

World Catholic Federation for the Biblical Apostolate

N°7

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Bulletin

*Sei
verbum*

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English Edition

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

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

Furthermore, it is the intention of the WCFBA to promote biblical studies, 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, lecturers and catechists, suggesting ways to form bible groups and recommending the use of both mass and group media to facilitate their encounter with the Word.

The Federation 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
Président of the WCFBA*

'Easy access to Sacred Scripture should be provided for all the Christian faithful'
(Del Verbum, 22).

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

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EDITORIAL

After Vienna, Malta and Bangalore, it will be Bogotá! Every six years the Federation members meet for a Plenary Assembly to evaluate the work done and to establish new guidelines for the future. The next Plenary Assembly will take place in Bogotá, Colombia in 1990. The General Secretary, therefore, asks all the members in a special appeal (cf. p. 4) for their support so that the Plenary Assembly in Bogotá be a success. The more members of the Federation participate in its preparation, the more fruitful the Assembly will be. Since Pope John Paul II often speaks of the need for a new evangelization on the threshold of the third millennium (p. 13), the Executive Committee proposes as theme for the next Plenary Assembly "The Bible in the New Evangelization". Indeed it is one of the foremost tasks of the Federation to reaffirm the central place of the Bible in evangelization, all the more since in the past there was a tendency in our Church to neglect the Bible or to shove it into the background. In view of the next Plenary Assembly we will publish in our BULLETIN DEI VERBUM several papers on the relation between Bible and the "New Evangelization". Thus, beginning with this issue of the BULLETIN, you will find on the center pages a statement by Fr. César Herrera, Coordinator of the Federation for Latin America, in which he attempts to delineate the characteristics of this New Evangelization in the Latin American context (p. 9-11). Please do not hesitate to communicate to us your reactions and comments as well as your reflections on the theme of the next Plenary Assembly.

In between Plenary Assemblies, the elected Executive Committee members convene for an annual meeting to assess the implementation of the recommendations of the last Plenary Assembly and to define new guidelines. This year the meeting took place in Chicago. On pages 4-6, a brief summary of the proceedings can be found.

Pages 13 and 14 are prepared as a leaflet which presents the Federation and its goals. Feel free to remove this leaflet for reproduction and distribution or use it as a guide to design your own leaflet detailing your work as a member of the Federation. The goals of the Federation are not widely known - so much needs to be done in this regard.

The idea of a Bishops' Synod on the place of God's Word in the life of the Church is spreading more and more (p. 6-7). The Vatican Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity has already adopted it. The opportunity is open - we have to take it!

Marc Sevin

Attention!

Please, note the new Post Office Box number of the General Secretariat :

WCFBA, Mittelstraße 12, P.O.Box 10 52 22, D - 7000 STUTTGART 10

An Appeal by the General Secretary

Dear Friends:

We have only two years left to prepare for our next Plenary Assembly in Bogotá, Colombia in 1990. As you certainly know, this Assembly is an extremely important event in the life of the Federation as it gives orientation for the future. All of us have to participate in its preparation if we want it to give new impetus to our service in the Word of God. This is an excellent opportunity to strengthen our activities and fill them with new life.

In a circular letter of November 1987, I informed the members of the Federation on the proposal of the Executive Committee that in 1988 each country organize a meeting for biblical animators on the theme **"The Place of the Bible in the New Evangelization"**. This meeting should then be repeated on the regional level in 1989.

With this appeal, I want to renew this invitation, and I do this with more emphasis. I beg each of you who have been entrusted with the biblical apostolate to deal with the theme of the next Plenary Assembly. Please bring it up for discussion in all meetings you may be involved with on all levels - diocesan, national or regional. To support you in this endeavor, we have printed in the center pages of the BULLETIN, a position paper from Latin America on the characteristics of the "New Evangelization". In the next issues, further statements will follow. It is our intention to stimulate your reflections on the theme of the Plenary Assembly in Bogotá. We encourage you to send any ideas you may have worked out regardless of how long they may be.

The General Secretariat will be at your disposal as far as possible to assist you in your work.

Your impressions are important. We express our sincere gratitude now to all of you who as members of the Federation are currently engaged in the preparations for our Plenary Assembly. It is our goal to rededicate and reinstate the Bible to the central place it must occupy in our Christian communities. Let us secure a head start for the next millennium in the area of biblical apostolate and the biblical-pastoral ministry.

Ludger Feldkämper
General Secretary

The Executive Committee

The World Catholic Federation for the Biblical Apostolate held its annual Executive Committee Meeting from 24-29 April 1988 in Chicago, Illinois, USA.

