

Catholic Biblical Federation

N° 18

1/1991

*** * * The celebrations of the 25th anniversary of the Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation, "Dei Verbum" - Rome - Vienna - Bangalore - Hong Kong - Paris**
*** * * News and Information**
*** * * New members of the Federation**
*** * * Funding Agencies' letter to the Federation** * * *

*** * * Follow-up to the Plenary Assembly of Bogotá**

Bulletin

Dei Verbum

English Edition

The Catholic Biblical Federation (CBF) 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 CBF to promote biblical studies, support the production of pedagogical aids for a better understanding of biblical texts, and assist in the formation of ministers of the Word, such as biblical animators, lectors and catechists, suggesting ways to form Bible groups and recommending the use of both mass and group media to facilitate their encounter with the Word.

The Federation also wishes to promote a dialogue 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 those great tasks.

+ Alberto Ablondi, Bishop of Livorno
President of the CBF

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

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Copies of the Final Statement of the Bogotá Assembly and the Constitution of the Federation are available from the General Secretariat in Stuttgart in English, French, German and Spanish.

Editorial

Hong Kong, Rome, Vienna, Paris ... numerous were the commemorations on the occasion of the 25th anniversary of the conciliar document *DEI VERBUM*. You will find echoes of these on pages 4-8 and 13-15. The celebrations are more than just a remembering of an historic event. They shed light on the dynamic dimension of this document, give us a chance to evaluate which of its recommendations have been implemented, and also stimulate us to explore new ways to realize them. In other words, the inheritance must bear fruit. As Fr. Feldkämper stated, "The Federation, though bound to the implementation of *DEI VERBUM*, is not just concerned with the letter of the Council. It wants to realize the Council's directives in the changing conditions of today's Church and world." The Bogotá Plenary Assembly showed very clearly that this is the main concern of the Federation.

"We share the Plenary Assembly's vision of a Church which, in a time of a New Evangelization, commits itself with determination and courage to issues which are really **new**. We therefore encourage everyone to come to grips with this important, future-oriented document and to rethink and support the pastoral priorities in the different continents." The contact persons of the Funding Agencies, which support the Federation's work, expressed this desire in a letter to the members of the Federation (p.20).

The Bogotá Final Statement serves as a basis for a plan of action for the various regions. The guiding principles for the biblical apostolate in Latin American, developed by the coordinators of that region, are given as an example on the middle pages of this Bulletin. According to L. Feldkämper, "...the Federation intends to be a forum in which the members enrich each other by sharing the fruits of reading the Bible in their respective contexts." We sincerely welcome the new members to the Federation!

Marc Sevin

25 Year Celebration of the Conciliar Constitution DEI VERBUM

When the idea of a 25th anniversary celebration of the publication of the conciliar document DEI VERBUM surfaced, the editor of the BULLETIN DEI VERBUM asked himself: "What is the point of such a celebration? And why should it be twenty-five years and not thirty or fifty? There are more urgent things to do." It is true that it is not the celebration itself that is important, but rather the opportunity it provides to raise some questions: Where are we in the biblical apostolate and biblical-pastoral ministry 25 years after the Council? Which actions have been taken? What were the obstacles, achievements, and things left undone?

In short the celebrations of the 25th anniversary of DEI VERBUM provided an occasion to make the urgency and importance of the biblical apostolate and the biblical-pastoral ministry better known to the Christian communities. It may also offer new initiatives in all sectors of biblical activities. Providing an evaluation of the past, an analysis of the current situation and, above all, an inspiration for the biblical apostolate and biblical-pastoral ministry in the future, could very well be the benefits of such an anniversary. Following are examples of our commemorations:

ROME

On the 13th and 14th of December last year, the members of the Federation and the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity organized such a celebration in Rome.

On the 13th of December, Cardinal Carlo M. Martini of Milan presented the keynote address "Lectio Divina - Model

and Instrument of the Biblical Apostolate" (La lectio divina modello e strumento dell' apostolato biblico) to an audience of 600 persons in the Pontifical Gregorian University. The next issue of this BULLETIN DEI VERBUM will publish the entire text of the Cardinal's address.

In his welcome address, Bishop Ablondi, the President of the Federation, referred to the Pope's letter to our Plenary Assembly in Bogotá in which he mentioned interreligious dialogue. Bishop Ablondi said: "The Bible should become a bond of peace among all those who view Abraham as the father of their faith and all men and women of good will, in the words of Pope John Paul II:

"The Bible is also a treasure which in large part is revered in common with the Hebrew people, to whom the Church is united by a special spiritual bond since its beginnings. Lastly, this holy book, to which, in a certain way, the peoples of Islam relate, can inspire all interreligious dialogue between peoples that believe in God; and in this way it contributes towards bringing about a universal prayer, acceptable to God, for peace in the hearts of all."

Before Cardinal Martini's keynote address, Fr. Ludger Feldkämper, general secretary of the Federation, presented some views on "Twenty-five years of DEI VERBUM and the Catholic Biblical Federation." You may read this text on pages 5-7 of this issue.

On 14 December in the office of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity, a meeting took place with the Roman members of the Catholic Biblical Federation and representatives of the United Bible Societies. In his welcome address, Archbishop Cassidy, president of the Council, recalled, among other things, that the Catholic Biblical Federation was founded in 1969 as an autonomous Catholic organization enabling it among other things to cooperate specifically with the United Bible Societies. The Constitution of the Federation, so he added, was approved by the Vatican in 1985. He then suggested the following points for discussion:

1. In view of the extraordinary development and growth of the Catholic Biblical Federation over the past 20 years of its existence, what precisely is its mission, its charism in the Church?

2. How should the groups at the local or regional levels coordinate their activities with others who have responsibility for the apostolate? (I am thinking especially of certain areas in which the Bible is particularly important: liturgy, evangelization, spirituality, education, the apostolate of the laity);

3. At the apostolic level in terms of the responsibility given by Christ to the Twelve and handed on by them to the bishops of the Church, what is the best way to express the biblical service of the CBF? In theory, this is expressed in various ways in the Constitution itself:

- with references to the new code of canon law (II,1);
- with a reference to our Pontifical Council (II,2);
- with a reference to the bishops (III,0). On 14 June 1990,

the Holy Father explicitly invited the Federation to carry out its activities "under the direction of the bishops."

4. Besides the question of cooperation between the Catholic Biblical Federation and the United Bible Societies, let me refer briefly to a dimension of our meeting that seems to me worthy of attention, and which explains the reason for the invitation extended to the Jewish authorities. It is an expression of our awareness that a large part of the Sacred Scriptures is the sacred patrimony of the Jewish people, and was so before becoming our treasure. Of this fact we have often been reminded by Pope John Paul II.

During the course of the meeting, the representative of the regional secretary of the United Bible Societies for Europe and the Middle East, talked about the important achievements that DEI VERBUM had brought forth for the United Bible Societies. Above all, he made two points:

1. The foundation of the Catholic Biblical Federation has provided an ample exchange of information and friendship.

2. The publication of *The Guidelines for Interconfessional Cooperation in Translating the Bible*, of which the revised version was signed in this hall of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity on 16 November 1987, also was a valuable contribution. The fact that these "Guidelines" have been applied to more than 160 interconfessional translations demonstrates that we cooperate as colleagues in the study and in the service of the holy Word of God.

Then the representative of the UBS discussed the preoccupation of the United Bible Societies with the demand for Bibles from the countries of Orthodoxy and the problems of revising biblical texts in these countries: "In our common service of the Word of God, we, Catholics and Protestants, have come to learn in the course of 25 years after DEI VERBUM to respect one another. In this moment when the orthodox Christians participate in this service, I wish and pray that we, thanks to the gift of God's love and patience of the Holy Spirit, may learn to grow in this trust towards one another: Catholics, Orthodox Christians, Protestants..."

In the subsequent papal audience, Pope John Paul II recalled the actuality of DEI VERBUM. He stated that although great progress has been made in the field of the biblical apostolate much remains to be done. The full text of the Pope's address can be found on pages 8 and 13 of this BULLETIN. The importance of this address should become clear to the members of the Federation as they work in the field of the biblical apostolate.

* * *

Report of the Secretary General 25 Years of DEI VERBUM and the Catholic Biblical Federation

Commemorating the 25 years of DEI VERBUM means more than recalling an historical date. It means calling to mind the dynamics of this conciliar document. It means answering the question of how the hopes of the Council Fathers concerning "a new surge of spiritual vitality from intensified veneration for God's Word which 'lasts forever' (Is 49,8; cf. 1 Petr 1,23-25) (DV 26)" have been fulfilled! In other words: We cannot celebrate the 25th anniversary of DEI VERBUM without looking at its "Wirkungsgeschichte."

