done in the 4th and 5th centuries by St. Jerome, to mention just one example. In more recent times the critical study of the Bible was developed and systematized, progressively taking its place in the organization of knowledge. Of course, this was not always easy and conflicts sometimes resulted because bible criticism attacked certain positions that had been considered as being definitively acquired. Here, it is sufficient to recall the exemplary case of Richard Simon, one of the most famous Catholic critics of the 17th century, whose "Critical History of the Old Testament" was condemned at the instigation of Bossuet.

Whatever the case, today the critical reading of the Bible is well rooted and every exegete worthy of the title is first initiated into it. Knowledge of biblical languages, of the Near East history and archaeology, of textual and literary criticism have become so efficient today that the impact on bible reading is immense and quite difficult to evaluate. Just to remember a few aspects, think of the progress made in the research of the neo-testamentary milieu thanks to the Dead Sea Scrolls (Qumran) and thanks to systematic use of Jewish literature: targoums, rabbinical texts, etc.

Therefore, historical-critical exegesis has an interesting past and promises to have a sound future. Can its importance for today's

believer be evaluated? One of its first blessings, it would seem, is that it avoids all fundamentalism. By linking the biblical text to the culture in which it was born, we can rediscover the true meaning of the text that goes beyond the immediate understanding we might have of it. This appears to be of importance for numerous passages and biblical expressions the meanings of which are not always obvious for a 20th century reader, e.g. the justice of God, the Covenant, law, grace, etc.

By establishing a link between the text and those who wrote it, the historical-critical exegesis shows us communities of believers and, as a result, is perceived as being the Word of God received by one or several groups of people. Therefore, the reader becomes more sensitive to the incarnation which is at the heart of Christian theology. The Word of God is revealed in history, and it is precisely this history that the historical critical method of exegesis should point out.

Another aspect of the critical method of reading the Bible is that it makes us ask the hermeneutical question: How can this text, written 20 or 25 centuries ago in a milieu so different from my own, still have something to say to me today? Obviously, some biblical passages like the psalms of praise, the beatitudes, the Our Father, seem to be surprisingly similar to my modern sensitivity. But how many others do not touch me at all because they seem so foreign to my way of seeing things? For example, a certain warrior story or a legislative passage from the Levitic which would make me ill at ease if I were asked to teach or preach them.

Firstly, the historical-critical method defends the text. I am forced to take it into consideration even if it says nothing to me, since it is in Bible. Therefore, thanks to this method, rather than ignoring the text I ask myself this question: What does this biblical passage, that says nothing to me at first, have to tell me, believer of the 20th century? It is not possible to give precise examples in this article. Just remember the role played by the great biblical theologians in answering this question. Old Testament theologians (those of Von Rad, Eichrodt, etc) assist in the understanding of all these texts which are difficult and far from our own pre-occupations in the "history of salvation" to which they add the wealth of their uniqueness. Biblical theology, in the wake of historical-critical exegesis, helps us to decipher the most difficult texts, putting them in perspective and, by doing so, helping us to renew the dialogue with them.

NEW METHODS

The method used to read the Bible must be related to the knowledge of the times. Otherwise it risks becoming old fashioned, obliging the faithful to take refuge in "fideism", a sort of "protectionism" which would protect them from the conflicts of their own times. Today, the development of the study of history and languages is such that exegetes can inaugurate new ways of reading the Bible. These methods are still relatively new, but they are beginning to give encouraging and substantial results. Take, for example, the sociological, psychological and semiotical methods. We will explain them briefly to show what is at stake.

- Methods of the **sociological type** draw attention to the social, political and economical conditions under which Jesus, the first Christians or other groups who wrote the Bible lived. Such an interest in these realities is not recent if you consider, for example, the beautiful study by J. Jeremias on the Jerusalem of Jesus's time (French text, Paris, 1976). However, these methods add something new: they use the tools and theories of sociologists more systematically. Therefore, the method tends to be rigorous. It tries, for example, to understand the different political, social and economic aspects in relation to each other, rather than just describing them without studying their interaction. In France at present, such studies are producing various and often noteworthy results, e.g., from the German J. Theissen (*Le christianisme de Jésus*, Paris).

- So far, readings of a **psychological type** seem to be the most difficult to set up, and therefore to evaluate. One can only observe that some specialists (psychologists, psychoanalysts) have attempted readings of the Bible, and that some of these have shed light on texts that we thought we knew by heart. Certainly the experienced eye of a psychologist can teach us a lot about a parable like that of the lost son, which tells of a father (without mentioning his wife), a young son who demands his part of the inheritance, and an elder son who stays at home. If used with finesse, this kind of reading could produce a fresh way of looking at texts which have lost their sparkle through being read too often and becoming too familiar. But this method needs to strengthen its theoretical foundations more than it has up to now. Note here the recent publication by D. Stein, *"Lectures psychanalytiques de la Bible"*, Paris, le Cerf, 1985.

- The **semiotic method** of reading. Today, it is most certainly in the area of language science that the most spectacular breakthroughs have been made. Catholic as well as

Protestant research groups have been exploring the possibilities offered by these sciences in Bible reading. The field known as semiotics studies the way in which the meaning is expressed in the texts. Treating the meaning through the internal conditions of the development, it methodically ignores everything which is not in the text: the intention of the author, the milieu in which he wrote, the milieu to receive the text, etc. It is centred exclusively on the text itself, the details of which it tries to describe as precisely as possible. The semiotician leaves the job of describing the literary history of the text to the historical exegete. He himself takes the text as a whole and looks at the phenomena of the meaning that come out of it. A method such as this which, specially in France, follows the plan drawn up by Mr Greimas, offers a very specific reading of the Bible. Undoubtedly the most demanding because of the rigorous methods of analysis it develops, it gives us some promising reading possibilities.

WRITING AND THE WORD OF GOD

It is wonderful to see that through reading methods a dialogue has been established between contemporary culture and the Bible. Thanks to these, exciting new possibilities are opening up on the theological level. It is easier to understand, for example, the paradox underlining this statement that writings are Word. When looking at the Bible, the most striking thing is the diversity: it is composed of many books written at different periods (from the 10th century BC to the 1st century AD, and probably later). The milieux in which these writings developed are also very diverse: royal courts of the 9th century and later periods, the milieu of the priests of the temple in Jerusalem, the alexandrine diaspora, and many other places in the Roman empire (Palestine, Ephese, Rome, etc). How, then, can one understand that this diversity of writings is uniqueness of Word addressed to the hearts of men. Without trying to solve this theological problem definitively, let us note the progress made by taking into consideration the historical and geographical diversity when evaluating how the Bible is Word of God. Thus, we can discover the importance for us of the story in the composition of a Word of God. If God speaks in the Bible, if Jesus is the Word of God in an authentically human "appearance", then the genre in which this Word is given - legislative texts, poems, prayers, chronicles, parables, stories of miracles, declarations, etc. - must be taken very seriously. Because God reveals himself in history, his Word speaks.

To illustrate this point, just imagine for a moment that Christians had definitively broken away from Jewish writings, saying that these were old writings and therefore out of date. Imagine, too, that they had refused the four gospels saying that such diversity might endanger the unity of faith and that it would be preferable to replace them with a unique text composed exclusively from the words of our Lord Jesus. But then one could bet that our religion would have been completely different. It would probably have fallen into a sort of gnosis, an ethereal faith, precisely because of the lack of historical roots. The Church has never been able to separate from the Old Testament (in the second century it refused to follow Marcion, who wanted to do just that). It has never tried to cover up the plurality of the gospel narrations. The reason is very simple: the Christian Bible, in its literary diversity, guarantees that God reveals himself in history, which is essential to Christianity. The biblical texts bear witness not only to the Word, but also to the effectiveness of this Word in the communities which receive it. These texts are the echo of the progress of groups of faith that the God who reveals himself has set on the path. They tell of the hesitation, the revolts, the ruptures, the discoveries of all these groups of faithful whose history is that of the people of God.

To counter the theologies which tend to forget this "incarnated" dimension of the Word of God, we speak today, though only recently, of "narrative theology". The expression is worth what it's worth. What is important is to remember that a Christian, in order to believe, needs to remember, to commemorate, and to tell of it himself. The Word of God coming into history cannot be given in one word, but rather in the Scriptures fulfilled in Jesus, the mystery of which is, thankfully, precisely to carry the Divine Word to our hearts.

Further Information: Service Biblique
Evangile et Vie, Pierre-Marie Beaude,
6 avenue Vavin, 75006 Paris, FRANCE. ■

* * * * *

A HISTORY OF EVENTS LEADING UP TO THE FOUNDING OF THE WORLD CATHOLIC FEDERATION FOR THE BIBLICAL APOSTOLATE, AS I SEE IT

* * * * *

However aware an organization might be of the need for openness towards new ideas and developments, from time to time it will also have to reflect on its origins. In looking back to the very beginning one becomes and remains conscious of one's obligations towards the original aims of the organization.

