

# *God's Word for the World*



For man does not live  
by bread alone

Catholic  
Biblical Federation

## *The Bible ...*

with its stories about human life and faith numbers among the greatest writings of humanity. Its message of life and hope is addressed to all human beings and cultures.

## *The Catholic Biblical Federation ...*

is obligated to the Christian system of values and to the biblical image of man. As advocate of the Bible in the Church it sees its mission in making God's Word the source of life and hope for the people of our times.

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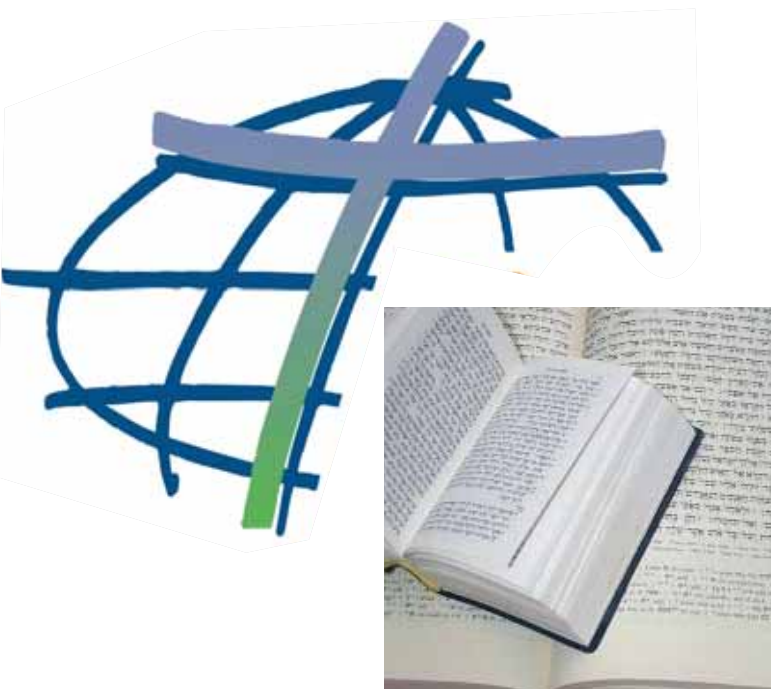
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# *Man does not live by bread alone*

## Vision

The Bible numbers among the greatest writings of humanity. When its readers discover ever anew the multiple facets of their own lives in the stories of the biblical books, Scripture unfolds its transforming potential, and its message of life and of hope becomes tangible.



The **Catholic Biblical Federation** was established by Pope Paul VI in 1969 to foster and promote an awareness of the unique significance of Sacred Scripture at all levels of ecclesial life. With its roots tracing back to the Second Vatican Council it sees itself as the advocate of the Bible in the Catholic Church.

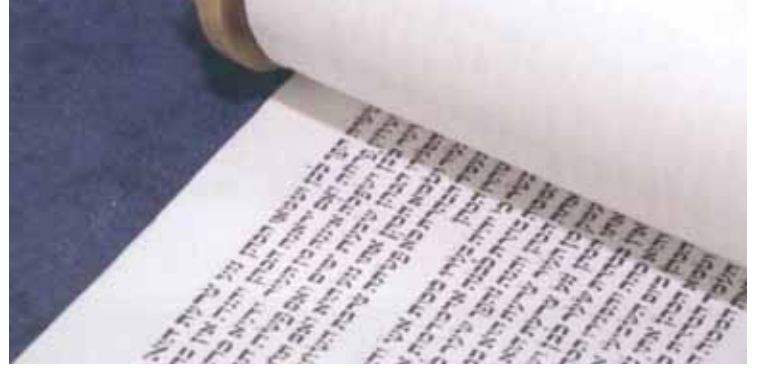
The **Catholic Biblical Federation** represents the world-wide multiplicity of the Catholic faith. Its more than 320 member institutions in 129 countries of the world are committed to insuring that people can experience the life-giving message of the Bible in their daily lives.