For an adequate review, more time would be needed than is available now. For that reason I would like to draw your attention - in all brevity - to two aspects (momenti) of the "Wirkungsgeschichte" of DEI VERBUM, namely the Catholic Biblical Federation, as the official organization for the implementation of the pastoral principles expressed in the 6th chapter of DEI VERBUM and the recent 4th Plenary Assembly of the Federation. The latter, under the theme "The Bible in the New Evangelization" was held in Bogotá, Colombia,

precisely also to commemorate the Constitution DEI VERBUM.

In the distributed leaflet you will find all important data concerning the Federation's aims, history and structure. Therefore, I would like to limit myself to highlighting some important aspects:

1. The task of implementing the pastoral principles and directives of DEI VERBUM is clearly spelled out in the descriptions of the aims of the Federation in Article III of the Federation's Constitution, consisting mostly of quotations from DEI VERBUM, Chapter VI.

The purpose of the Federation is to foster and support the work of Catholic organizations for biblical-pastoral ministry which, throughout the world, collaborate with the bishops to make the Word of God available to all (DV Ch. VI).

- *by promoting:*

translations and widespread distribution of the Sacred Scriptures, since "easy access to Sacred Scripture should be provided for all the Christian faithful" (DV 22);

the study, understanding and use of the Bible among Catholic clergy and people, since "all the clergy... (and all) who are legitimately active in the ministry of the Word" as well as "all the Christian faithful" are to learn "through diligent sacred reading and careful study of the divine Scriptures the excellent knowledge of Jesus Christ" (cf. DV 25).

a pastoral care that is solidly founded on the Scriptures since "like the Christian religion itself, all the preaching of the Church must be nourished and ruled by Sacred Scripture" (DV 21);

all means whereby "as many ministers of the divine Word as possible will be able effectively to provide the nourishment of the Scriptures for the People of God" (DV 23);

- *by organizing, assisting and maintaining:*

coordination centers for the biblical-pastoral ministry;

interdiocesan and international sharing of biblical courses, study materials, lectures, etc.;

co-operation with the United Bible Societies and with other organizations in matters of mutual concern (cf DV 22);

- *by assisting local churches in need with their biblical-pastoral ministry.*

Hence, the Federation has a very clear mandate from the Second Vatican Council and for the implementation of its important directives for the biblical apostolate.

Even though the Constitution DEI VERBUM, and in particular its 6th chapter, are often quoted, the directives relevant to Sacred Scripture in other Council documents belong to the Federation's agenda as well.

2. The Federation, as a worldwide Catholic organization approved by the Holy See, stands at the service of the local churches. Its members are "administratively distinct international and local organizations committed to the biblical-pastoral ministry and having ecclesiastical recognition" (CIC 298-326).

The service for the local churches results from the description of the category of Full Members:

A Full Member is the Catholic organization entrusted by the Bishops' Conference or equivalent authority, with an official mandate for the biblical-pastoral ministry which has applied for membership. (Art. IV,1.1).

For this reason, the Federation is committed to the task of fostering a reading of the Bible "in context."

It sees itself as an instrument for the inculturation and incarnation of the Word of God.

3. Another distinctive mark of our organization is its federative character. The members of the Catholic Biblical Federation, though autonomous, are committed in solidarity to mutual support. At the same time, the Federation intends to be a forum in which the members enrich each other by sharing the fruits of reading the Bible in their respective contexts. Hence, the Federation considers itself as an instrument for a "catholic" all-embracing reading of the Bible.

4. With its emphasis on making the Scriptures available to all, to Christians (DV 22) and even to members of other religions (DV 25), the Federation stands for an "ecumenical" reading of the Bible in a threefold sense:

- The Federation promotes a reading of the Bible within the Catholic Church, in which all members of the Church have their special competences: the Magisterium, the Scripture scholars, as well as the faithful, to the majority of whom direct and ample access to the Scriptures was not available for so long.

- The Federation, recognizing that "a love, veneration and near cult of the Sacred Scriptures lead our brethren (i.e., Christians of other Churches and ecclesial communities) to a constant study of the sacred text" (UR 21), works together with (organizations of) other Christians, in particular the United Bible Societies, in making the Scriptures available to all.

- The Federation, finally and ultimately convinced that the "seeds of the Word" (AG 11) found in other religions must be enshrined especially in the scriptures

and traditions venerated by them, wants to be an instrument for dialogue - precisely through their venerated scriptures and traditions.

5. The Federation, though bound to the implementation of DEI VERBUM, is not just concerned with the letter of the Council. It wants to realize the Council's directives in the changing conditions of today's Church and world. Hence, every six years on the occasion of the Plenary Assemblies, it sets itself a concrete program in the theme of the Assembly and its Final Statement. The Federation's Plenary Assemblies are so to speak exercises in "listening to what the spirit is saying to the Churches." The first two Plenary Assemblies in 1972 and 1978 underlined, as it were, the importance of the Word of God and Sacred Scripture in relation to the life and activities of the Church: the Bible and liturgy (Vienna), the Bible and catechesis as well as spirituality (Malta). Then a shift seems to have taken place from a somewhat church-centered view and direction in the Federation's biblical-pastoral ministry to an orientation more attentive to the world. The Assembly of Bangalore (1984) had as its theme "God's prophetic people" ("Would that all were prophets") and Bogotá (1990): "The Bible in the New Evangelization" ("Behold, I make all things new").

The Final Statement of Bogotá, the Federation's President Bishop Ablondi has suggested, may be considered as the gift of the Federation to the Church on the occasion of the 25th anniversary of DEI VERBUM. Indeed, this document is both an indication of the vitality of the Federation, of the 70 Full and 170 Associate Members in some 90 countries of the world; it is a summary of the manifold challenges for the biblical-pastoral ministry, i.e., for the implementation of DEI VERBUM in the years to come. The four parts entitled "The Call for a New Evangelization," "What We Understand by the New Evangelization," "How Does the New Evangelization Become Good News" and "A New Way of Reading the Bible" summarize the reflections of the Assembly's 140 delegates from 70 different countries and summarize their convergent views of what the biblical-pastoral ministry is all about.

They conclude with outlining five new thrusts for the biblical-pastoral ministry, namely:

- a thrust from the book to the Word
- a thrust from the institutional structure to a creative presence
- a thrust from clergy to laity
- a thrust from a private reading to a transforming presence in the world

- a thrust from the Church to the Reign of God

The fifth and last part of the document highlights and underlines once again in its opening paragraphs that the Federation's concern and task is DEI VERBUM. Let me read, in conclusion these important paragraphs:

In order to make sure that the Bible is not only possessed and read but also believed and lived, we make the following recommendations:

We appeal to Bishops and Bishops' Conferences to ensure that the Dogmatic Constitution DEI VERBUM is implemented in the various dioceses and regions through the establishment of biblical-pastoral centers or institutes.

We appeal to Bishops and Bishops' Conferences to give the biblical apostolate the priority it deserves in their pastoral endeavors and to encourage it through the formulation of a biblical-pastoral plan and through the conscientization of the faithful through pastoral letters on the biblical apostolate or other appropriate means such as the celebration of Bible Sundays, weeks, months or even a Bible year, especially in those areas where this is not yet a practice.

We appeal to Bishops and Bishops' Conferences to dedicate the next Synod of the Bishops to "Biblical-Pastoral Ministry" so that the relative neglect of the Conciliar Document "Dei Verbum" may be set right.

The relative neglect, mentioned in the last sentence, was lamented by both the Bishops' Synod of 1985, 20 years after the closing of the Council, and by Pope John Paul II in 1986, when he addressed the Executive Committee of the Federation. The hopes of the Council Fathers, expressed in the final words of DEI VERBUM, certainly have not yet been fulfilled.

In addressing our Plenary Assembly the Pope stated: "Twenty-five years have passed since the promulgation of the Constitution DEI VERBUM and the task that has to be carried out ... is still large." Yet, we are confident that in the 25 years to come, another big step - or many small steps! - will be taken in fulfilling the hopes of the Church 25 years ago. Our hope is based not only on the hunger and thirst for the Word of God which God's Holy Spirit has roused in the Church; but it is ultimately based on the power and force of the Word of God itself, which is living and active!

12 December 1990

Fr. Ludger Feldkämper, SVD
- General Secretary -

Message of Pope John Paul II on the Occasion of the 25th Anniversary of Dei Verbum

1. Today we are celebrating the 25th anniversary of the Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation, *Dei Verbum*, and we praise the Lord who guided the Fathers gathered in the Second Vatican Council who were "hearing the word of God with reverence and proclaiming it confidently" (n.1).

This document has had a positive effect on the deepening of the knowledge of the faith and the Church's mission throughout the post-conciliar period. It is still timely for today and the future. The Council Fathers taught that the *reverent hearing* of the Word of God and its *confident proclamation* are essential elements of the Church's life and mission, "so that by hearing the message of salvation, the whole world may believe; by believing, it may hope; and by hoping, it may love" (ibid.).

2. If we look towards the past, we must give thanks to the Lord who guides the Church with his Spirit towards an ever deeper knowledge of his Word passed on through the Sacred Scriptures which reveal to the world his beloved Son, Jesus Christ, our Saviour and Redeemer.