In No. 64/65 of our review WORD-EVENT we published reports from the two Englishmen Dom Bernard Orchard and Prof. Reginald Fuller on the founding of the Federation. This time Prof. Dr. Otto Knoch presents his own view of the events leading up to this important event in which, as director of the Catholic Biblical Association of West Germany, he played an important role.

The task of compiling an adequate documentation of the early history of the Federation is an important and worthwhile one. Already in 1951 Pius Parsch, well known beyond the borders of Austria as the pioneer of popular liturgy and biblical apostolate, wrote: "Now we must set to work and get in contact with the bible movements of other countries to create some form of federation. This would lead to a Catholic World Organization for the biblical apostolate which could gradually win over the entire Church" (Bibel und Liturgie 1951/52). Furthermore, on 6th October 1964, during the third assembly of the II. Vatican Council, Bishop Emil Cekada of Skopje in Yugoslavia recommended the setting up, under the auspices of the Holy See, of an International Bible Society according to the model of the United Bible Societies for the translation and production of the Bible in all languages. The concern for an International Catholic Organization for bible work was already "in the air", therefore, when the first concrete steps, reported here by Prof. Dr. Knoch, were taken.

1. During the II Vatican Council the 80th Deutsche Katholikentag 1964 (German Catholic Congress) took place in Stuttgart. Following the recommendation made by Katholisches Bibelwerk (KBW) and its patron, Bishop Dr. Carl Joseph Leiprecht, this Congress was given a biblical and ecumenical orientation in consideration for the goals set by the

Council. The Katholikentag was opened by an ecumenical service of the Word, a liturgia et celebratio Verbi Dei, in the Neckarstadion in Stuttgart. 50,000 copies of the New Testament with a prologue by Cardinal Bea were distributed. The idea and its realization came from KBW. The campaign "Katholikentag-Neues-Testament" (complete with special binding) received enthusiastic response, also on the ecumenical level.

Within the framework of the Congress a large ecumenical Bible Exhibition, also visited by Cardinal Bea, was held in the Landesgewerbemuseum (county trades museum) in Stuttgart.

Cardinal Bea took part in the Katholikentag as special guest and gave a special ecumenical reception in the Kursaal, Stuttgart-Bad Cannstatt, to which representatives of the Württembergische Landeskirche (Regional Church of Württemberg) and the Württembergische Bibelanstalt (Biblical Institute of Württemberg) were also invited.

In connection with this Katholikentag I met, in my capacity as director of KBW, Cardinal Bea whom I informed about the work of our organization, the affiliated biblical associations of Austria and Switzerland, and our contacts with the Württembergische Bibelanstalt. On this occasion I recommended a meeting of such Catholic organizations and an investigation of possible areas of cooperation and coordination.

After this, Cardinal Bea stayed in contact with our organization, keeping us informed about the biblical objectives of the Council and about their development.

He finally visited the Secretariat of KBW, at very short notice (2 days), on 11th August 1966 during a stay in Stuttgart-Neuhausen where the Noviciate of the South German Jesuit Province was situated at that time. After informing him about the development of the organization since the Stuttgart Katholikentag and about the work on the Einheitsübersetzung (Interconfessional Translation) which had been started in 1962, I again presented to him the proposition of a meeting of all comparable Catholic biblical-pastoral organizations in Western Europe. He showed great openness for this idea, informed me about the biblical tasks of the Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity (SPCU), and requested precise information on the aims and methods of the Einheitsübersetzung, collaboration of the Protestant churches, cooperation with the Württembergische Bibelanstalt, and the project of founding a Catholic Biblical Institute to make use of the copyrights from the Einheitsübersetzung. He then made provisional plans for a conference of biblical-pastoral institutes in Rome and

requested that information be sent regularly.

He accompanied me on a visit to the Württembergische Bibelanstalt where he expressed his hope for good cooperation in the production of scientific texts, finishing with the very meaningful sentence: "If the case up to now could be seen as: side by side and against one another, from now on it must be: towards each other and onwards together!".

Since that time the contact with Cardinal Bea has remained unbroken, as can be seen from documentation and correspondence in the archive.

2. From October onwards, efforts were made in the SPCU to set up a separate department to implement the biblical objectives laid down in Ch. 6 of the Constitution DEI VERBUM. The American Jesuit Walter F. Abbot, editor of the American Jesuit newspaper America and since then well acquainted with the American Bible Society and the general secretariat of the United Bible Societies in New York, was entrusted with this work.

He kept in close contact with me (together with the German exegete Rev. Dr. Norbert Lohfink, sj, professor at the Pontifical Biblical Institute in Rome and colleague of Cardinal Bea and Rev. Abbot; (cf. correspondence, also reports in Bibel und Kirche).

3. On 4th October 1966 I sent an exposé to Cardinal Bea concerning the desired collaboration with the United Bible Societies. The occasion for this was the intention of the Württembergische Bibelanstalt to include the text of the Vulgata, which was in the care of the Pontifical Biblical Institute, in its collection of scientific texts for publication. I tried to gain responsibility for the protection of the copyrights of the Vulgata and thereby to become integrated in the work of publishing scientific biblical texts. In this context I proposed a meeting of Catholic biblical organizations with the United Bible Societies in Rome.

4. Commencing in October 1966, the SPCU conducted a survey among all Catholic bishops to discover which bible translations were available, if these had been, or could be, prepared in collaboration with non-Catholic Christians, whether biblical-pastoral establishments existed, and, if so, whether these had ecumenical contacts.

In this context Rev. Abbot announced through Rev. Lohfink in November/December 1966 his plan to follow up the evaluation of the questionnaires with a meeting of all Catholic Biblical Associations and organizations.

5. On 5th June 1967 in Rome the SPCU, together with the UBS, held a meeting attended by members of staff from the SPCU and the UBS as well as Catholic biblical experts to investigate possible areas of collaboration concerning the translation, production and distribution of Bibles. Recommendations for church authorities were set down concerning the relationship between the Bible Societies and the Catholic Church, these being based on recommendations made by the Konferenz der Bibelgesellschaften (Conference of Bible Societies) in Driebergen / Holland in 1964 (cf. Bibel und Kirche 1967). At this meeting Fr. Abbot gave a brief report on the results of the worldwide survey among Catholic bishops which showed that 70-80% welcomed ecumenical bible translations.

Negative, on the other hand, was the result of a meeting of representatives from the SPCU and UBS with leaders and authorities from churches in various parts of Europe as well as Poland, Rumania, Russia, Czechoslovakia and East Germany. This took place from 11th-15th September 1967 in St. Cergue, Switzerland. No concrete agreements were reached concerning collaboration in the biblical field (according to a report by Abbot in the archive).

6. On 14th October 1967 Fr. Abbot announced that the planned meeting of representatives of Catholic Biblical Associations and biblical publishing houses was to be held on 22nd/23rd April 1968 in Arrizzia near Rome.

7. Fr. Abbot made known his intention of paying a visit to KBW Stuttgart in February 1967 and requested the preparation of contacts with the Württembergische Bibelanstalt and with Pastor Smaadahl, UBS representative for Europe.

At the meeting in the house of KBW we had about two hours for mutual exchange. I informed him about the work, structure and objectives of KBW, reported on the ecumenical situation in the biblical field in Germany, Austria and Switzerland - especially the good contacts with the Württembergische Bibelanstalt and the Protestant Bible Society of Germany - and finally brought him up to date regarding the Einheitsübersetzung.

I then presented my plans for the meeting in Rome and earnestly pleaded for the founding of regional or national Catholic biblical associations. I particularly supported the viewpoint that the main biblical work lies, on the Catholic side, in the pastoral usage of the Bible, and that Bible distribution is only a preliminary step towards this. Close collaboration with the UBS was therefore desirable, but not membership in these.

8. Abbot listened attentively and requested an appropriate exposé for the planned meeting. The official invitation to a meeting on 22nd/23rd April 1968 concerning the biblical apostolate and collaboration with other Christians, dated 15th February 1968, was sent by the Secretary of the SPCU, Archbishop J.G. Willebrands. The Secretary of the East German bishops, Msgr. Paul Dissemmond, East Berlin, was also invited upon my recommendation. The venue of the meeting was the Secretariat, Via dell' Erba, Rome.

9. In preparation for the meeting I composed a dossier and sent sample issues of our magazines and publications to the SPCU.

10. At the request of Msgr. H. Sondaal, at that time director of the Dutch Catholic Biblical Association, I arranged a preliminary discussion prior to the meeting in Rome in order to establish our common direction, namely: independent Catholic Biblical Associations with pastoral objectives, a Universal Catholic Alliance of these associations and close collaboration with the Protestant side, but without membership in the UBS. Also: for the time being to set the secretariat up within an existing organization as long as the financial basis was limited, only later opening an office in Rome.

11. Since documents exist from the meeting on 22nd/23rd April 1968 in Rome, at which the Bibelwerk was represented by Fr. Lohfink, Fr. Hoffmann and I, there is no need of a detailed report here. The Dutch Biblical Association presented a special list of recommendations which were then discussed.