Rooted in the Catholic Church, the **Catholic Biblical Federation** avows itself to ecumenical and interconfessional dialogue. It promotes tolerance and respect for other cultures and religions and is actively engaged on behalf of peace and justice.

Through its commitment to the Gospel, the **Catholic Biblical Federation** plays an active role in building a world in which the values of love of God and neighbor, of justice and responsibility are the core of political, social and personal activity.





## Tasks and goals

The Catholic Biblical Federation (CBF) is a worldwide fellowship of international, national and local institutions engaged in the field of biblical pastoral ministry, biblical studies and Bible translation.

Besides translation of the Bible into local languages, the primary task of the Catholic Biblical Federation resides in the effort to translate the biblical message into the personal and communal contexts of human beings lives. It thereby promotes a way of reading Sacred Scripture which uncovers the life-giving message of God's Word, thus countering the danger of a fundamentalistic misinterpretation.

With its commitment to the Gospel, the Catholic Biblical Federation is aware that today, at the beginning of the third millennium, Christian values need to be strengthened and rediscovered as a foundation for communal living. The Christian value system is the premise for universal human rights and for Christians the basis of a responsible intercultural and interreligious dialogue.

The Catholic Biblical Federation with its **member organizations** pursues a broad variety of goals and is engaged in various fields of activities, among others:

### Bible translation

- Translation of the Bible into local languages and revision of existing translations
- Publication and distribution of affordable Bible editions
- Training and further education of qualified translators

### Commitment to a biblical foundation of all areas of pastoral ministry

- Elaboration of biblical aids and educational tools for parishes, schools, adult education, youth work, etc.
- Planning and implementation of Bible courses and seminars
- Development of materials, course programs and other activities designed to deal with religious fundamentalism

### Religious education and training

- Biblical pastoral training and ongoing formation for full-time as well as voluntary collaborators
- Planning and running of Bible courses in Small Christian Communities, and at grass-root level
- Religious instruction in schools, colleges, universities, etc.

### Biblical studies and hermeneutics

- Organization of meetings and conferences relating to biblical studies
- Fostering of dialogue between scientific-academic and pastoral-practical Bible work
- Positioning of the biblical-Christian image of man in the discussions on current values in society



## Ecumenism and interreligious dialogue

- Carrying out of interconfessional translations and pastoral projects
- Cooperation with other Churches and religious communities in countering fundamentalism and violence

## Media work

- Publication of periodicals, handbooks, teaching aids, etc.
- Running of publishing houses
- Production of radio and TV programs
- Elaboration of internet resources and online services

The **General Secretariat** in Stuttgart with its international team consisting of six collaborators supports the member institutions in individual regions and coordinates the worldwide exchange of information, experiences and resources. Its prime areas of engagement are:

## Support and coordination of the activities of member institutions

- Conceptual, personnel, financial support
- Through the General Secretary's personal contacts
- Through the monitoring and evaluation of projects
- Through assistance with public relations and fundraising

## Coordination and organization of biblical pastoral ministry worldwide

- Through meetings at local, regional and supra-regional levels
- Through initiatives and conceptual support
- Through special projects, e.g. Ecumenical Bible Sunday, International Dei Verbum Courses

## Communication and networking

- Organization of meetings at all levels within the Federation
- Exchange of experience with other ecclesial institutions and agencies (Holy See, Bishops' Conferences, funding agencies, NGOs, etc.)
- Cooperation at ecumenical and interreligious levels (United Bible Societies, Jewish-Christian dialogue, etc.)