The President of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity has just recalled the main stages of this journey from the publication of the Encyclical *Providentissimus Deus* in 1893 to the recent practical ecumenial "Directives" for interconfessional Bible translations which were published in 1987.

The Pontifical Biblical Commission, which was established at the beginning of the century, has made a valuable contribution to the progress of the Catholic Biblical Movement. Thus, in a rigorous doctrinal context the reflection which opened the way for the Constitution *Dei Verbum* was deepened.

Among the noted figures of biblical study and apostolate, I would like to make grateful mention of Fr. Marie-Joseph Lagrange who founded the *Ecole Biblique* in Jerusalem 100 years ago; Cardinal Augustin Bea, Rector of the Pontifical Biblical Institute in Rome and a great promoter of the Catholic Biblical Movement, who was later called by Pope John XXIII to serve the cause of Christian unity and dialogue with the Jewish people. In the light of such a long path, the Council's document reveals a constant timeliness.

3. In order to recognize the full importance of the Constitution *Dei Verbum*, we should first of all recall that it is a *dogmatic* Constitution which treats of *divine revelation*, and not only biblical writings. *Dei Verbum*, the opening words of which serve to designate the document, are not, as people are sometimes tempted to think, a mere synonym for "Sacred Scripture"; its meaning is

broader and more complete: it designates the living Word of God as God continually communicates it to the Church and through the Church, to arouse the faith and lead human beings in a life of communion with God and one another.

Written words do not suffice for the transmission of this living and life-giving Word; they must be carried along by a current of life which gives them soul, the current of the great Tradition which, docile to the Holy Spirit, shows the texts in their true light and makes them bear fruit.

The Church's Magisterium is at the service of this transmission; it guarantees its fidelity, according to God's will. The Council indeed declares that "sacred Tradition, Sacred Scripture, and the teaching authority of the Church, in accord with God's most wise design, are so linked and joined together that one cannot stand without the others, and that all together and each its own way under the action of the one Holy Spirit contribute effectively to the salvation of souls" (DV 10).

4. Having said that, the Council's Constitution places at the centre of its perspective Sacred Scripture, which is truly the "Word of God (*locutio Dei*)... consigned to writing under the inspiration of the divine Spirit" (n.9), and which plays a role of primary importance for our relationship with God in faith, hope and love.

The doctrinal teaching of *Dei Verbum* on the inspiration of Scripture is truly enlightening and stimulating because it sheds great light on the divine and human character of the biblical texts. In Sacred Scripture it is God who speaks, but he speaks "through people and in a human fashion" (n.12). The books of the Bible "have God as their author," yet the people who composed them are also their "true authors" (n.11).

Thus it follows that, in order to be faithful to the very nature of the Bible, interpretation must avoid being one-sided. To claim with the fundamentalists that one understands the meaning of the Word of God without taking into consideration the human aspects of its expression leads to all sorts of errors and illusions. Inversely, whoever is limited to a positivist exegesis tends to lose sight of the essential message.

In its teaching the Council traced a safer path for the greater good of the People of God. It implicitly bound its experts not to take a too narrow concept in their work, a concept which would make their work sterile (cf. nn.12 and 23). It invited the theologians to see to it that the study of Sacred Scripture is the soul of theology, thus emphasizing the importance of Sacred Scripture in catechesis and liturgy (cf. nn. 24, 25). It reminded bishops

Follow-up to the Bogotá Assembly

In this section we will publish commentaries on the Final Statement and manifestations of the life of the Federation as it presents itself in the aftermath and development of the guidelines at the Bogotá Assembly. In this issue we present the Global Plan, developed at the meeting of the Latin American coordinators, which reveals their working perspective for the next few years according to the recommendations established in Bogotá.

We thank the various regions in advance for providing their documents to the Stuttgart Secretariat so that this section can be nourished, and above all, we hope that the research of some will stimulate others.

GLOBAL PLAN FOR THE LATIN AMERICAN SUBREGION OF THE CATHOLIC BIBLICAL FEDERATION (FEBIC-LA) 1990-1993

INTRODUCTION

The Fourth Plenary Assembly of the Catholic Biblical Federation (FEBIC in Spanish, formerly FEBICAM for World Catholic Federation for the Biblical Apostolate) gave the participants a special opportunity for mutual enrichment and for the exchange of concerns which can partly be found in the Final Statement or in the revised Constitution.

One of the most important concerns was the wish for a better structuring of the Federation on regional and subregional levels (General Constitution IX, 2 and 3).

Another concern was expressed in the fifth part of the Final Statement by recommending that "these structures are effective and function to promote the biblical apostolate" (Final Statement 8.2.1).

The representatives of the Federation's Latin American members, who expressed these concerns at the Plenary Assembly, successfully presented their suggestions at the meeting on July 3. They wanted assurance that the Latin American subregion is provided with a structure for a viable service.

With this in mind they gave their vote of confidence to the subregional coordinator and the zonal coordinators. It is these coordinators' tasks to form the first Executive Committee and to set up the administration of the new structure. Furthermore, they are responsible for improving the services of FEBIC.

The zonal coordinators, the subregional coordinator and the general secretary of the Federation met from October 18-20 in Mexico to implement the tasks given to them by the Latin American members. Dr. Eduardo Peña Vanegas, professor of methodology for pastoral planning of the Theological-Pastoral Institute of CELAM (Latin American Council of Bishops), who is also the Executive Secretary of CELAM's Department for the Laity, assisted us in this endeavor.

The result of our meeting was the Constitution for the Latin American subregion which will be published as soon as the suggestions for changes are inserted. Another significant outcome is the "global plan" as follows:

PART I

WORKING ON A FRAME OF REFERENCE

Due to the specific nature of the Catholic Biblical Federation, we think that the frame of reference should include the following elements for both the biblical apostolate and CBF:

- Mission, key principles, activities, working methods
- Strengths, weaknesses, opportunities

These elements lead us to a — CHALLENGE which leads us to a — PLAN.

MISSION

Without any doubt our working plan is based on the nature and the mission of our Federation.

First of all, we are a *Federation*. Therefore we respect the autonomy of the members, but we both strive for common goals. We do not claim to play the role of a diocese which has the ultimate responsibility for the biblical-pastoral ministry. Our function is to *serve* through animation, support and pro-

motion. We collaborate with the organizations of CELAM, and while our character is more charismatic, we respect their more institutional character.

KEY PRINCIPLES

First, **subsidiarity**. This is not meant in the sense of replacing, but of offering our hand to a weaker member, helping him grow while respecting his style and autonomy. This is logical since the pastoral ministry is something very concrete; it can be embodied in its regionalization. This can happen on various levels: between all members and the central coordination, and among the regional, subregional and zonal coordinators.

Second, **solidarity**. This is not meant in the sense of "paternalism," i.e. that the superior has to act. Rather, we want to put ourselves on the same level with the members who are responsible for each other and who work for the same mission.

Third, **autonomy of the members.** This principle is based on the specific nature of the Federation: an association of local organizations which are independent from each other in terms of administration and which are recognized by the Church. As a Federation, it is of utmost importance to respect the autonomy of the members.

Fourth, **decentralization.** Not everything should be governed by a central coordination. Above all, the Fourth Plenary Assembly insisted on regionalization (Final Statement 8.2).

ACTIVITIES

CBF *promotes*: a) a favorable environment and a climate for studying the Sacred Scriptures.

- b) a change of mentality and attitude, e.g., toward the relation of Bible/Magisterium or revelation.
- c) reflection, understanding, study and concrete research, e.g., Bible and popular religiosity, Bible and spiritualistic millennialism (experiences of Quéretaro).

CBF *supports*:

- a) a functional organization,
- b) Bible translations,
- c) initiatives for formation, above all for lay people and women,
- d) production of biblical-pastoral materials.

CBF *encourages* a more pastoral use of the Scriptures.

WORKING METHODS

The traditional Federation methods are: a) biblical-pastoral regional and subregional meetings, b) Plenary Assemblies, c) publications, d) a growing organization and structure according to the needs of the biblical-pastoral ministry, e) information and periodical reports.

STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

These elements should be regarded as "ad intra," i.e., they apply to FEBIC-LA internally.

First, **STRENGTHS** a) A specific "philosophy" of the Federation; one can say a certain already traditional mysticism about it.

- b) Constitution and Final Statement of the IV Plenary Assembly
- c) A significant structure and full-time staff
- d) A specific reputation which makes it easier for the members to receive financial support from the Funding Agencies
- e) A growing number of people in the Federation with conviction and experience in the biblical apostolate and exegetical training
- f) A relatively homogenous culture within the subregion
- g) A service of growing importance in the Church: the service of the Word
- h) A considerable number of Bishops' Conferences with membership in the Federation

Second, **WEAKNESSES** a) Experience predominates over training, b) staff insufficient in number and overworked with a multiplicity of simultaneous tasks, c) subregional economic dependency, d) little communication, e) inadequate public relations and advertising.