Representing the KBW, I myself supported these recommendations, especially point VI: "Establishment of an international (for the present, European) Catholic Bible Foundation". This suggestion was also supported by the representatives of England, Germany, Switzerland, Austria and Italy. According to a suggestion made by Fr. Ahern, representative of Canada, the name was altered to "Catholic Biblical Pastoral Association". Under this name, a press release was then published on: "Conference of Catholic Biblical Associations".

This also mentioned that the conference of 40 participants "expressed a desire to explore the possibility of formation of an International Catholic Federation for the Biblical Apostolate" in accordance with Ch. 6 of DEI VERBUM (easy access to sacred Scripture should be provided for all), and also of closer collaboration between the various national Catholic organizations and institutes with biblical-pastoral aims. At

the same time collaboration of the closest possible sort should be sought with the UBS.

A further meeting was planned for 1969 in Rome, at which the matter of founding such a Federation was to be investigated and decided upon. For this meeting the following persons were elected to form a preparatory committee known as the "Steering Committee": Sondaal (Holland), Knoch (Germany), Orchard (England), Penna (Italy) and Rhymer (England). The decision was therefore very much in line with the German and Dutch recommendations.

At the conclusion of the meeting the participants were received by Cardinal Bea who expressed his thanks to me for the preparation work and for the biblical work done in Germany, and subsequently by Pope Paul VI who expressed his grateful joy at the great interest shown, and especially over the presence of the General Secretary and other leading representatives of the UBS (cf. also report in Bibel und Kirche 1968 and the official photo).

12. After the meeting in Rome, Archbishop Willebrands and Fr. Abbot asked the members of the Steering Committee to discuss draft plans for the structure and constitution of a Catholic biblical association so that these could be laid before the representatives at the next meeting in Rome. Out of consideration for the Iron Curtain countries, overall responsibility was given to the Biblical Association of the Netherlands. (This workgroup was given the name Steering Committee.) There were two models for consideration: firstly, an international organization financed by donations with a central office in Rome, a general secretary and its own bulletin (preferred by Fr. Abbot and Dom Bernard Orchard, the English representative), and secondly, the transferral of the secretariat to an already existing European biblical association without additional expenses until the national organizations were developed and the means of financing established (preferred by the Netherlands, Germany, Austria, Switzerland and Italy). Germany recommended the Austrian Biblical Association in Vienna (special considerations being openness towards Eastern Europe and neutrality). Following a suggestion by the Netherlands, the next meeting was held in early summer in Stuttgart between the Dutch team (Msgr. Sondaal, Pfr. Verbeck and the secretary) and myself, Mr. Gschwender, and Fr. Hoffmann as secretary. At this meeting the structure of our model, based on recommendations from Holland, was established. The two English representatives, Dom Orchard and Dr. Rhymer, visited me for discussions from 12th-14th August 1968, Dr. Rhymer falling in with my proposals. We then drove together to Bortol, Holland, where a meeting of the Steering Committee plus Fr. Abbot was held from 15th-16th August. This was organized by the Dutch Biblical Association. Suggestions made for the future structure of organization encompassed two plans, A: Establishment of a very active secretariat in Rome led by a dynamic Executive Committee, and B: The step-by-step development of the planned Federation (cf. report by Fr. Abbot, 30.10.1968, in the archive).

An important factor was that, along with the production and distribution of good, ecumenically recognized bible editions, equal weight should be given to the establishment of national biblical associations.

(As was later seen, in spite of being accepted in 1969 Plan A was never really put into practice owing to the lack of a financial basis - Fr. Abbot's intention of finding an American sponsor willing to donate 1 million dollars as starting capital being unrealizable - and because the Vatican was not prepared to accept the secretariat and give it a place within its own organization.)

The concept itself therefore continued to bear the stamp of the Dutch and German-speaking biblical associations.

13. On 15th April 1969 in Rome the "World Federation for the Biblical Apostolate" was founded within the framework of a new, comprehensive meeting held by the SPCU under the auspices of Cardinal Willebrands (as successor to Cardinal Bea). Plan A was accepted as the basic model. I myself was elected into the Executive Committee as representative of the German-speaking biblical associations. Cardinal König was elected president, and Dr. Jorge Mejia, secretary of the Latin American Episcopal Conferences, was elected chairman. Fr. Abbot was nominated general secretary (cf. report in Bibel und Kirche 1969).

The first meeting of the Executive Committee took place in Klosterneuburg near Vienna from 15th-27th September 1969, in the rooms of the monastery connected with the secretariat of the Austrian Biblical Association. The main points of discussion were how to finance the work of the secretariat and how to stimulate the various bishops' conferences to set up national or regional biblical-pastoral centres. The hope that the financially well-situated Klosterneuburg monastery might possibly cover the costs of the WCFBA secretariat were unfortunately not to be realized.

I myself tried to obtain funds from Missio (Aachen) and Adveniat (Essen) for the biblical-pastoral plans of the WCFBA.

Happily, both organizations expressed their willingness to cooperate.

14. The WCFBA Executive Committee held its second meeting in Rome from 18th-22nd May 1970. Three work groups were elected to deal with questions of membership, biblical apostolate and finance. Fr. Dom Orchard, OSB, was nominated new general secretary. The secretariat established itself in the Generalate of the Salettiner. In accordance with a recommendation made by Fr. Abbot, Mr. James Lynch of Boston was given the position of treasurer. The main task was now to prepare the next Plenary Assembly of the members in 1971 (cf. report in Bibel und Kirche 1970).

15. The first biblical-pastoral seminar organized by the WCFBA was held in Rocca di Papa near Rome from 6th-19th July 1971. The main points of the programme were the state of biblical scholarship, the biblical-pastoral situation in the different catholic regions (old and new world, developing countries, mission countries), and the possibility of starting national or regional centres for the biblical apostolate. The question of collaboration with the Protestant bible societies was also dealt with. The lectures given at this seminar have been published as a separate volume, The Bible is for all, (J. Rhymer, Editor, Collins Publishers, London, 1973, 190pp., paperback. Report in Bibel und Kirche 1971).

16. As it became evident that the WCFBA secretariat in Rome could no longer be maintained, the Executive Committee decided in 1973 to transfer the office to Stuttgart, West Germany; using part of the building belonging to the KBW. The new general secretary (from 1973), Fr. John van der Valk, raised the necessary funds and completed the move. Through my contacts with Missio (Aachen) and Adveniat (Essen) as well as with funding agencies in Austria and Switzerland, it was possible to reorganize the secretariat as an information, planning and evaluation office for biblical-pastoral projects. At the same time the Katholische Bibelanstalt GmbH, Stuttgart, which was founded in 1967, agreed that some of the proceeds emerging from the copyrights which it held for the Einheitsübersetzung should be used to support biblical projects. In 1974 Fr. van der Valk transferred the WCFBA secretariat to rooms on two floors of a building especially bought for the purpose in the Mittelstraße 12.

The move to Stuttgart made it possible to save the WCFBA as an organization, after attempts to establish it in the Vatican had failed. This is the merit of the KBW Stuttgart. Plan B showed itself here to be

the more realistic of the two. From this time on, everything depended on capable general secretaries and the clever policy of the Executive Committee to slowly but surely establish the aims and objectives of the WCFBA in the universal Catholic Church itself.

PROF. DR. OTTO KNOCH
PASSAU

* * * * *

READ THE BIBLE - PRAY THE ROSARY

* * * * *

Many Catholics, especially in certain countries, like to use the Rosary for praying. The custom of meditating the "mysteries" of the life of Jesus by reciting over the half scores of rosary beads has already made the rosary into a gospel prayer. In the Philippines, where the Rosary is particularly popular among the faithful, pastoral leaders are trying to emphasize its "biblical" character. Thus the John Paul I Biblical Center of Vigan has proposed that recitation of the Rosary be accompanied by a preliminary reading taken from the Gospels and the insertion, in the recitation of the Hail Marys, of a short "meditation clause" echoing the chosen reading. The Rosary becomes a means among others for making the Bible "the basic book of prayer" for the faithful, the wish expressed by Pope Paul VI. The following, by way of example, is a document composed by this centre.

This document recalls first of all the fact that the Rosary is a Marial Prayer centred on Christ - it is indeed Jesus who is the central point of the Rosary meditation - and then gives directions. In order to revivify the recitation of the Rosary, which often threatens to become mechanical, the mystery is mentioned - in a short meditation clause - after the name of Jesus in each Hail Mary. For example, the actual recitation of the third glorious mystery would be like this: "... and blessed is the fruit of your womb, Jesus, who sent us the Holy Spirit. Holy Mary, mother of God, pray for us sinners ...". Of course, an explanation of this kind

of Scriptural Rosary must be given to the people. There is no use in introducing it without prior instruction. This method is proposed for common recitation of the Rosary, but also applicable to individual recitation.