## Publications

- International biblical pastoral periodical "Bulletin Dei Verbum" (published quarterly in English, French, Spanish and German)
- CBF Newsletter
- Handbooks, reports, documentation
- Website, internet activities and electronic media

## Public relations and fundraising

## Cooperation with funding agencies

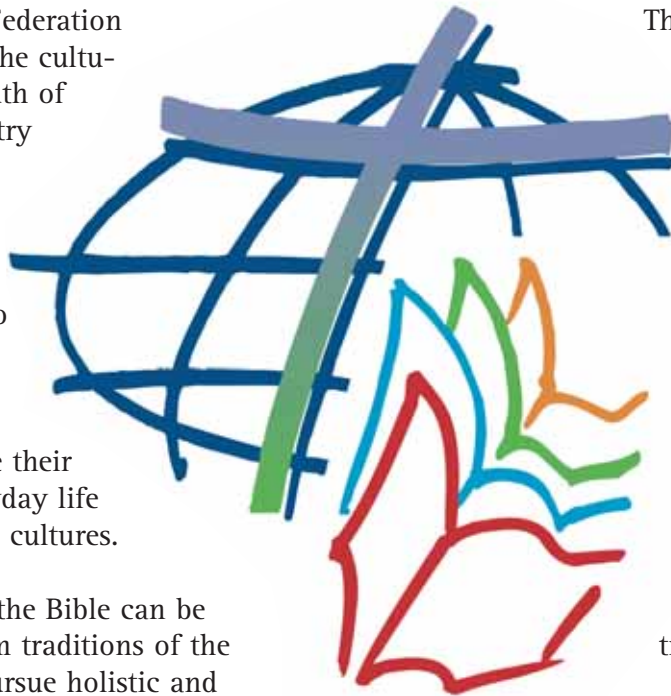
## Biblical pastoral ministry in individual cultural contexts

There are as many approaches to Sacred Scripture as there are people listening to the Word of God. Every culture, society or group has its own emphases in the way it reads the Bible and translates its message into life in our times.

The Catholic Biblical Federation fosters and promotes the cultural diversity and breadth of biblical pastoral ministry around the world.

It promotes methods and ways of using the Bible that take into account the different contexts of life, faith and society. Its international activities take their orientation from everyday life in various regions and cultures.

Asiatic approaches to the Bible can be inspired by the wisdom traditions of the East and they often pursue holistic and integrative approaches.



These complement the rather intellectual-analytical approaches of many Western traditions found in Europe and North America.

The life-related interpretation of the Bible in Latin America makes a conscious effort not to lose sight of the social dimension of Scripture and its prophetic function vis-à-vis society.

In Africa again, Bible-reading is marked by themes such as inculturation and family, or it stresses the significance of orally transmitted narratives and stories.



## Examples from the different regions of the world

At the centre of ecclesial life in many countries of Africa are the **Small Christian Communities**. Their members place the Bible and its message at the core of their activities.

The so-called **seven-step-method** of Bible-sharing, also known as the **Lumko-method**, and originally developed in South Africa, is today employed by communities and Bible-reading circles throughout the world.



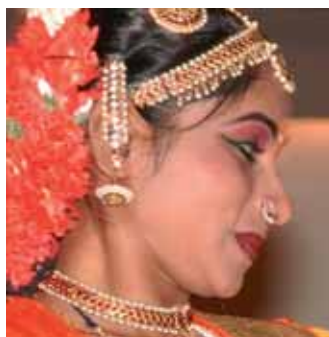
The International **Dei Verbum Course** in Nemi (Italy), jointly organized by the Catholic Biblical Federation and the Divine Word Missionaries, has for decades been educating male and female biblical pastoral collaborators from all parts of the world.

**Bibliodrama**, an experience-related way of bringing biblical texts creatively "into play", is now no longer limited to Europe but is also popular in Asia and Latin America.



The "**lectura popular**" ("people's reading"), a form of Bible-reading oriented to the life-situation of "common" people, forms the basis of biblical pastoral ministry in many countries of Latin America. It does not regard biblical texts as antiquated stories of history, but rather attempts to uncover their life-transforming potential.

"From life to the Bible – from the Bible to life", this motto describes a socially conscious and committed Bible-reading method that draws its inspiration from *lectio divina*. It originated in the basic Christian communities of Brazil and has long been practiced in Europe and Africa as well.



The **Basic Bible Seminar** is an elementary course in biblical pastoral ministry developed in the Philippines and adapted to the relevant cultural context of its addressees. It is now being given in many countries of Asia and Africa.