OPPORTUNITIES AND RISKS

These elements should be considered "ad extra," i.e., in respect to the level at which the internal organization of FEBIC-LA is situated: in society in general and in the Church.

First, **OPPORTUNITIES** a) There is hunger for the Word of God and for more dialogue. Growing poverty makes people sensitive to the Word. The humanities and linguistics also lead to the study of the Bible. b) actual specific circumstances of today such as 25th anniversary of Dei Verbum, 500 years after the evangelization of America, the approaching of the year 2000, the necessity of a New Evangelization, the danger of sects and religious movements, the merging of a new humanism with openness towards the transcendent. c) the openness of some Bishops' Conferences, d) impulses of the Magisterium towards reading of the Word, e) a growing diffusion of the idea of a worldwide Synod on the Bible.

Second, **RISKS** a) deficient readings of the Bible from different points of view with radical or theologically conservative tendencies, leading in individualistic, spiritualistic and anthropologically negative directions, b) secularism, obsession with sexuality and misuse of biogenetics, c) misery and anguish of survival, d) polarization of tendencies and groups which leads to division (e.g., in the case of "Palabra Vida"), e) the growing discrepancy between the rich and the poor, supported by a conservative mentality, even with religious justifications, in areas where people are looking for change.

CHALLENGES

First, **CHALLENGES FOR THE BIBLICAL APOSTOLATE**

a) solid formation of biblical animators in all sectors, b) change of mentality in some fields of the hierarchy and among priests in respect to the use of the Bible: from applying the Bible for the proof of a "theological thesis" to an authentically theological and pastoral use, c) a reading of the Bible as Good News for the poor, d) a reading which incarnates itself in a situation overcoming various polarized types of reading and giving the Scriptures the place which it deserves in the life of the people of God; consequently, a responsible and appropriate reading of the Bible which meets the challenges of today and the new humanism, e) overcoming a biblical improvising and oversimplified use of the Bible by an effective program, f) the necessary attention within the biblical apostolate to the laity, above all to women, inculturation and environmental problems.

Second, **CHALLENGES FOR FEBIC-LA**: a) develop an effective promotion of biblical education, investigation and instruction. Specifically, this means the support of institutes, schools, courses, and formation of leaders, b) encourage conscientization and biblical formation at all levels, c) promote the immediate formation of exegetes for the biblical apostolate, d) create room for dialogue for overcoming polarization in the reading of the Bible, e) improve our own structures so that they become more effective.

DEMAND

After analyzing the challenges which the biblical-pastoral ministry and especially FEBIC-LA are faced with, we summarize them in a global demand as follows:

- Promoting a profound knowledge of the God of the Bible by instruction, education, research and dialogue.
- Encouraging solid instruction about the Bible in all sectors so that the biblical-pastoral ministry can provide answers to the challenges of today and encourage dialogue.
- Creating a consciousness of the role of the Bible as an answer to the challenges of today by supporting and training responsible persons in the biblical-pastoral ministry.
- Promoting a "biblical awareness" in the hierarchy so that we all let ourselves be questioned by the Bible.
- Creating possibilities for a more effective conscientization and formation.

These demands result in three elements:

- a) **CONSCIENTIZATION** (about the role of the Bible in the community and about the necessity to develop a biblical mentality)
 - b) **FORMATION OF RESPONSIBLE PERSONS** in the biblical-pastoral ministry
 - c) **ANSWERS TO CURRENT PROBLEMS**
- These three elements contributed to formulating the "general goal" and the specific goals for the "global three-year plan."

PART II

ELABORATION OF A GLOBAL PLAN FOR THE BIBLICAL- PASTORAL MINISTRY (GOALS, POLICIES, STRATEGIES AND ACTIVITIES)

GENERAL GOAL

CREATE A CONSCIOUSNESS FOR THE IMPORTANCE AND RELEVANCE OF THE BIBLE SO THAT IT BECOMES A SOURCE OF LIFE FOR THE CHURCH AND ILLUMINATES AND TRANSFORMS THE REALITY OF THE REIGN OF GOD

In the following part the "policies" and "strategies" are enumerated which are necessary for reaching the general goal:

1. Strengthen the spirit of search by:

- creating an attitude of listening to the Word of God
- instilling in all an awareness of history and everyday life
- fostering an attitude of openness towards what is really new and towards change.

2. Be and create an environment for dialogue by:

- discovering the necessity of complementing each other
- accepting that everyone can contribute and enrich
- establishing an awareness of a common goal
- overcoming radical and individualistic views.

3. Call for a profound biblical mentality by:

- meditating on the Word
- developing direct contact with the Word
- encouraging intense, enthusiastic study of the Word
- assuring the presence of Scriptures in the Church and in the biblical-pastoral ministry
- promoting a communitarian reading of the Word
- assimilating the world view of the God of the Bible

SPECIFIC GOALS

Furthermore, the specific goals are listed in the following categories: organization, formation, study and research, common activities. We will discuss the specific goals according to their policies, strategies and areas of activity.

AREA OF ORGANIZATION

GOAL: DEVELOP FLEXIBLE AND UP-TO-DATE STRUCTURES AND METHODS TO IMPROVE THE SERVICES OF THE FEDERATION

Policies and strategies:

1. Foster communication between and with the members by:

- facilitating meetings on the Latin American level according to zones and countries
- improving written communication (magazines, bulletins, letters)
- increasing the visits to the individual members by the subregional coordinator as well as the zonal coordinators
- establishing "data banks" through the use of modern communication and information technology.

2. Improve the administration of the coordination center of the subregion by:

- developing a more efficient office for the subregional coordinator
- striving for a more solid and self-sufficient financial basis
- creating a Constitution and adapting it appropriately.

3. Sharing of responsibility with the zonal coordinators by:

- providing them with information about the activities of the members in their zones (e.g., copies of letters)
- sending them reminders to help them keep up with the timetable of the program
- suggesting to them and to the members of the zones specific tasks according to their abilities.

Activities:

- organize a meeting at the zonal level
- plan a yearly meeting with the zonal coordinators for study, evaluation and planning (the next is in October 91)
- Establish a data bank for collecting information and making it available in the central office
- Visit of each zone by the subregional coordinator and the zonal coordinators
- Disseminate communications to and among the members by various media, among them the review, LA PALABRA HOY
- Prepare for the III Latin American meeting for the biblical apostolate (1993)

AREA OF FORMATION

GOAL: SUPPORT AND PROMOTE TRAINING FOR UPDATING PASTORAL LEADERS SO THAT THEY DEVELOP A BIBLICAL MENTALITY WHICH ENABLES THEM TO COMMUNICATE THE WORD IN AN EXPERIENTIAL AND DEDICATED MANNER.

Policies and strategies:

1. Using existing resources by:

- relying on available personnel
- promoting courses already in existence
- exchanging didactic material
- using existing pedagogical methods

2. Promoting the use of the language of the people by:

- adapting the translations to a language the people are able to understand
- using images which relate more to the lives of the people.

3. Creating impulses for formation in action by:

- being in contact with and listening to people
- committing ourselves both as persons and communitarians
- analyzing concrete situations
- performing duties with a biblical mind.

Activities:

- Collecting data (data bank) about existing experiences in the formation on all levels
- Establishing a higher institute of the formation in the biblical-pastoral ministry by possibly utilizing existing centers: ITE PAL, Nemi, University of Antioquia, Center for Biblical Studies in Brazil, etc.
- Disseminating bibliographies about biblical materials
- Implementing a two-week course for people involved with the biblical-pastoral ministry
- Creating scholarships for lay people, especially women
- Publishing a handbook on the biblical-pastoral ministry about prevailing experiences
- Publishing and distributing the magazine LA PALABRA HOY
- Using LA PALABRA HOY to support Bible month activities
- Formulating a mobile team for biblical-pastoral ministry work (concrete form not yet specified)

AREA OF STUDY AND RESEARCH

GOAL: PROMOTE AN ATMOSPHERE FOR THE ANALYSIS OF REALITY AND FOR DIALOGUE SO THAT HISTORY IS SEEN IN THE LIGHT OF THE WORD.

Policies and strategies:

1. Continuous study of reality by:

- analyzing historical events
- accepting the contributions of the social sciences (pedagogy, sociology, anthropology, etc.)
- understanding concrete events in the light of the Word
- being in contact with the Word through study and prayer
- illuminating reality through the Word

2. Discover how God reveals himself through historical events by:

- being sensitive towards these events

- realizing how God presents himself in the Bible
 - being aware of God's manifestations in our daily life
- 3. Cultivate an attitude of openness towards a plurality of criteria and focal points.**

Activities:

- Organize study and reflection seminars given by specialists on current biblical topics: Bible - culture, Bible - New Evangelization, *Dei Verbum* and the pastoral ministry, etc.
- Initiate or promote a meeting (in 1992) about methods of reading the Bible which focuses on the popular reading of the Bible.
- Provide a section of open topics in the magazine LA PALABRA HOY with varying themes, e.g., revelation, the role of the Bible in the document of Santo Domingo, etc.
- Profit from the auxiliary sciences of the Bible.