Proposed pattern

1. Start with a song.
2. Read the scripture text from which the "mysteries" or meditation clauses will be taken.
3. A short commentary or meditative reflections on the reading may be given, or a Bible Sharing on the text may take place.
4. The actual recitation of the Rosary:
 - a) The introduction: the Creed, the three Hail Marys for an increase of faith, hope and charity, and the Glory be.
 - b) The decades:
 - .1 First the meditation topic is announced. For example: "We meditate on Jesus who is the bread of life";
 - .2 Then the Our Father; the Hail Mary ten times, each time with the meditation clause inserted after the name of Jesus. For example: "... and blessed is the fruit of your womb, Jesus who said: 'I am the bread of life'. Glory to the Father ... O my Jesus ...
 - .3 According to custom the litany of the Virgin Mary, the "Hail holy Queen ..." or other prayers may be added.
5. Conclude with a song.

The Rosary based on the Gospel of Luke

By way of example, the John Paul I Biblical Center suggests that the Rosary Prayer be based on an entire Gospel. The following 31 passages (one for each day of the month of October of liturgical cycle C) are all taken from the Gospel according to St. Luke. They are grouped according to five main themes. After the scriptural reference a summary of the passage is given which brings out the connection between the selected text and the theme of the section. Then the five meditation clauses are proposed for the insertion into each "Hail Mary" after the name of Jesus. The following meditation clauses are, however, only suggestions and may be modified or substituted.

"WHO DO YOU SAY I AM?"

- * 1. Lk 1:26-38 Son of Mary - Son of God
 - a. Whose coming was revealed to you by an angel;
 - b. Whom you conceived by the overshadowing of the Holy Spirit;
 - c. Who is holy and the Son of God;
 - d. Who is king of the house of David;
 - e. Whose kingdom will never end.

- * 2. Lk 2:1-21 A baby in the manger - Saviour, Christ the Lord
 - a. Who was born under Emperor Augustus in the town of king David;
 - b. Whose birth the angels announced to the shepherds;
 - c. Whom the shepherds found wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger;
 - d. At whose birth angels and shepherds sang the praises of God;
 - e. Who is Saviour, Christ and Lord.

- * 3. Lk 2:22-40 Light to the Gentiles - glory to Israel
 - a. Whom you took to the temple to present him to the Lord;
 - b. Whom Simeon took into his arms giving thanks to God;
 - c. Who is the light of all nations;
 - d. Who is destined for the fall and rising of many;
 - e. About whom Anna spoke to all waiting for redemption.

- * 4. Lk 2:41-52 "Your Father and I ..." "... in my Father's house"
 - a. Who stayed behind in the Temple without your knowing it;
 - b. Whom you sought for three days with anxiety;
 - c. Who said: "I must be in my Father's house";
 - d. Whom you did not understand;
 - e. Who went with you to Nazareth and was obedient to you.

- * 5. Lk 3:15-16, 21-22 He, upon whom the Holy Spirit descended, will baptize with the Holy Spirit
 - a. Whose sandal straps John felt unfit to loosen;
 - b. Who baptizes with the Holy Spirit;
 - c. Who prayed after his baptism;
 - d. On whom the Holy Spirit descended like a dove;
 - e. Who was proclaimed as God's Son by the heavenly voice.

- * 6. Lk 4:1-13 Son of God - tempted by the devil
 - a. Who returned from the Jordan full of the Holy Spirit;
 - b. Who was led by the Spirit into the wilderness;
 - c. Who was tempted by the devil for forty days;

- d. Who overcame temptation by trusting and obeying God;
- e. Whose victory makes us victorious over Satan.

*** 7. Lk 4:16-30 Sent to proclaim Good News - prophet not accepted**

- a. Who was anointed with the Holy Spirit;
- b. Who was sent to proclaim the Good News to the poor;
- c. Who was sent to set captives free;
- d. Who was held to be the son of Joseph;
- e. Who was not accepted in his own country.

*** 8. Lk 9:28-36 With Moses and Elijah - the chosen Son**

- a. Who went up on a mountain to pray;
- b. Who in prayer accepted the "must" of his suffering;
- c. Who conversed with Moses and Elijah about his death in Jerusalem;
- d. Whose suffering was not understood by his disciples;
- e. Who is God's chosen Son to whom we have to listen.

* * * * *

GETTING TO KNOW EACH OTHER

* * * * *

Full Member

**GHANA: National Catholic Secretariat,
Department of Pastoral Care.**

The Bishops' Conference of Ghana, member of the Federation since 1972, has set up a special "Biblical Apostolate Section" within the Pastoral Care Department of the National Catholic Secretariat. This is no isolated unit but a way through which the Department of Pastoral Care fulfils its policy of involving the Bible in all its activities.

Untiring work on Bible translations and the revision of texts over many years has produced marked success in a growing awareness that the Word of God must have its place in all Catholic gatherings, especially in the meetings of Lay and Youth associations. The aim is to promote a devotional reading which determines the day to day life of the people.

The most important biblical-pastoral programme is the Catechetical Programme for Christian Initiation of Adults which is prepared by the Catechetical Commission of the Bishops' Conference for the whole of Ghana. Two volumes out of a series of six have been published so far. There are also diocesan and local programmes, especially in the Centre for Spiritual Renewal in the Diocese of Kumasi.

A growing challenge comes from sects and groups which pour fundamentalistic literature into the country. Low priced but attractive Scripture publications are needed to compete with this avalanche (portions, themes, meditations, etc). Also needed are resource materials for Bible study for lay associations and movements. Nothing noteworthy is being published in Ghana itself owing to lack of funds, and - except for in Major Seminaries - not much literature is brought in.

Biblical formation of lay leaders in the various movements and associations is of primary importance within the Local Church. Most lay persons read the Scriptures in a very fundamentalistic and literal sense and have no idea about exegetical data. Biblical apostolate activities for the next few years have therefore been predetermined: continuous effort to sensibillize the lay associations to the use of Scripture and at the same time formation programmes for the charismatic and prayer groups all over the country. A national animation team led by an episcopal animator and promoter tries to cover this area and also to reach out to the priests and religious.

Further information:

Rev. Dr. Henk C.J. Bonke, wf
National Catholic Secretariat
Department of Pastoral Care
Biblical Apostolate Section
P.O. Box 9712
Airport-Accra, GHANA

Full Member:

JAPAN: EPISCOPAL BIBLE COMMITTEE OF JAPAN

The Episcopal Bible Committee, full member of the WCFBA since 1972, is composed of two bishops, five bible scholars and two experts on the biblical apostolate.

The Ecumenical Bible translation, begun in 1972, is considered by the Committee as the most important milestone for the biblical apostolate in the country. Special committees were appointed: Translators Committee,

Redaction Committee, Terminology Committee, Japanese Language Committee and Executive Committee. The New Testament already appeared in 1978. The Old Testament and a revised edition of the New Testament with Deuterocanonical Books are scheduled for publication this Easter. The preparation of the Ecumenical Translation was accompanied by the information leaflet "Ecumenical Bible Translation News" published from 1973 to 1984.

One of the main goals of the Bible Committee is the training of a sufficient number of Bible scholars and biblical apostolate experts. On national and regional levels Bible Study Sessions with the Bible as the central theme are planned for priests and lay leaders. Up until now all energy has been spent on the Ecumenical Translation of the Bible and the organization of Bible Week.

The efforts made over many years in the biblical apostolate are now bearing rich fruit. Awareness of the importance of DEI VERBUM, especially Chapter 6, has brought about a change in the mentality of the Japanese Catholics. A valuable contribution is also the annual Bible week, held since 1972. The Bible finally occupies its due place in the hearts of Catholics and also in the Church.

However, there is still much to be done. There is great need for the production of biblical background literature with simple explanations of sacred Scripture. In turn, this requires that pastors and lay leaders be trained as biblical scholars. A vision of the Bible as a whole is often lacking - the connection between the events and celebrations of the Old Testament and the New. The Bible Committee intends to provide help by way of the already mentioned Bible Study Sessions.

Information provided by:
 Msgr. Peter S. Hirata, Bishop of Fukuoka
 C/o Episcopal Bible Committee of Japan
 10-1 Rokubanchō, Chiyoda-Ku
 Tokyo 102, Japan.

Full Member:
THE PHILIPPINES, Episcopal Commission for the Biblical Apostolate.

The Episcopal Commission for the Biblical Apostolate, formerly Bishops' Bible Committee, belonged in April 1969 to the founding members of the WCFBA. Originally the National Catholic Bible Center in Manila was the service arm for practical bible

work, but over the years Regional and Diocesan Bible Centers have also been organized.

The "Bible for Every Family" programme aims at making God's Word better known to Catholics. This is also the reason for the efforts made to translate the Bible into as many local languages as possible. Indeed, translation, production and distribution of the Bible represent a major sector within biblical-pastoral work. Three types of introductory Bible course are offered: three-day Basic Bible Seminars, one-day Basic Animation Seminars and three-day Bible Facilitators' Seminars for pastoral leaders. A great many people, both young and old, take part in these courses, and it is through them that lay people become ministers of the Word.