**AsIPA** (Asian Integral Pastoral Approach), a new pastoral model, developed from the praxis of Bible-sharing in Small Christian Communities and has since also acquired a foothold in other continents of the world.

# That they may have life

## Projects und initiatives

Besides the continuous work in various countries and regions around the globe the Catholic Biblical Federation initiates and promotes numerous concrete projects in the areas of Bible translation, pastoral care, qualified religious training, the media, ecumenism, biblical studies, etc.

A selection of currently ongoing projects:



In East Africa a **Swahili Pastoral Bible** is in process of being produced with the support of the Catholic Biblical Federation. The text of the Bible is enriched with commentaries, introductions, readers notes, maps and illustrations,

all specifically adapted to the life and faith context of East African Christians.

In Ghana the Catholic Biblical Federation supports the **Basic Bible Seminar** in parishes and Small Christian Communities. This praxis-oriented Bible course, aimed especially at people with little or no knowledge of the Bible, makes possible a generally understandable access to the Bible and one that is adapted to the context of their own culture. The idea of the Basic Bible Seminar stems from the Philippines, where it has long been a part of daily biblical training.



In Myanmar Christians constitute a minority and are exposed to continuous reprisals. In spite of this, their number continues to grow. In the north part of the country, on the border with China, the Catholic Biblical Federation is

supporting the program “**Satisfying the Hunger for the Word of God.**” The goal is the training of new collaborators, women and men, for biblical pastoral ministry. Besides this the Catholic Biblical Federation is promoting the production of vernacular Bibles affordable for Christians who often live in extreme poverty in Myanmar.

In Sri Lanka the Catholic Biblical Federation is supporting the production of a basic commentary to the Bible for a general audience and with an orientation to pastoral concerns (**Sinhala Pastoral Commentary**).





In Brazil the Bible Center CEBI ([Centro de Estudos Biblicos](#)) has been successfully active in biblical pastoral ministry for over 25 years. The work of this ecumenical institution is rooted in the “lectura popular”, the way of Bible-reading and

Bible-sharing that is oriented to the life situation of the “common” people. The basic assumption, as simple as it is enlightening, is that biblical texts are not mere antiquated stories taken from history but rather, carry a vital and relevant message for today’s world.

In Colombia CEDEBI ([Colectivo Ecu mico de Biblistas](#)), an ecumenical association of Latin American biblical scholars, is actively engaged in the realm of biblical pastoral work. At present CEDEBI is developing a project, with the support of the Catholic Biblical Federation, in the area of women’s and gender studies. Through courses, workshops, seminars, lectures and other activities in the basic communities and women’s groups the Bible will be treated especially under the aspect of its statements on human dignity and the relationship between man and woman. The aim is to further awareness-raising with respect to women’s rights and to speak up actively in support of equal opportunity.



In many countries of Europe special focus is given to biblical activities for children and youth. Among the great successes here in Romania and Poland, for example, are the numerous [Bible Camps](#) and [Bible Olympiads](#). These are carried out in youth groups and parish communities, but also in kindergartens and schools. The youth are thus introduced to the Bible in combination with sports activities and age-specific entertainment.

The Catholic Biblical Association of Hungary is currently working on the first complete Catholic translation of the Bible into Romanes-Lovari, one of the primary languages of the well over 10 million Romany in Central and Eastern Europe ([Romanes-Bible](#)). The New Testament was finished recently and the Old Testament is soon to follow.



# A vibrant network for the Bible

## Structures

The Catholic Biblical Federation is an "international public organization" according to the Code of Canon Law (can. 312 § 1 n. 1 CIC / can. 575 § 1 n. 3 CCEO). In Germany, it takes the legal form of a registered, non-profit organization (eingetragener Verein "Katholische Bibelföderation e. V.") whose activities pursue socially beneficial and ecclesiastical goals.