AREA OF SOLIDARITY

GOAL: ANNOUNCE THE GOD OF THE BIBLE WITH PROPHETIC ACTIONS AS SIGNS OF THE REIGN OF GOD IN HISTORY

Policies and strategies:

1. Strengthen the spirit of solidarity by:

- supporting groups which are committed to answering the ecological imbalances of today,
- showing unity with and support for all groups and movements which stand up for justice, peace and solidarity with the oppressed,
- supporting those who challenge unjust social structures, violations of human rights, situations of oppression and exploitation,
- putting pressure on governments and those responsible for the national and international economy so that the social costs of foreign debts will not be paid by the poor,
- supporting efforts at women's emancipation in all countries, nations, cultures, and in the Church,
- working for the defense of the rights of native populations, Negroes and oppressed minorities.

2. Emphasize a Christian's prophetic dimension by:

- leading him to contemplate God who is present in history,
- following Jesus who became flesh and in solidarity walked with people on their way
- accepting the surrender of one's life to God until death as the true identity of a Christian
- working together with people for brotherhood, thus building the Reign of God

Activities:

- Participate in the most significant meetings about human rights, environmental problems, etc., making contributions from the biblical point of view
- Show availability and openness in concrete cases
- Promote communication among and within the zones for creating solidarity
- Establish a section in LA PALABRA HOY for these topics
- Distribute widely the Final Statement of the IV Plenary Assembly which gives the justification for this stand.

(Original text in Spanish)

and priests of their responsibility for the biblical apostolate (cf. n. 25).

It proclaimed that "easy access to Sacred Scripture should be provided for all Christian faithful" (n.22); for "in the Sacred books, the Father who is in heaven meets his children with great love and speaks with them; and the force and power in the Word of God is so great that it remains the support and energy of the Church, the strength of faith for her children, the food of the soul, the pure and perennial source of spiritual life" (n.21). Thus all Christians are urged to read, study and meditate on the Sacred Scripture in order to foster their life of faith and charity (cf. n. 25).

5. Turning now towards the future, in the sixth chapter of *Dei Verbum* we find many suggestions for pastoral ministry and the biblical apostolate.

Emphasizing the usefulness of "appropriate but precise translations in various languages," the Council envisages interconfessional translations. Since that time several of these versions have been made, with excellent results, in collaboration with the World Bible Alliance. They can become ever more valuable instruments of evangelization, especially in annotated editions, as is the case in the very recent translation of the Bible into the Castilian language and the ecumenical translation of the Bible into French. I am happy that at Budapest in 1988 the World Bible Alliance became more greatly involved in interconfessional cooperation.

The impulse given by *Dei Verbum* brought about the foundation of the World Catholic Federation for the Biblical Apostolate in 1970; since that time it has grown quite a bit, and is now called the Catholic Biblical Federation. This year at its international congress in Bogotá, it reaffirmed the Bible's importance in the apostolate and a renewed effort of evangelization in view of the third millennium. In order to realize the diverse

urgent tasks imposed upon us for promoting greater access to Sacred Scripture for the largest number of our contemporaries, the leaders in the biblical apostolate, under the direction of bishops, will be able to collaborate with the people in charge of catechesis, liturgy and ecumenism in the dioceses, in the spirit of the Council's recommendations when it outlined the bishop's pastoral responsibility (cf. *Christus Dominus*, n.17).

6. Last of all, I would like to add, that in contemplating the infinite wealth of Sacred Scripture according to the teaching of the Council, we rejoin the people to whom, from the beginning, the message of salvation was revealed; I am speaking of the Jewish people. The conciliar declaration emphasizes that "God..., by a special dispensation, chose for himself a people to whom he might entrust his promises. First he entered into a covenant with Abraham (cf. Gen 15:18) and, through Moses, with the people of Israel (cf. Ex 24:8). To this people which he has acquired for himself, he...manifested himself in words and deeds...(n.14).

7. The prophetic message of peace, reconciliation and friendship is destined for all peoples; that is why the Sacred Scripture inspires universal veneration. That is also the reason why there should be no obstacle to the spreading of Holy Scripture throughout the world.

On the occasion of this significant anniversary which you have desired to observe, I am happy to welcome you and to encourage your reflection and action. I cordially greet, in addition to the members of the Catholic Biblical Federation and the members of the Roman Curia, the people who belong to other confessions who have desired to participate in the event.

God's Word impels us to pray for peace which is so threatened today, and to unite in hope and action so that the day will come when "the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the Lord, as water covers the sea" (Is 11:9).

Vienna

The Catholic Biblical Association of Austria (Österr. Kathol. Bibelwerk) conducted several celebrations in Vienna on the occasion of the 25th anniversary of the Constitution on Divine Revelation *DEI VERBUM* from November 21-29 last year. A quarter of a century after the Vatican Council, one must pose the question: Has the new orientation towards the Bible as demanded by the Council become a reality?

On November 21, Bishop Joachim Wanke D.D., apostolic administrator of Erfurt and Meiningen, gave the keynote address, "The Word of God to People of Today - the Council document *DEI VERBUM* regarding biblical interpretation and the biblical-pastoral ministry."

On November 22, Bible experts in a round table discussion reflected on "Did the Bible reach down to the basis?"

On November 29, a lecture with following discussion was given by Fr. Dr. Norbert Lohfink, SJ: "A Courageous Yes to Biblical Scholarship - Understanding of the Bible according

to the Directives of the Second Vatican Council."

Further information: Österreichisches Katholisches Bibelwerk, Stiftsplatz 8, A-3400 Klosterneuburg.

Stuttgart

The Catholic Biblical Association of Germany (Katholisches Bibelwerk) dedicated an entire issue of its quarterly *Kirche und Leben* (Church and Life), Vol. 45, 4/1990, to the 25th anniversary of the solemn publication of the Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation *DEI VERBUM*. The main articles were written by N. Höslinger: *25 Years DEI VERBUM*; J. Scharbert: *The Second Vatican Council and the Old Testament Exegesis*; E. Bons: *The Translation of the Bible: Methods, Results, Desideratum*; and H. Frankemölle: *Scriptural Interpretation in Conflict*.

Further information: Katholisches Bibelwerk, Silberburgstr. 121, D-7000 Stuttgart 1

Great Britain

On Saturday, November 17, 1990, the Catholic Biblical Association of Great Britain, with lectures and celebration, commemorated the 50th anniversary of its foundation in St. Mary's College, Twickenham. After the inaugural liturgy celebrated by His Eminence Cardinal George Basil Hume, major conferences were given by Fr. Gerald O'Collins, SJ: "Biblical Scholarship and Christian Belief" and Bishop David Konstant: "The Role of the Bible within the Church."

To mark the Golden Jubilee of the Catholic Biblical Association of Great Britain, founded in St. Edmund's House, Cambridge in 1940, and to anticipate by a few months the Silver Jubilee of the promulgation of *DEI VERBUM*, the entire double issue of *Priests & People* (Vol. 4, July/August 1990) was devoted to Scripture.

The conciliar Document *DEI VERBUM* and its significance for biblical scholarship and for the life of the Church is also the subject of the main articles of the issue Vol. XXI, Number 2, January 1991, of *Scripture Bulletin*, the quarterly of the Catholic Biblical Association of Great Britain.

Further information:

Priests & People, The Tablet Publishing Co. Ltd., 48 Great Peter Street, London SW1P 2HP, England; *Scripture Bulletin*, LSU College of Higher Education, The Avenue, Southampton, SO9 5HB, England.

Bangalore

The National Biblical Catechetical and Liturgical Center of Bangalore organized a seminar for exegetes and clergy concerning the 25th anniversary of *DEI VERBUM* (see p. 17).

Hong Kong

On the occasion of the 25th anniversary of the publication of *DEI VERBUM* Cardinal Wu addressed a short pastoral letter to his diocese. "This Constitution is the cornerstone of the Council's teaching. It deals with God's revelation, the foundation of our faith, and gives direction to our biblical exegesis; it has stimulated worldwide reading and studying of the Bible for it shows that the Word of God is at the center of Church life." The Cardinal concludes his letter with a lively encouragement for the biblical movement in his diocese.

Paris

On the occasion of the 25th anniversary of the publication of the Constitution *DEI VERBUM*, the French Catholic Society for Biblical Studies and the Biblical Service "Evangile et Vie" organized a colloquium from January 18-19, 1991, in Paris. The goals of this colloquium were:

- to point out the importance of this document
- to evaluate its effect on the life of the Church
- to analyze new questions which have arisen.

The initial session on Jan. 18 was dedicated to the Council document with a perspective of the history of the text with a personal testimony of Cardinal Decourtray about the effects of *DEI VERBUM* and with a statement on the importance of the Council document from the viewpoint of a Protestant pastor.