The Philippines played an active role in the organization of the First Asian Workshop for the Biblical Apostolate, held in Hong Kong in October 1985. This was followed in February 1986 by the First National Workshop for the Biblical Apostolate. One of the greatest needs is for a deeper but simple explanation of the Word of God for the people now that so much interest has been generated in this regard. Also needed is a way of counter-acting the fundamentalistic approach to the Bible by different Protestant sects, a cause of much worry at the present time.

For the future we still have important tasks to fulfil: the establishment of more diocesan centres, the formation of lay ministers of the Word, the preparation of texts and articles for the proper understanding of Scriptures and the incorporation of the biblical apostolate in the formation of priests and religious.

Information provided by:
 Bishop Cirilo Almario
 C/o Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines
 P.O. Box 3601 Manila
 PHILIPPINES

Full Member:
SRI LANKA: NATIONAL CATECHETICAL LITURGICAL BIBLICAL CENTRE, Colombo, Sri Lanka

The Bishops' Conference of Sri Lanka, full member of the Federation since 1972, has delegated responsibility for biblical work to the National Catechetical Liturgical Biblical Centre. With its full-time director and eight staff members, it operates under the auspices of an episcopal commission.

The Biblical-pastoral impulses radiating from this centre are making themselves felt throughout the entire Church of Sri Lanka. A milestone in biblical work on the island was the First National Workshop on the Biblical Apostolate from 14-17 October 1986 under the theme "The Bible in the life of the Church of Sri Lanka". The final statement of this meeting (published in BULLETIN DEI VERBUM No. 2, pp. 13-14) should bring new life into the biblical apostolate of the Local Church.

Close collaboration with the Ceylon Bible Society has always been of the greatest importance and has resulted in the publication of a common translation of the full Bible, including the Deuterocanonicals, in the Sinhalese language. The main goals of the centre are to make Catholics more familiar with the Bible so that it becomes their daily bread and to make the Bible freely available to all Catholics. To further this aim the campaign "Every family a Bible" was given priority this year. The main activities of the centre cover publication and distribution of sacred Scripture, training of pastoral leaders, greater use of the Bible in the liturgy and catechesis, and correspondence courses for both adults and children.

Projects which have proved particularly successful are the biblical correspondence courses with 60 lessons for adults and 25 for children, the provision of good books on the Bible for the clergy and religious, the translation and distribution of the Bible in Sinhalese in collaboration with the Ceylon Bible Society (15,000 copies have been sold and another 8,000 are being printed) and the annual "Bible Quiz". Besides the biblical correspondence courses an English language quarterly magazine "Catechetical, Liturgical, Biblical Review" is published.

In order to support the efforts of the Centre the bishops published a common pastoral letter on the occasion of National Bible Week. However, there are still problems to be faced. There is a lack of attractive popular literature in the vernacular languages (Sinhalese and Tamil) and a lack of funds to produce this literature and expand publications. Furthermore, a threat is posed by fundamentalists who, equipped with Bibles and attractive literature, visit the homes of Catholics with too little knowledge of the Bible to defend their Catholic faith.

The main needs of the Church in Sri Lanka can be listed as follows: Easy guides for understanding the Scriptures, literature for deeper bible study in the local languages, formation of Bible discussion groups and the training of leaders for these, and a way of creating awareness that the Bible is not so much a source book for exegetical study but

more a form of nourishment for daily life and prayer.

The centre has planned various concrete projects for the coming year. These include expanding the correspondence courses, forming parish Bible discussion groups, conducting Bible seminars, producing mass media programmes on the Bible and increasing ecumenical collaboration with the Ceylon Bible Society which celebrates its 175th anniversary in 1987. Furthermore, priority is to be given to the biblical-pastoral training of future priests, lay organizations are to be encouraged to make the Bible the source and inspiration of their work, and children are to be taught to read and learn the Bible at an early age.

Information provided by:
Rev. Alex Dassanayake
National Director, NCLBC
11, Borella Cross Road
Colombo 8
SRI LANKA

Full member: TOGO: CENTRE BIBLIQUE DE LOME (CEBILO)

The Biblical Centre of Lome (CEBILO) has been a member of the Federation since 1978. Started one year before under the leadership of its founder Fr. Dieter Skweres, svd, and with a team of staff taken from local religious orders and qualified diocesan clergy, the Centre provides many biblical-pastoral aids and materials which for years now have been welcome far beyond the borders of the country. The African context, the African contribution towards understanding the Bible, and the needs of the Local Church were of the greatest importance for the biblical-pastoral direction of the Centre right from the very beginning. The intention was to provide access to sacred Scripture and to divine revelation in accordance with the African mentality. Lectures, Bible courses and biblical-pastoral publications serve this purpose.

Ecoutez et Annoncez (Listen and Proclaim), a monthly French-language publication now in its ninth year, has more than 2,000 paying subscribers in 15 French-speaking countries of Africa. Following the liturgical year, the biblical texts of each Sunday and of the major feast days are explained for the use of preachers. Furthermore, concrete proposals are made on how to structure the service of the Word for the liturgy.

Since collaboration with the publishing house Verbum Bible in Kinshasa/Zaire started

in 1982, other publications such as the youth prayer book "The Lord is my Saviour", "Biblical Personalities", "The Bible and the Catholic Faith", etc, have also been widely distributed in other French-speaking African countries.

All four dioceses in the country make use of the services offered by the Centre in their various biblical events for priests, religious orders and lay people. Radio programmes are also prepared by CEBILO.

The lack of qualified staff hampers lively and continuing biblical-pastoral activity. Many publications have insufficient theological depth. One would also like to see the development of a greater mutual enrichment between biblical scholarship, spiritual reading and Bible reading within the framework of the Church.

There is certainly no lack of problems. Of particular mention here are Bible translations in local languages, cooperation with the Bible Society and a way of counteracting the sects and movements (also Catholic) which use the Bible in a fundamentalistic or even magical and superstitious way. The greatest wish is still for a deep encounter between the biblical revelation and the African world view in order to escape from a colonial and paternal "adaptation" of theology and to clear the way for a true African theology.

Further information:
Rev. Dieter Skweres, svd
Centre Biblique de Lome
B.P. 2698
Lome, TOGO

Associate Member:
GOOD NEWS CENTRE, Bombay, India

The "Good News Centre" of the Paulists in Bombay, India, became an associate member of the Federation in 1982. The aim of the centre is to instruct both Christians and non-Christians on the Bible. This is done by means of oral teaching, correspondence courses, audiovisual aids and the distribution of Bibles, especially New Testaments.

The centre publishes and sells the New Testament in English and some of the Indian languages. Two monthly magazines are also produced, one for Christians and one for non-Christians. Short term biblical courses and seminars are held annually.

Last year the most important project was the campaign "A New Testament for every family"

(Christian and non-Christian) in the Dharavi Slum. With 8% of the 9 million inhabitants of Bombay, this is the largest slum in the whole of Asia. The Good News Centre has almost reached its goal of providing every family with a NT in their own language. The next project of the Centre will be the publication of the Jerusalem Bible in India.

As far as Bombay is concerned, the greatest problem is the lack of biblical scholars and trained personnel to instruct the people who come in crowds to hear the Good News. The Local Church should become more involved in biblical work.

Information supplied by:
Rev. Vincent Gnarakatt, ssp
Good News Centre
Post Bag No. 16499
Mahim, Bombay 400 016
INDIA

* * * * *

BIBLE SUNDAY

* * * * *

In the first issue of BULLETIN DEI VERBUM we launched an inquiry concerning the celebration of Bible Sunday. Having started this column with Ireland's "Parish Guide to Preparing a Bible Sunday" in the last issue we now continue with contributions from Switzerland and Great Britain. We wish to thank those who have already sent us their replies. Those who have not yet taken the time are again requested to do so. Please don't forget.

* GERMAN-SPEAKING SWITZERLAND

1. The first time that the Catholic Biblical Association of Switzerland suggested to the parishes in German-speaking Switzerland to hold a Bible Sunday was on the occasion of its 50th anniversary celebration in 1985. The Bishop's Conference had expressed its approval of this initiative, but had not taken the matter into its own hands. Following the encouraging experiences of 1985 we decided to recommend the parishes to hold a Bible Sunday every year.

2. We recommend the third Sunday in November as being a suitable date. This allows the

parishes sufficient time after the summer and autumn holidays to prepare the programme for the Bible Sunday with various groups. Naturally, there are also parishes which celebrate Bible Sunday on a different date more suited to their own schedules.

3. The main aim in holding Bible Sunday is not to raise a large collection in support of biblical activities. More important is to make the community aware of what an inspiring and promising gift we received when we were given the Bible. Since we celebrate the gift of the Eucharist on the feast of Corpus Christi, shouldn't we also hold a feast for the gift of the Bible which brings us God's living Word? If the Jews consider it right to hold the feast of Simhat Tora, we Christians could welcome a "Feast of joy in the Bible"! Of course, in order to hold such a feast one must have had good experiences with the Bible. Bible Sunday should give groups and individuals the opportunity of bringing their own experiences into the community, making them public and thereby encouraging others to study the Bible.