### Members

The Federation has two categories of members: full members (at present 92) are Bishops' Conferences or those Catholic organizations which function as the Bishops' Conference's action arm for biblical pastoral ministry in a given country and that have sought membership. Associated members (at present 232) can be any other Catholic organization engaged in the fields of biblical pastoral ministry, biblical studies or Bible translation and that has been accepted as a member by the CBF Executive Committee.

Three-fourths of the member institutions are located in so-called "developing countries".

### Plenary Assembly

The governing body of the Federation is the Plenary Assembly. It is a delegates' conference of full members and associate members held regularly every six years. The Plenary Assembly sets the guidelines for the work of the Federation for the following six years. It also elects the members of the Executive Committee. The Plenary Assembly offers CBF members the opportunity to meet on a worldwide scale. It is the place for exchange and reflection beyond regional and continental borders.

The last two Plenary Assemblies were held, respectively, in Hong Kong (1996) and in Lebanon (2002); the next will be held in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, in 2008.

### Executive Committee

The Executive Committee is elected by the Plenary Assembly. It is the highest organ in the period between Plenary Assemblies and it is obligated to implement their decisions and to nominate office-holders. Each region is served by at least one representative in the Executive Committee.

### President

The President is the presiding officer of the Federation. He is a prelate, elected by the Executive Committee, his name being presented to the Holy See for confirmation. His term of office is six years renewable.

CBF President (since 2002) is Vincenzo Paglia, Bishop of Terni-Narni-Amelia (Italy).

### General Secretary

The General Secretary is elected by the Executive Committee and is responsible for the implementation and realization of the goals and tasks of the Federation. With the support of an international team in the General Secretariat and in collaboration with the coordinators of the individual regions he promotes and coordinates the work of the Federation.

CBF General Secretary (since 2002) is Alexander M. Schweitzer.



## Administrative Board

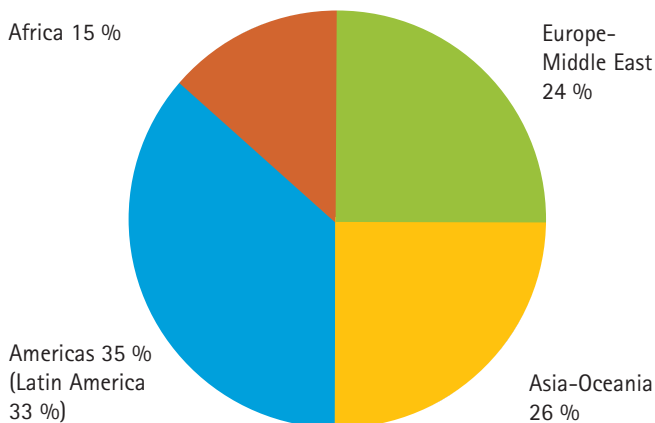
The Administrative Board of the Catholic Biblical Federation is, in accordance with German law, the legal entity of the Federation as a registered organization in Germany, and as such bears the responsibility for all legal and financial matters of the Federation in accordance with the current law of the Federal Republic of Germany.

## Regions

Based on the principle of subsidiarity the Catholic Biblical Federation is divided into four regions: Africa, Americas, Asia-Oceania and Europe-Middle East. As a rule, these regions are further subdivided into subregions.

The regional and subregional coordinators have the task of promoting biblical pastoral ministry in their own regions and of coordinating it with the support of the General Secretariat. Most of the coordinators work on a voluntary basis.

CBF member institutions worldwide



## Facts in overview

Founded April 16, 1969

Affiliation Holy See

Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity

President

Bishop Vincenzo Paglia, Terni-Narni-Amelia, Italy

Members

324 (92 Full Members, 232 Associate Members)