On the morning of Jan 19 the participants in various work groups exchanged their experiences about the place of the

Bible in the life of the Church: Bible courses, Bible and catechesis, Bible and liturgy, Bible and ecumenism, exegesis and dogma, and fundamentalism. In the afternoon, after a lecture on the Bible in Latin America, the Final Statement of the Plenary Assembly of Bogotá was presented.

By way of example, we will cite some of the questions which were proposed to the participants of the work groups in preparation for the meeting:

Biblical Animation

Workshop one: Three themes were proposed to leaders of Bible groups:

1. Often there is a distinction between the individual steps of Bible reading: between study (private and in a group), prayer (or celebration) and realization in life. Does this pose a problem for us? How can this separation be overcome?

2. A certain number of Christians have a desire to know how the Bible was read in the past. They would like to know other ways of Bible reading throughout Christian tradition (e.g., by the Church Fathers), possibly in order to relativize specific methods of Bible reading. How can we do justice to this concern?

3. The Catholic Biblical Federation tries to promote the practice of celebrating Bible Sunday. Do we know where this request has been implemented? Which projects do we develop in this regard?

Workshop two: The last chapter of *DEI VERBUM* (Sacred Scripture in the Life of the Church) places "the table of both the Word of God and the body of Christ" (DV 22) in its original place: the liturgy of the Church.

- Starting from practical examples in the community, we propose to reflect on possibilities of introducing children through Sacred Scripture to the mysteries of our faith in the context of the Sunday Eucharist.

- One should reflect on the method of passing on revelation and interpretation when - with the Bible in hand - Holy Scripture is recounted and commented upon.

The Bible in the Liturgy

From the manifold questions which this title evokes, the following points should be considered:

1) The Bible is the bases for the entire liturgy (quotes, words or expressions, images). This fact is underlined when, on the one hand, one asks what this means from the theological standpoint regarding Christian liturgy, and on the other hand, what it says about the essence of the Bible itself.

2) The Bible lives in the liturgical assembly like a fish in the water. To verify this statement one should reflect on the relations between the conditions under which the Bible came into existence as "Word of God" and the main elements which are being used for its "exposition" in the liturgy of the Word.

3) The selection of liturgical texts, the typological relationship of OT/NT and the ritual context influence the interpretation of Holy Scripture: thus emphasizing a particular level of meaning paying less attention to another. The present theological status of the Bible in the liturgy and its consequences should be discussed.

4) The ritualization of the liturgy of the Word (too much? not enough?). Not only the opportunities being offered and the risks to be avoided should be reflected upon, but also the inconveniences that they create.

Bible and Ecumenism

This work group intends to reflect on the realization of ecumenical cooperation in the translation of and commenting on the Bible. In practice the annotations of the T.O.B. are compared with those of the Jerusalem Bible.

Two further suggestions:

- Is a common theological commentary possible?
- A comparative study of lectionaries for a precise liturgical season.

Exegesis and Dogma

One should reflect on the bonds which link Holy Scripture to the Church, and which according to *Dei Verbum*, form the basis for the theological and dogmatic work.

If today, based especially on the results of Formgeschichte, one recognizes the role of the Church at the pluriform origin of Sacred Scripture, it is less certain that the critical and renewing role of the Bible has been recognized and accepted by the Church and by theology (cf. DV 24; *Unitatis redintegratio* 26). It is therefore mandatory to deepen the hermeneutical, as well as the dogmatic, reflection on progress since the Constitution on Divine Revelation and also on the obstacles which hinder a full implementation of the guidelines of Chapter 6 of the Constitution.

From a hermeneutical viewpoint, one would particularly pose the question whether the respect for the inspiring and critical position of Scripture demands more attention in view of a theory according to which the biblical text is susceptible to a variety of contexts and theologies.

Fundamentalism

Compare the declaration of the Protestant Churches on inerrancy (Chicago, 1978), the text of which was distributed among the participants with *Dei Verbum*. Locate the phenomenon of fundamentalism inside and outside the Catholic Church.

Which points of reference and which ways does the

Council text offer in the context of the emerging of a Catholic fundamentalism?

Status of exegesis according to *Dei Verbum*

Above all, it is proposed to question the models of development of the exegetical process whether they are directly recommended or whether they are implied in the instructions of *Dei Verbum*. They must be placed between two points of reference: *Divino Afflante Spiritu* and the exegesis of the second half of this century. Some questions which could be deepened according to the competency of the participants are:

1. *Dei Verbum* and *Divino Afflante Spiritu*: do they have the same concept of exegetical science? Does the Council suggest a status quo of the doctrine of the encyclical letter or view it as a starting point? Compare the two texts.

2. Does DV12 imply a harmony or disharmony between two directives placed side by side with a "however"?

a) Does it imply a priority in research into the situation of the texts in the "context" of their time;

b) Does it imply an interpretation of each text not according to its contemporary situation but according to the entirety of Sacred Scripture (valid for all times?).

Solutions adopted after the Council: do we have to talk about the priority of one of the two ways i.e., about the conciliation acquired from tradition from which therefore research and the division of the tasks have to be started; or are erroneous ways freely admitted?

3. According to DV14, the teaching of the Old Testament seems to give priority to the way indicated above in section b) above (DV12). Why? Is there an "exact" method to discover that "the New Testament is hidden in the Old?" Is this teaching of DV14 in full coherence with the declaration *Nostra Aetate*?

Further information: The minutes of this colloquium will be published in the next issue of the Bulletin d'Information Biblique (B.I.B.), Évangile et Vie, 6 ave. Vavin, F-75006 Paris.

News and Information

Bangladesh - A Bible for catechumens

Recently Father Gianni Martoccia, sx published in Jessore (Bangladesh) the first five books of the Old Testament (Pentateuch) a "Bible for Catechumens" in the Bengali language. Several Bible texts are accompanied with footnotes and commentaries. It also includes an introduction to biblical geography and history. This work is a milestone in publishing biblical materials in the Catholic Church of Bangladesh.

Cameroun - Pastoral letter on Bible Sunday

On the occasion of the celebration of the first Bible Sunday (16 Sept. 1990), the bishops of the ecclesiastical province of Bamenda addressed a common pastoral letter on the celebration of Bible Sunday to their faithful.

Since January 1985 the biblical apostolate has been one of the pastoral priorities of the province. The biblical apostolate tries:

- to provide the faithful with easy access to Sacred Scripture through translation, publication and distribution of the Bible (DV 22);
- to help Christians to understand the Bible and to use it properly as "food of the soul...and source of spiritual life" (DV 22-26);
- to promote the love of Sacred Scripture and reverence for the Word of God (DV 21 and 26).

The bishops think that the celebration of Bible Sunday is an apt means to realize these concerns, particularly the latter one. The goal of Bible Sunday is to underline the importance of the Bible as the Word of God. Several suggestions for the celebration of Bible Sunday are proposed. The first is the liturgy of the day: readings, intercessions, etc. Other activities for this day should be centered on the Word of God and inspired by it. The celebration could begin with a solemn procession of the Bible. A procession with the lectionary could precede the proclamation of the Word. Other liturgical activities could be organized such as a Bible celebration on Sunday evening. Drama presentations of biblical scenes could be planned especially with the young people, as well as a competition on biblical songs, Bible exposition and Bible group discussions.

During Bible Sunday a collection could be taken for the biblical apostolate as an expression of thanks for the gift of the Bible.

Canada, Quebec: 50 years SOCABI

In the service of the Word since 1940, the Catholic Biblical Association (Société Catholique de la Bible - SOCABI) has now reached 50 years. Three events are closely connected with the celebration of this half century:

- an exposition "Bible and Culture in Quebec" in the Museum of Civilization from March 27 - Aug 25, 1990. This exposition was organized by the Museum of Civilization with the competent collaboration of SOCABI.

- a colloquium on the place of the Bible in the pastoral ministry scheduled at the Laval University from June 6-9, 1991. It will deal with the biblical dimension of the pastoral ministry on the level of concrete experiences of Christian communities, as well as with the fundamental reflection about the expectations, the concerns and the new challenges to be faced in today's world. The colloquium, organized by SOCABI with the participation of the theological faculty of Laval, will be preceded by a round of consultations with the people responsible for the biblical-pastoral ministry in 26 dioceses in Quebec, Ontario, and New Brunswick.

- on June 8 during the colloquium, a family feast will be provided with a homage to those men and women who have contributed to making the Catholic Biblical Association what it is today.

Chad - catechesis - translation

An important work was started in this country many years ago with devising a catechesis on the national level based completely on biblical texts.

The ecumenical translation of the Bible in Sara is slowly being pursued. The team has finished the translation of Deuteronomy, Judges, Ruth and Samuel. Unfortunately, technical difficulties in the country delay the work.

China - Publication of the Old Testament

The Administrative Commission of the Catholic Chinese Church in Peking, in accordance with the government, has obtained from the Studium Franciscanum in Hong Kong the authorization to publish their version of the Old Testament. Ten thousand copies have been distributed to various communities in the country. The New Testament translation with annotations of the Jerusalem Bible was completed at the end of last year and is to be published soon.