We are concerned that the preparation of Bible Sunday should be done by parish groups: both the programme of the prayer service and the organization of other events. By other events we mean, for example, biblical theatre, lectures, painting competitions, recitation of biblical stories to children, eating together, information desk, etc. Careful note is taken of the consequences of Bible Sunday: does it draw people into deeper involvement with the Bible?

4. Each year we produce a small folder of information material on Bible Sunday containing suggestions for the organization of the service and of the Sunday itself. A particular point is emphasized, centred not on a biblical-theological content but on a class or group within the parish which we specially wish to animate towards bible work during that particular year (e.g. school children, church workers, women ...).

5. Bible Sunday has not yet been officially established here, nor have we sought an ecumenical basis although we are in favour of this. It is our intention first of all to make Bible Sunday, with its already described aims, feel at home within the Catholic Church.

6. There are still many parishes in German-speaking Switzerland in which Bible Sunday was not introduced, far less established, during the past two years. However, we can

still say that this suggestion received an amazingly positive response. In some places things have come to pass which far surpassed our expectations.

Further information: Toni Steiner, op,
Bibelpastorale Arbeitsstelle, Bederstr. 76
8002 Zürich, SWITZERLAND

* GREAT BRITAIN

The majority of Churches choose the second Sunday of Advent for the celebration of "Bible Sunday". For this occasion the Bible Society of Great Britain prepares materials centred on the theme for free distribution among the parishes: notes on the homily, information on the world biblical apostolate and on the activities of the Bible Societies, a booklet for working on a biblical passage with children, a suggestion concerning the celebration. Posters announcing Bible Sunday are also available.

Further information:
BIBLE SOCIETY OF GREAT BRITAIN
Stonehill Green, Westlea,
Swindon SN5 7D6, ENGLAND

* * * * *

GENERAL INFORMATION

* * * * *

BISHOP ABLONDI, WCFBA PRESIDENT - A World-wide Bible Sunday? Interview with the KNA-Südwestdeutscher Dienst

Stuttgart, 18th March. Bishop Alberto Ablondi of Livorno, Italy, president of the World Catholic Federation for the Biblical Apostolate (WCFBA), wishes to spread the idea of an annual ecumenical Bible Sunday, which started in Stuttgart and became established within Germany, throughout the entire world. As he explained in Stuttgart on March 18th, he expects this to lead to a deepening of sacred Scripture especially in the Catholic Church. Ablondi has also suggested a bishops' synod in Rome dedicated to the theme "The Bible in the Life of the Church", as was already recommended by the Plenary Assembly of the WCFBA in Bangalore. Ablondi is taking part in the Executive

Committee meeting of Bible Societies from the regions of Europe and the Middle East which will be held in Bad Urach from 18-21 March.

According to the WCFBA president, the bishops' synod coming up already in autumn in Rome will be unable to avoid dealing with the Bible and its significance, not only for bishops and priests but especially for the laity as leaders in many of the Young Churches. There, awareness is far greater than in Europe - which is considerably better equipped with priests - that sacred Scripture is not only a book for a few experts but belongs in the hands of every Christian. It is in the poor of the Third World that Ablondi sees "today's prophets of the Church". Their message for Europe: The Bible is not merely a book of edification. South America, for example, with its basic groups, teaches the institutional Church what it means for the individual, both socially and politically, to analyse his personal situation and that of his community in the light of the Bible, to act accordingly and to experience the liberating power of the Word of God.

As he made clear at the WCFBA General Secretariat in Stuttgart, Bishop Ablondi hopes that the laity, given the power of speech again by the Bible (in the early history of the Local Church they were reduced to silence) will provide a beneficial example for secularized Europe. He also felt the importance of re-emphasizing the sometimes depreciated true values of popular devotion in the Church. Even here, said Bishop Ablondi, who was recently commissioned by the Italian Bishops' Conference to visit Mexico and Guatemala, South America appeared to hold a leading position in the Catholic World Church.

BOLIVIA - Publications of the Biblical Department of the Episcopal Commission for Catechesis.

The Biblical Department of the Episcopal Commission for Catechesis in Bolivia has sent us a list of biblical aids published in Spanish to promote the biblical apostolate throughout the country. Some titles from the catalogue are: "ABC of the Bible", "The Bible, the book of God's People", "Concise dictionary of the Bible", "The Parables", "The hope of a struggling people", "Amos, the peasant prophet", "The Bible, a flower without protection", "It is indeed the land of Jesus".

Further information: Departamento de Biblia, Potosí 814, Casilla 7857, La Paz, Bolivia.

BRAZIL: Year of the Bible in the diocese of Pelotas

The diocese of Pelotas in the state of Rio Grande has over 500,000 inhabitants. It comprises 300 basic communities in which 1,500 groups meet for reflection. In order to celebrate its 75 years of existence the diocese proclaimed 1985 as "Year of the Bible". The following programme for biblical formation on three levels was proposed:

- A **first level** for the benefit of the reflection groups. Formation takes place with the help of three biblical workbooks: Introduction to Bible reading, Introduction to the Old Testament and Introduction to the Gospel of St. Matthew.
- A **second level** for parishes; a course of introduction to the Bible and to the Old Testament.
- A **third level** aimed at the entire diocese and containing a two-day workshop for the laity as well as a five-day workshop for priests on Bible reading based on the Gospel according to Matthew.

The diocesan team for the formation of biblical animators was given responsibility for coordinating this Year of the Bible. It produced biblical booklets and organized meetings on diocesan level. 1,500 Bibles were sold during Bible Year. Biblical aids as well as 12 copies of the book "Nossos Pais nos Contaram" were sent to every parish. A biblical library was set up. Two booklets containing Bible reading methods and the history and geography of Israel were distributed for the use of the 300 biblical animators.

Throughout the Year of the Bible the biblical dimension has had particular influence over the pastoral areas of the diocese: catechesis, social work, liturgy, youth, ministering to working classes, farming communities, etc.

Further information:

Sr. Marie Bernadete Sturm, Equipo do formacion de agentes, Diocesis de Pelotas, Caixa Postal 260, 96100 Pelotas, BRAZIL.

CHILE - First National Workshop for the Biblical Apostolate.

Reflection, exchange of experiences and recommendations: these were the three elements which made up the First National Workshop for the Biblical Apostolate held in Chile during August 1986. Among the subjects entered upon were: "The Bible, ecumenism and sects: pastoral problems"; "The liturgy, privileged place of the Word of God"; "For an evangelization which takes seriously the culture and the Word"; "Bible and apostolate"; "The Bible in popular religiosity".

PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA: Printing of Bibles.

The People's Republic of China has about five million Christians. On the Protestant side, the arrival of a new printing press gives rise to the hope that from now on 250,000 Chinese Bibles and 500,000 editions of the New Testament will be printed annually. Two Catholic Bible editions exist: a complete Bible (Peking 1981) adapted from an old translation and a completely new translation of the four Gospels (Shanghai 1986).

COLOMBIA: First national meeting for the biblical apostolate

The first national meeting for the biblical apostolate took place from 14-17 November last year. We hope to publish more information on this meeting in a future number of BULLETIN DEI VERBUM.

COLOMBIA: Meeting of scripture professors

From 22-23 October 1986 scripture professors of the various seminaries in Colombia came together to analyse and reformulate the sacred Scripture programmes used in seminaries in order to achieve better coordination. Research work to establish the criteria for such coordination was carried out prior to the meeting.

GREAT BRITAIN, Birmingham: Pastoral letter on "Reading the Bible".

On the occasion of Lent this year the Archbishop of Birmingham, Msgr. Couve de Murville, addressed a pastoral letter concerning the importance of Bible reading to all his faithful. Having recalled the essential role of the Bible in the celebration of the eucharist and pointed to the connection between the Old and New Testaments, the Archbishop appealed to the faithful to read the Bible at home: "Don't forget that by Baptism and Confirmation you have received the Holy Spirit too. He is a real spiritual guide. His gifts of knowledge and understanding, given at Confirmation, are used when we try to understand the words of Scripture". Reading the Bible is working for the growth of ecumenism. A copy of this letter can be obtained from the General Secretariat (WCFBA, Postfach 601, 7000 Stuttgart 1, West Germany).

INDIA - Bible translation in Tamil.

On 19th and 20th April 1986 a meeting on the interconfessional Bible translation in the Tamil language took place in Shembaganur, India. Representatives from the Bible

Society of India and the Catholic Church got together to consider the present translation method and to discuss problems encountered so far. A report on this meeting will be published in English and Tamil. Further information: St. Paul's Bible Institute, Poonamallée, Madras 600 056, India.

ITALY - STUDY WEEK ON POPULAR BIBLE READING

From 19th to 24th January this year the "Centro Ecclesiale Italiano America Latina" in Verona organized a study week on popular Bible reading. Based on experiences in Africa, Latin America and Italy, the participants reflected on the specific features, requirements, functions, limitations and possibilities of such a reading. It would appear that, among the various types, popular Bible reading is of a particularly lively nature. It does not limit itself simply to the comprehension of abstract ideas. It is the quest of the Spirit who calls together and assembles the poor, the nameless, the unprotected, the marginal groups, the voiceless and the powerless to become a people - the people of God by grace of the message of the "kingdom".