Countries represented 129

General Secretary

Alexander M. Schweitzer, Germany

**Executive Committee** Bishop Vincenzo Paglia (Italy, CBF-President), Msgr. Bernhard Krautter (Germany, Chairman Administrative Board), Msgr. Juan Usma Gómez (Colombia, representative Holy See), Archbishop Ignatius A. Kaigama (Nigeria, representative Africa), Archbishop Diego Rafael Padrón Sánchez (Venezuela, representative Americas), Bishop Arturo Bastes, svd (Philippines, representative Asia-Oceania), Fr. Paul Féghaly (Lebanon, representative Europe-Middle East), Fr. Gabriel Naranjo Salazar, cm (Colombia, representative associate members), Sr. Renu Rita Silvano (India, representative associate members)

**Administrative Board**

Msgr. Bernhard Krautter (Germany, Chairman)

Hans-Werner Fröhlich (Germany)

Theo Kersten (Netherlands)

Fr. Andreas Müller, ofm (Germany)

Fr. Robert Schmitz, svd (Germany/Italy)

**Sub/regional coordinators**

12 (2 full-time, 10 unsalaried)

**General Secretariat**

Located: Stuttgart, Germany

6 staff members

**Publications**

**Worldwide level:**

Bulletin Dei Verbum (in four languages),

CBF-Newsletter (in four languages)

**Regional/continental level:**

BICAM Newsletter (Africa), Word of God in Africa (Southern Africa),

La Palabra Hoy (Latin America and Caribbean),

Bulletin d'Information (Middle East)

# Easy access to Sacred Scripture

## History of CBF

**1965** The Second Vatican Council recommends: “Easy access to Sacred Scripture should be provided for all the Christian faithful.” (Dei Verbum, paragraph 22)

**1966** Pope Paul VI entrusts the President of the Secretariat for Christian Unity, Cardinal Augustin Bea, with the implementation of the conciliar recommendations.

**1969** Upon the suggestion of Catholic Biblical Associations, the Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity founds the World Catholic Federation for the Biblical Apostolate (WCFBA) which in 1990 simplifies its name to Catholic Biblical Federation (CBF).

**1970** The Federation opens its General Secretariat in Rome. The secretariat is transferred to Stuttgart, Germany, in 1972.

**1972** First Plenary Assembly held in Vienna, Austria. Theme: “Bible and Liturgy”.

President: Cardinal Franz König, Vienna, Austria.

**1978** Second Plenary Assembly held in Malta. Theme: “Biblical Spirituality”.

President: Cardinal Paul Zoungrana, Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso.

**1984** Third Plenary Assembly held in Bangalore, India. Theme: “God’s Prophetic People”.

President: Bishop Alberto Ablondi, Livorno, Italy.

**1985** The Constitution of the Federation is approved by the Holy See in accordance with the norms of the new Code of Canon Law.

**1990** Fourth Plenary Assembly held in Bogotá, Colombia. Theme: “The Bible in the New Evangelization”. President: Bishop Alberto Ablondi, Livorno, Italy.

**1996** Fifth Plenary Assembly held in Hong Kong. Theme: “Word of God – Source of Life”.

President: Bishop Wilhelm Egger, Bolzano-Bressanone, Italy.

**1997** The new Constitution of the Federation is approved by the Holy See in accordance with the norms of the Code of Canon Law.

**2002** Sixth Plenary Assembly held in Lebanon. Theme: “Word of God – A Blessing for all Nations”.

President: Bishop Vincenzo Paglia, Terni-Narni-Amelia, Italy.

**2005** On the occasion of the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Dogmatic Constitution Dei Verbum the Federation and the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity jointly organize the international congress “Sacred Scripture in the Life of the Church” in Rome.

**2008** Seventh Plenary Assembly to be held in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania. Theme: “Word of God: Source of Reconciliation, Justice and Peace”.

**2008** The Twelfth Ordinary General Assembly of the Synod of Bishops in Rome devotes itself to the theme: “The Word of God in the Life and Mission of the Church”. The Federation follows the preparatory process and the Synod itself.

### Bank details

Liga Bank Stuttgart

Account No. 6459820

IBAN: DE28 75090300 0006459820

BIC: GENODEF1M05

Istituto per le Opere di Religione (IOR) Roma

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SWIFT: IOPRVAVX

As of August 2007



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