Hong Kong - Bible Month

The Catholic Biblical Association of Hong Kong, Full Member of the Federation, has organized a Bible Month. The theme was "The Bible in the New Evangelization." Among the topics treated were "The Bible and small faith communities," "The importance of the theme for the pastoral mission in Hong Kong" "The New Evangelization in the present political context of mainland China."

This same organization has helped in developing a program of biblical activities for Filipinos in Hong Kong. Over four consecutive Sundays in January 1990 various Filipino Catholic groups in the diocese participated in these activities which had as their aim: 1) to foster awareness among Filipinos in Hong Kong of the need to "read, live and share the Bible," 2) to answer the call for all Christians to spread the Good News (Mk 16,15; Mat 28,19-20), 3) to evangelize especially those Filipinos who do not yet belong to any group. Among proposed group activities were poster design competition, short skit (drama) competition, Gospel songs, group singing competition, Bible games, Basic Bible Seminar, and an information and publicity (media) campaign.

Further information: Diocesan Catholic Center, 16 Caine Road, Hong Kong.

India - A seminar for exegetes and pastors

In the context of the 25th anniversary celebration of *Dei Verbum*, the National Biblical-Catechetical-Liturgical Center (NCBCL) of Bangalore conducted a research seminar on the topic "God's Word in the emerging India 2000." This research seminar, with the participation of scholars and pastors, took place from March 4-8, 1991. The three objectives proposed were 1) to enable the Church of India to understand the real meaning of Revelation in order to give a new direction to its pastoral policy and action, 2) to interpret the meaning of Revelation in the context of the multireligious situation of the country in order to promote a meaningful dialogue with people of other faiths, 3) to offer to the universal Church an Indian theology of Revelation which will enrich our own Christian understanding of Revelation.

Further Information: NCBCL, P. O. Box 8426, Hutchins Road 2nd Cross, Bangalore - 560 084, India.

Italy - Encounter of biblical scholars and catechists

In order to promote, sustain, and coordinate a biblical-pastoral ministry and catechesis in Italy, biblical scholars and diocesan representatives for catechesis met in November of last year. In June 1990, the directors of the diocesan catechetical offices in Italy on the occasion of their 25th National Assembly had asked themselves how the connection and relation between Bible and catechesis could be better understood and secured. They concluded that the Scriptures are a decisive factor in the journey of the faith for numerous groups.

One positive element can be observed without a doubt in Italy: numerous people have discovered the Bible and have direct contact with it. There also exists an abundance of biblical culture. Nevertheless the majority of the faithful do not read the Scriptures. There also exists in certain Bible groups a temptation towards an elitist, exclusive and separatist approach. Yes, even in the name of their contact with the Bible, they show an indifference towards their local Church. Hence, there is the necessity for a biblical apostolate that develops a pastoral ministry in the perspective of the church community and is connected with all sectors of church life, and in particular with catechesis.

Ivory Coast - 5th Congress of Catholic Exegetes

The 5th Pan-African Congress of Catholic Exegetes will take place from July 13-23, 1991. The theme "The Good News announced to the poor" was selected in view of the upcoming Roman Synod for Africa.

The 4th Pan-African Congress was held from the July 24-29, 1989, in Karen, near Nairobi with the theme "The Johannine Communities." Thirty exegetes from 14 countries of Africa gathered for this meeting.

Japan - The interconfessional Bible translation

In September 1987 after 18 years of work, the interconfessional Japanese Bible was published by the Japanese Bible Society. Three years have elapsed since this publication and it is possible to state now that this translation has been a success. The Catholic Church has made it the official text for the liturgical lectionary, and gradually this Bible has also become the liturgical Bible of our Protestant brothers and sisters. This new translation is therefore not only a Bible common to Christians but has also become the principal Bible for all Christians of Japan. No doubt this is an important landmark on the long route towards Christian unity.

The first difficulty which had to be overcome in preparing this Bible was that of the transcription of proper names. Catholics and Protestants have different traditions. For example, the name of Jesus was transcribed by Catholics along the Latin and became "Iezusu," whereas the Protestant Bible transcribed it into "Iesu" (pronounced "yes"). This transcription came from the Chinese Bible which had been used since the beginning of the Protestant evangelization of Japan about one century ago. Depending on the translation used, a person's religious affiliation could be determined.

The Commission on Terminology, charged with the study of these problems, decided that the only transcription possible for an ecumenical Bible would have to be faithful to the original Greek text. Hence, the transcription became "Iezusu."

Another difficulty was the publication of the deuterocanonical books in ecumenical Bibles which is always a delicate matter. For it is contrary to a very viable tradition with many of our Protestant brothers. There are consequently two simultaneous editions of this Bible, one with these books, one without these books. This procedure has not created any problems or criticisms. The two editions have been and are well received.

This Bible carries subtitles in bold print, but no footnotes. It is supplemented at the end of the volume by an introduction to the Bible and to its individual books, followed by a glossary with some 130 entries explaining biblical themes and concepts, a table of the discrepancies in the numeration of chapters and verses between this Bible and the previous one by the Bible Society of Japan; a table which lists quotations from the Old Testament used in the New Testament; a table of weights, measures and coins; citations, and nine geographical maps.

Further information: Fr. Z. Yelle, St. Sulpice Seminary, 1-1-1 Matsuyama, Jonan-Ku, Fukuoka, 814-01 Japan.

Latin America - Republics of the Andes - ecumenical encounter of biblicists at the popular level

From the July 5-7 last year an ecumenical encounter of biblicists at the popular level of the Andes took place in Fusagasugá, Colombia. Representatives from different confessions gathered under the patronage of the World Council of Churches (WCC).

This Council is convinced that the proclamation of the Gospel is not a mere communication of information but of life itself. Therefore, it has created a "Commission for the Participation of the Church in Development" with different sections according to the continents of the Third World. The section for Latin America has given itself five objectives for reflection and action: 1) earth, violence and peace, 2) theology, economy and politics, 3) theology and black culture, 4) communication, culture, and evangelization, and 5) Bible. This last program allows for regional and national encounters of animators in popular and communitarian reading of the Bible. A bulletin "The People on the Way" has been edited with contributions from the communities. A biblical bibliography from Latin America is in preparation. Since 1987 a Center for Biblical Studies organizes intensive courses in collaboration with biblicists in Latin America, Brazil, Mexico, Colombia, and Chile.

In the course of the meeting the participants analyzed the actual situation of the people in the Andes and especially of the indigenous of Ecuador, Peru and Bolivia. They confronted their experiences in the domain of popular Bible reading. They discovered that Bible reading sustains the communities in their action for liberation, enlightens their most burning problems, helps them to unite faith and life to interpret the signs of the times, and to discover that God is with the community on their journey. The Bible facilitates encounters between Protestants and Catholics in their common efforts to defend life. It helps them discover that they have much more in common than what divides them. It has been decided in the course of the encounter to intensify future Bible reading in the communities.

Further information: Fr. John Pierre Wyssenbach, sj. in "Présence oecuménique VI" December 1990, Caracas.

Papua New Guinea - A mini-course for biblical animators

Since 1987, the Dei Verbum Center in Nemi, near Rome, has organized annual formation courses for leaders in the biblical-pastoral ministry. These courses extend over several months. The next course will take place from August 26 to December 19, 1991.

Former graduates of the Nemi course from Papua New Guinea, after returning to their countries, decided to propose a sort of mini-Nemi course for biblical animators. Such a mini-course took place from Sept. 3 - October 12, and had 24 participants (21 lay people, one sister, one brother and one priest), coming from the 16 provinces of Papua New Guinea, from the Solomon Islands, and from Vanuatu.

The course dealt with three important areas of the pastoral ministry:

- studying of the Scripture for better understanding
- interiorizing of the Word of God
- communicating the Word of God

Further Information: Gunther Koller, SM, Liturgical Catechetical Institute, P. O. Box 347, Coroka, Papua New Guinea.

Philippines

- Parish Bible Center

Another fruit of the DEI VERBUM course at Nemi is the parish Bible Center, recently opened at St. Joseph parish in Las Piñas, Manila. Its objectives are likewise to study, interiorize and communicate the Word of God, to apply it to life and live according to its values. The means to accomplish this are: recollections, courses, and sessions. It offers training on three levels.

The first level comprises the following elements:

1) one day recollection on the Bible; 2) the Basic Bible Seminar: a very basic introduction, orientation, and a general view of the Bible (five half days); 3) an overview of the highlights of salvation history (4 hours); 4) a brief survey of all the books from the Old to the New Testament (twelve 2 hour sessions); 5) a presentation of the Kingdom of God as the central message of Jesus for us today (4 hours); 6) ten sessions (2 hours each) on several methods of Gospel sharing; 7) one day of basic communication skills and group dynamics; 8) a practicum: participants form Gospel sharing groups in their neighborhood, with whom they meet several times throughout the following four months. They are guided in this by the center. Occasional meetings can be called for evaluation of the participants' neighborhood Gospel sharing groups.