Further information: C.E.I.A.L., via Bacilieri n.1/A, S. Masimo, 37139 Verona, ITALY.

ITALY: The Italian Biblical Association and the next Synod.

The next synod of Bishops will have as its theme "The vocation and mission of the laity in the Church and in the world". The Italian Biblical Association has devoted the most recent number of its review "Parole di vita" to a study of the laity in the light of scriptural facts. (Parole di Vita No. 6/1986, Editrice Elle Di Ci, 10096 LEUMANN TO, ITALY).

JAPAN - Bible translation in modern Japanese

After 18 years of work, the Japanese Bible Society will publish an interconfessional translation of the Bible in Japanese this year. Over 100 experts, both Protestant and Catholic, have worked together on this project.

MALAYSIA, Kuala Lumpur: Biblical holiday camps for young people.

Among the many activities of the Pastoral Institute, which is well known far beyond the borders of the country, special mention should be made of the "biblical camps". These help young people to deepen their

faith and to defend themselves in the face of attacks by the sects.

Further information: Pastoral Institute, 528 Jalan Bukit Nanas, 50250 Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

MALTA: The Bible Society

The Bible Society of Malta, an associate member of the Federation, publishes a quarterly magazine *Kliem il-Hajja* in the Maltese language for a total of 17,000 subscribers. It also organizes an annual "Bible Sunday", and is currently preparing a Biblical Quarterly Review.

MEXICO - The work of the centre "DIFUSORA BIBLICA".

The centre "Difusora Biblica" of the Capuchin Fathers represents Mexico as member of the Federation. Its main activities in 1986 included the following: reflection on the international theme of peace, preparation of a translation of the New Testament in modern Spanish, biblical apostolate for youth and for Spanish-speaking immigrants in the United States, courses and workshops for nuns and seminarists, Bible days in various parts of the country.

Further information: Difusora Biblica, Ruiz Cortinez 20, Cd. Victoria, Tam-Mexico.

PAKISTAN - Bible Enthronisation in Churches

Making the Bible the centre of every Catholic home will be the focus of all Church activities in Pakistan on Bible Sunday, February 22nd, when the Bible will be enthroned in all churches.

Bible Sunday will mark the introduction on a national level of the biblical apostolate which so far has been confined mainly to the Karachi archdiocese. The greatest problem is the low level of literacy. Pakistan has about 500,000 Catholics. Of Pakistan's 90 million people roughly 1.5% are Christians.

PAKISTAN - Karachi: Formation of Bible promoters.

Two seminars in Urdu and one in English were conducted at the Catechetical Centre of Karachi. The purpose was to form a group of Bible promoters. Furthermore, during the year 1986 eight Bible Days were held in different parishes in Karachi.

PAPUA NEW GUINEA - The work of the Biblical Sub-commission.

The Catholic Bible Apostolate Sub-Commission (CBA), which assembled from 22nd-25th

September 1986 in Goroka, New Guinea, defined its work as follows:

- to make the biblical apostolate a priority in pastoral practice with pastoral use of the Bible not limited to liturgy and catechesis.
- to foster the growth of small groups and communities (especially in families and among youth) centred on the Bible.
- to promote in small communities a reading and study of the Bible which discerns the signs of the times and motivates to action.
- to promote biblical training of lay leaders and those engaged in pastoral work.
- to foster the use of the Bible as a book of prayer especially in the family.
- to exchange information about initiatives and experiences in the field of the biblical apostolate especially within Papua New Guinea.
- to evaluate, encourage and communicate these initiatives.
- to develop guidelines and some programmes.
- to promote regular and systematic fund raising for the biblical apostolate.

Some guidelines for evaluating biblical apostolate programmes:

- a) How does the programme promote a personal conversion to the Father in Jesus Christ?
- b) Does it help believers to discern God's activity and God's challenge in the situation in which they live, i.e. "to read the signs of the times", and does it motivate them to "service to the world"?
- c) Does it help believers to grow as a Christian community?

Further information: Catholic Bible Apostolate Sub-Commission, Goroka, PAPUA NEW GUINEA.

PERU: First national meeting for the biblical apostolate

Chaciacayo was the venue of the first national meeting for the biblical apostolate to be held in Peru. Organized by the Episcopal Commission for the Doctrine of the Faith, this event, which took place from 7-10 October 1986, reunited diocesan pastoral leaders. Participants reflected on criteria for interpreting the Conciliar Constitution DEI VERBUM as well as on the prophetic, ecclesial and catechetical character of sacred Scripture. They made several practical proposals for better coordination of their efforts and expressed the desire for a college or institute for the biblical apostolate on the national level. A mobile team is to be set up in order to focus biblical pastoral work on those areas in which it is called for.

PHILIPPINES - Second National Congress on the Biblical Apostolate.

From 23rd to 27th February 1987 biblical

animators from the Philippines met for their second congress. The following recommendations were formulated on this occasion:

- "- That the Episcopal Commission for the Biblical Apostolate (ECBA) forge and strengthen the ties among the regional centres and regional directors which constitute the National Council of the Biblical Apostolate.
- That a national magazine be published quarterly by ECBA.
- That a Eucharistic Bible Festival be held in conjunction with the National Eucharistic Celebration in the Philippines sometime in September 1987.
- That ECBA encourage the rewriting of the traditional novenas and para-liturgical devotions so as to imbue them with scriptural orientation in coordination with the Liturgical Committee.
- That the next National Workshop be held in the third week of February 1988.
- That ECBA, all centres and dioceses make an outreach programme of the Biblical Apostolate for Filipinos abroad in conjunction with the Episcopal Commission on Migration and Tourism."

PHILIPPINES: Festival of Bible Songs.

The Center for the Biblical Apostolate in Abra organized its Sixth Festival of Bible Songs on February 8th, 1987. 36 groups of young people entered this competition with their own compositions.

PHILIPPINES: National Bible Week.

The last week of January 1987 (26.1-1.2) was proclaimed "National Bible Week" by the president of the Philippines, Corazon Aquino. The week concluded with the celebration of Bible Sunday.

PORTUGAL - Ninth National Bible Week

Organized by the National Movement for Biblical Dynamism of the Capuchins, the Ninth National Bible Week was held in Fatima from 31st August to 5th September 1986. Over 700 people arrived from every direction. The theme of the week was "Genesis: from dream to hope for the promised land".

The Tenth National Bible Week, also in Fatima, will take place from 30th August to 4th September 1987 under the theme "The Apocalypse".

Before then, on 18th/19th July this year, the National Meeting of Biblical Groups will also be held in Fatima.

Further information: Difusora Biblica, Av. Cons. Barjona de Freitas, 12, 1500 Lisbon, Portugal.

THAILAND - Distribution of Bibles in Buddhist monasteries.

In order to facilitate understanding and dialogue with the Buddhists in the country, the bishop of Chiang Mai has launched an appeal to all Catholics to buy Bibles for distribution among the novices and monks of the 31,628 Buddhist temples throughout the country.

* * * * *

BOOKS AND OTHER PUBLICATIONS

* * * * *

Gerd Theißen, Der Schatten des Galiläers, Historische Jesusforschung in erzählender Form, Chr. Kaiser, Munich, W. Germany, 1986. When an accredited New Testament scholar and expert in early Christian sociology writes a Jesus-story, this is already a noteworthy event in itself. When, on top of this, his narrative form of translation makes the historical Jesus-research transparent for the reader, the reading of such a book can become a delight even for those who are no laymen in exegetical matters. Such is the case with Gerd Theißen's book which we present here.

Gerd Theißen writes on two different levels: On the one hand there is a story out of the public life of Jesus of Nazareth, in which a Jewish merchant is blackmailed into spying for the Roman occupation forces in order to collect informational material about the political and religious groupings within Judaism. In this way, the many different movements in Palestine at that time are presented very realistically to the reader: the Qumran-Essenes, the Zealots, the Pharisees, the Herodians, the Sadducees and finally the Jesus movement as well. Through the narrative perspective of the observer, the reader becomes familiar with all these trends and can form an accurate picture of the times. If these narrative dealings were all it had to offer, however, Theißen's book would hardly differ from other attempts at story-telling (Rinser, Fussenegger, ...), apart from being better researched.

Here the second level becomes important. By means of footnotes Gerd Theißen provides continuous information on his sources which the interested reader, if familiar with

them, can look up. This should be of particular value to theology students, though by no means only to them. Furthermore, between the individual chapters of his story Theißen inserts fictive letters addressed to his "Dear Colleague Kratzinger", in which he justifies his narrative effort chapter by chapter. In this way an exciting, although naturally one-sided, conversation develops between a New Testament scholar and his fictive critic which serves well to reveal Theißen's scriptural interpretation of a "narrative theology".