The second level follows the model of the first with biblical recollection and courses. More attention is given in particular to the study of each of the Gospels and the methods of biblical interpretation.

On the third level two series of ten sessions of two hours each permit the study of D'Etienne Charpentier's books, "How to Read the Old Testament," and "How to Read the New Testament." Another seminar with eight sessions of two hours each focuses on studying special passages and themes.

- A Bible course at the E.A.P.I.

The East Asian Pastoral Institute (E.A.P.I.), Associate Member of the Federation, has organized from Jan. 7 to Feb. 14 this year a six-week course on the theme "The Word of God and the Kingdom of God." The goal of this course was to deepen understanding of the Bible and, in particular, how it can be used in the pastoral ministry. Two books (one from each of the Old and the New Testament) were studied with special attention to the social and religious contexts of Asia and the Pacific. There followed a series of practical workshops on the use of the Bible in different kinds of groups and small communities. A final section explored the phenomenon of fundamentalism:

What implications for pastoral practice can be drawn from the challenges posed by fundamentalist communities and movements? How do we avoid the danger of fundamentalism within the Catholic Church?

Further information: East Asian Pastoral Institute, P.O. Box 221, 1101 U.P. Campus, Quezon City, Philippines.

Spain - Formation of Animators

Casa de la Biblia, Full Member of the Federation for the Catholic Bishops' Conference of Spain, is very concerned about forming biblical animators. It realizes this formation, above all, through courses such as: correspondence courses, an introductory course to reading the Bible, biblical commentaries, and a course of biblical animation." In addition, it organizes "Bible weeks" every year.

Some of its projects of the Bible House are:

- Establishing a financial fund for the distribution and study of the Bible so that subsidies may be available for projects involving the distribution, animation, and study of the Bible
- Promoting of the celebration of Bible Sunday or Bible week on the national level
- Involving itself directly in biblical animation by proposing and realizing precise activities.

Further Information: Casa de la Biblia, Mayor 81, E -28013 Madrid.

Zaire

- Basic Bible Seminar

The Center for the Biblical Apostolate in Bandundu, Zaire, has adapted to the regional situation the "Basic Bible Seminar" worked out by the Divine Word Missionaries in the Philippines. This "seminar" consists of group work, lectures, liturgical celebrations, prayer, Bible sharing, games, dances, and all those activities that aim at building Christian communities on the Word of God. The seminar was conducted in the three parishes in Bandundu. It allows a "cordial" approach to the Bible in a spirit of prayer, joy and communion. The participants deepen their faith through the study of and exchange on the Word of God with emphasis on translating it into their lives. The Center for the Biblical Apostolate likewise conducted some twenty Basic Bible Seminars throughout the diocese.

Further Information: Center for the Biblical Apostolate, B.P. 246, Bandundu, Zaire.

- The Center Saint Irénée de Kikwit

Since 1977 this Associate Member of the Federation has been a center of great biblical influence thanks to its multiple activities: translations, productions, formation seminars, and biblical retreats. Currently, a history of salvation in Kikongo and the translation of the Acts of the Apostles is in the making. The center aims at helping the Catholic population to read biblical texts not in a superficial way and avoiding the traps of fundamentalism.

Further information: Fr. Jean-Marie Widart, c/o Service des Missions sj, B.P. 7245, Kinshasa 1, Zaire.

NEW MEMBERS OF THE CATHOLIC BIBLICAL FEDERATION

During the last year, two new countries, Burundi and Nepal, became Full Members of the Federation. During the Bogotá Assembly, 14 new Associate Members were accepted into our Federation. Welcome to all of them!

ASSOCIATE MEMBERS

AMERICAS

Argentina

Obispado de Quilmes
C. Pellegrini 1650, 1879 Quilmes (Bs. As.), Argentina
Tel: 54-(0)1-250 2323

Taller de Creaciones para la Evangelización (TECEPE)
Belgrano 230, C.C. 49, 1876 Bernal (Bs. As.)
Argentina. Tel: 54-(0)1-251 1268

Brazil

Arcebisado de Juiz de Fora
Rua Henrique Surerus 30, 36100-Juiz de Fora, MG,
Brasil Tel: 55-(0)32-212-4214

Trinidad

Bible Institute, Benedictine Monastery
Mount St. Benedict, Tunapuna, Trinidad, West Indies
Tel: 1-809-622-2259

USA

Adult Biblical Interdependent Learning (ABIL)
15851 N. Lago del Oro Parkway, Tucson, Arizona
85737-9626, USA Tel: 1-602-825-9374

ASIA / OCEANIA

India

Khandwa Diocese
Bishop's House, Khandwa 450 001, M.P., India
Tel: 91-(0)...- 2935

Catholic Gospel Center
P.O. No. 50, Ward No. xx. H. No. 90, Palai, 686 575,
Kerala, S. India. Tel: 91-(0)...- 2183

Gyan Ashram, Institute of Performing Arts
Mahakali Road, Andheri East, Bombay 400 093, India
Tel: 91-(0)22-632 5046

EUROPE / MIDDLE EAST

England

Sion Community for Evangelization
Sion House, Greenland Road, Selly Park, Birmingham
B29 7PP, England. Tel: 44-(0)61-627 15 60

France

"Le Passage" Cours par Correspondence
3 rue Duguay Trouin, F-75006 Paris
Tel: 33-(0)1-45 44 03 30

Italy

"Evangelium et Cultura"
Pontificio Istituto Biblico, Via della Pilotta, 25
I - 00187 Roma. Tel: 39-(0)6-679 64 53

Servizio Documentazione e Studi (SEDOS)
Via dei Verbiti 1, I-00154 Roma. Tel: 39-(0)6-574 13 50

Spain

Asociación Bíblica San Pablo
Apartado de Correos 15.161, E-28080 Madrid

Secretariado Bíblico Diocesano Tui-Vigo
c/o Joaquín Yañez, 12, Bajo, E-36202 - Vigo

FULL MEMBERS

AFRICA

Burundi

Conférence des Evêques Catholiques des Burundi
(FM 1990)

Secretariat de l'Episcopat, B.P. 1390
Bujumbura, Burundi. Tel: 257-(0)22-3263

ASIA

Nepal

Missio Sui Iuris (FM 1989)
St. Xavier's School, G.P.O. Box 50
Jawlakhel, Kathmandu, Nepal. Tel: 977-(0)1-521 710

Letter from the Funding Agencies

The member representatives of the Funding Agencies who support the work of the Federation addressed the following letter to the participants of the Bogotá Plenary Assembly and to the members of the Federation. The Federation wishes to express its gratitude to the signatories for their personal interest in the concerns of the Federation, as well as to the Funding Agencies for the support they give to numerous biblical-pastoral projects.

December 1990

On November 9, 1990, in Salzburg, Austria, the annual meeting of the representatives of the Catholic Funding Agencies with those of the Catholic Biblical Federation took place. Their long-standing collaboration is based on the common conviction that the statement of the II Vatican Council's Constitution *DEI VERBUM* on the right of Christians to easy and ample access to Sacred Scripture is of great importance. Undeniably, much has been accomplished since then to the spreading of Sacred Scripture (translations, institutions, biblical-pastoral work, etc.); but it is likewise undeniable that the Catholic Church worldwide has not yet given the Bible and the biblical-pastoral ministry its due priority.

Also Pope John Paul II, in addressing the Executive Committee of the Catholic Biblical Federation in, 1986, conceded that the demands of *DEI VERBUM* have not yet been fulfilled. For that reason we listened with great interest to the reports of the Plenary Assembly in Bogotá and were deeply affected when we studied the documents of the Plenary Assembly. We would like especially to thank all participants in the Plenary Assembly for the impressive and direction-giving Final Statement. It formulates in consequent continuation of the Federation's previous work not only essential and basic ideas, but also precisely and concretely the necessary emphases and priorities. We welcome among other things that the issues of Church renewal in the countries formerly "behind the iron curtain," of common economic problems (e.g., the question of abolishing foreign debts), of the ecological world crisis, and of the cultural identity of peoples and needs of oppressed groups have been voiced. Equally important is the fact that for lay people, especially women, a preferential position in the biblical-pastoral ministry has been demanded.

We share the common conviction that all preaching in the Church must be nourished and ruled by Sacred Scripture (DV 21). We share the Plenary Assembly's vision of a Church, which in a time of a New Evangelization, commits itself with determination and courage to issues which are really new. We therefore encourage everyone to come to grips with this important, future-oriented document and to rethink and support the pastoral priorities in the different continents. We thank the Plenary Assembly for its prophetic and concrete words and thank the Federation for their speedy publication - an important contribution to our common dialogue and collaboration in our common task.

Ama (the Netherlands)
Action de Carême (Switzerland)
Dreikönigsaktion der Kath. Jungschar (Austria)
Missio Aachen (Germany)
Missio Munich (Germany)