Its unusual construction makes this book interesting for a great variety of reader groups. One can simply read the story and ignore the incorporated letters and footnotes. This leaves one with a fascinating story which also provides a fairly realistic picture of the time of Jesus: entertainment coupled with study. Anyone who is interested in historical Jesus-research, and this must in fact include all those who concentrate their efforts more on the New Testament, can use the source indications to obtain an excellent introduction to this branch of theological research. If he then includes the letters, which are also written in a very lively manner, he can discover quite a bit about the methodology of a narrative theology, something which he would otherwise have to glean from the few existing narrative textbooks.

In spite of its delight in narration, this book is factually based ("Dear Colleague Kratzinger, ... my book contains nothing about Jesus which I haven't also taught at university." P.9) and can only be warmly recommended to everybody.

Dieter Bauer.

Liturgical Year A: presentation of the gospel according to Saint Matthew.

Three of our members have sent us different and complementary presentations of the gospel of Matthew.

* KATHOLISCHES BIBELWERK (Stuttgart, Federal Republic of Germany) = **Matthäus Evangelium, Stuttgarter kleiner Kommentar, Neues Testament, 1, by Meinrad Limbeck, 1986.** A brief scientific commentary, complete, consistent and up-to-date.

* Service biblique EVANGILE ET VIE (Paris, France) = **Matthieu le théologien, Cahier EVANGILE No. 58, by Jean Zumstein, 1987.** A theological synthesis centred round the two main axis of the first gospel: the teachings of Christ who fulfilled the Law and the community of the disciples in the face of Israel and of the heathens.

* Société Catholique de la Bible, SOCABI, (Montreal, Quebec, Canada) = **"Du neuf et du vieux..." dans l'évangile selon saint Matthieu, collection "de la parole à l'écriture" No. 6, by Philippe Gendron, 1986.** This pedagogical instrument, based on observations on 20 themes, helps the reader to actively uncover a central problem of the Church of Matthew, the tension between novelty and tradition, between "the new and the old".

Basic Bible Seminar, second edition, John Paul I Biblical Center, Vigan, Philippines, 1982.

It is well known that the Bible has played a vital role in the history of certain countries. This is the case with the Philippines. The Biblical Center in Vigan tries to provide simple tools for animators in the biblical apostolate. It has organized several Basic Bible Seminars in the region. From its own experience it recommends seminars of a continuous development type. This booklet, an excellent example of properly called "biblical apostolate", has also been adopted by other regions.

Cahiers Bibliques Africains, No. 1, January 1987, CEBAM/BICAM, Nairobi, Kenya.

We greet the appearance of the new biblical apostolate review "Cahiers Bibliques Africains" published by the Centre Biblique Catholique pour l'Afrique et Madagascar. The first number includes:

- What is biblical apostolate?
- Experiences and discoveries with the Bible in West Africa.
- The problems of the exegetical methods today.
- Prophecy, ecstasy and the gift of languages in biblical spirituality.

Information: BICAM, P.O. Box 24215,
KAREN-NAIROBI/KENYA

EINE GESCHICHTE, DIE NIE ENDET: Volume I, THE PEOPLE OF ISRAEL, stories from the O.T. illustrated in comic form, MISSIO ACTUELL VERLAG, Aachen, W. Germany.

With this volume the Pontifical Mission Aid Society has made a Spanish publication available to German children. Problems encountered in biblical history are presented to the young reader within the framework of a story about a group of children in a holiday camp. If this book is intended as an initial approach towards a world of the Bible, its slightly raised price enables the funding agency to print children's Bibles for distribution in Third World countries.

"PARABOLES", a quarterly magazine published by the SOCIÉTÉ CATHOLIQUE DE LA BIBLE (SOCABI), Montreal, Quebec, Canada. This popular and attractive magazine, intended by SOCABI as a service to the biblical apostolate, is delivered free of charge in the French-speaking part of Canada. Each pedagogically composed number concentrates on a different theme (the last one, January-February, dealt with the Sermon on the Mount). "Paraboles" also reports on the many biblical-pastoral activities of the various dioceses of Quebec: Bible groups, exhibitions, National Bible Week, workshops... Further information: SOCABI, 7400, boul. St. Laurent 519, Montreal, Quebec H2R 2Y1, Canada.

Tatort Korinth, the annual theme proposed by Katholische Jungschar Österreichs, Vienna, Austria, 1986/87.

This year the Catholic Youth Funding Agency of Austria recommends pedagogical materials for group meetings. The theme chosen this year is based on Paul's letter to the Corinthians. The purpose is to find out about the lives of early Christian communities which, in much the same way as the Christian communities of today, were confronted with the problem of attacks on their faith in Christ. Maps, panels, questionnaires... the method proposed is very active.

François Castel, Comienzos, los once primeros capítulos del Génesis, Verbo Divino, Estella, Spain, 1987.

This excellent commentary, both informative and open, renders service to biblical animators and allows them to rediscover the true flavour of the first eleven chapters of the Bible which bear important questions on humanity. It was first published in French through Centurion Publications.

Oswald Hirmer, Our Journey Together, a Guide for the Christian Community to accompany adult catechumens on their journey of faith, Lumko Institute, South Africa, 1987.

The Bible holds a special place in this guide intended to accompany catechumens on their path.

Jacob Kremer, Die Bibel - ein Buch für alle, Verlag Katholisches Bibelwerk, Stuttgart, 1986.

The sub-title states: "Justification and limits of 'simple' Scripture reading". Every Christian must have access to the Bible, and each has a right to 'simple' Scripture reading which does not follow the path of biblical science or various methods. However, this reading does have its limits. Thus anyone who is not aware of the gradual

genesis of biblical texts is in danger of failing to take seriously the Word of God set forth in history. It is doubtless not a matter of weighing 'simple' Scripture reading against biblical science, but of seeing in what ways these can support each other.

Peter Madros, History and Faith, Texts and Documents, Jerusalem, 1986.

Rev. Pierre Madros of the Latin Patriarchy in Jerusalem strives to reply to questions and objections raised against the Christians of his country by the very active sects. This booklet contains passages in Arabic, English, French and Spanish. It presents historical and archaeological texts and evidence of the existence of Jesus, the apostles, the Apocrypha and the so-called gospel of Barnabas.

Carlos Mesters, Lecturas Biblicas, guías de trabajo para un curso bíblico, Verbo Divino, Estella, Espagne, 1986.

God needs us, and we need God. This conviction animates every recommendation for biblical-pastoral work made in this book, the product of an expert in matters concerning the biblical apostolate. He knows how to draw forth from the Bible the demands life makes on us (texts of life) in order to see whether the Bible (biblical texts) is able to help us to respond to our problems today. This course is followed by each of the themes dealt with: wisdom literature, the parables, the sermon on the mount, the person of Jesus Christ, a new heaven and a new earth. This book is the Spanish translation of the work "Círculos bíblicos" published in Brazil.

William G. Thompson, sj, Paul and his Message for Life's Journey, Paulist Press, New York, USA, 1986.

Paul appears inaccessible to many people. Here is a pleasant little book which invites one to get to know him by way of dialogue, study and prayer. This method is inductive: it begins and ends with the reader's own experience.

Heinz Schürmann, Rosenkranz und Jesusgebet, Anleitung zum inneren Beten, Herder, Freiburg-Basel-Vienna, 1986.

The rosary promotes access to the mystery of Jesus. This prayer method draws its nourishment from the gospels. In this booklet Heinz Schürmann, having recalled that the rosary can bring us closer to Jesus' own prayer, gives instructions for praying the rosary in accordance with the readings from the three-year liturgical cycle.

SUBSCRIPTION FEE REMINDER

This issue is the third number of BULLETIN DEI VERBUM. As already announced, our financial situation does not permit us to continue sending our Bulletin free of charge to those who received WORD-EVENT without payment. Our publications are sent gratis only to members, since the membership fee covers the expenses, and to those with whom a special arrangement has been made.

To those who wish to continue receiving the Bulletin and do not come under the above mentioned categories we therefore direct this final appeal: kindly return the subscription form and make arrangements for payment if you have not already done so since otherwise this will be the last issue of the Bulletin which we are able to send you. We hope for your understanding in this matter.

SUBSCRIPTION FORM FOR BULLETIN DEI VERBUM

Organization/Institute:.....

Mr/Mrs/Fr/Sr/Br:.....

Address:.....

.....

(Please use capital letters or type)

* I wish to subscribe to BULLETIN DEI VERBUM for the year 1987 (4 issues).

* I would prefer: () the English edition

() the French edition

() the German edition

* Category of subscription: () Ordinary: 12 US dollars (or equivalent)

() Supporting: 25 US dollars (or equivalent)

() Third World: 8 US dollars (or equivalent)

() Students: 8 US dollars (or equivalent)

* I wish to pay the airmail rate of 2 US dollars extra ().

* I enclose a cheque/money order for the amount indicated.

Date

Signature

-
- Payment of subscription fees should be made to:
WCFBA, Liga Bank, Speyer, Acc. No. 59820 (BLZ 547 903 00)
 - If you are able to, we would appreciate it if you would pay for a supporting subscription to help us cover production costs.