The participants included:

2 Ex-officio Members:

Bishop Alberto Ablondi, President
Fr. Florencio Galindo, CM, Chairperson Administrative Board

General Secretary

Fr. Ludger Feldkämper, SVD.

9 Full Member Representatives:

Bishop Cirilo Almario, Philippines
Sr. Suzanne Bolduc, FSP, Canada
Fr. Ignatius Chidavaenzi, Zimbabwe
Bro. Enrique Garcia, FSC, Chile
Bishop John Onaiyekan, Nigeria
Fr. Paul Puthanangady, SDB, India
Ms. Silvia Schroer, Switzerland
Fr. Valmor Da Silva, OFMCap, Brazil
Fr. Francois Tricard, France

4 Associate Member Representatives:

Sr. Maura Cho, SOLPH, Korea
Fr. Gerhard Lesch, SVD, Zaire
Fr. Leo Mahon, USA, Moderator
Bro. Ferdinand Poswick, OSB, Belgium

2 Regional Coordinators:

Fr. Cesar Herrera, CSSR, Colombia
Fr. Wim Wijten, SVD, Philippines

Rome Liaison Officer:

Fr. Pietro Sessolo, SVD, Rome

Guests:

Fr. Stephen Hartdegen, OFM, Washington, DC
Fr. Michael Walsh, Washington, DC

Stuttgart Staff Members:

Mrs. Linda Bryan, Secretary
Mr. Heinz Köster, Office Coordinator

Agenda of the Meeting:

Each of the participants had received before the meeting a complete dossier including the text of the different

reports (of the General Secretary, of the Regional Coordinators, of the Treasurer...) as well as various documents concerning the items to be handled during the meeting. The major part of the meeting was dedicated to the preparation of the forthcoming Plenary Assembly in 1990 in Bogotá, Colombia.

The reports of the General Secretary and the delegates.

After the presentation of the participants, Fr. Feldkämper, General Secretary, opened a session with a survey on the developments in the biblical apostolate in the various regions. He gave an account of his various journeys (Kenya, U.S.A., Europe, Colombia, Mexico, East Asia, Oceania). The delegates from the regions were then invited to supplement his report with their own.

Africa

Poor communications make it difficult to give an exact account of the richness and diversity of the biblical apostolate in Africa. The lack of competent animators is, unfortunately, strongly felt. Hence, there is a great urgency as far as formation is concerned. Biblical materials are lacking and in particular there is a great demand for editions of the Bible.

Asia

"The Bible in the New Evangelization" is the theme of the next All-Asia Meeting on Biblical Apostolate which will be held in Singapore from 11-16 Dec. 1988. Here are some themes of importance for Asia: Bible in the context of Buddhism, Hinduism, and Islam; the Bible face to face with fundamentalistic currents; the Bible and the approaches of a Catholic biblical pastoral strategy. In the Philippines a proliferation of bible centers has been observed (five since 1979) which are formation centers for biblical apostolate.

The first meeting for Mandarin speaking Chinese animators from Taiwan, Hong Kong, Macau, Malaysia and Singapore was held in Taipei, Taiwan from 29 Nov. to 5 Dec. 1987. The impact of the biblical apostolate in Korea is considerable.

Latin America

In Latin America giving the Bible to groups appears to be an excellent means of building community. Brazil plays the role of a leader in the biblical apostolate of that continent. The second All-Latin American Meeting of Biblical Apostolate is scheduled for 17-23 July 1989 in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.

North America

In Canada the work of the "Société Catholique de la Bible" (SOCABI) has become more diversified and contributes to the

dynamism of biblical-pastoral work in francophone Canada. Influence on the World Catholic Federation for the Biblical Apostolate moves slowly in Canada and a better constitutional representation on the part of anglophone Canada is desirable. In the United States, the Center for the Catholic Biblical Apostolate has concentrated its efforts until now on translation, publication and distribution of the "New American Bible".

Europe

Cooperation among the Latin countries of Europe has progressed in the course of last year with two meetings of people who are primarily responsible for biblical apostolate in their countries. The concern of formation for biblical apostolate is common to these countries. The reflections on this important issue continues.

Middle East

In spite of the difficulties in which the countries of the Middle East find themselves, leaders in the field of Catholic biblical apostolate in these countries have met once again for an exchange of their experiences. A common project of an introduction to the Bible in Arabic in the context of the Middle East is on the way to realization.

Oceania

The first encounter of biblical animators from all of Oceania was held from the 8-13 Feb. of this year, giving hope to a fruitful cooperation in matters of the biblical apostolate among the four Bishops' Conferences of the area.

Finances

The Administrative Board meets twice a year. During these past years, its main concerns have been questions of finance. The treasurer presented his financial report. The efforts on the part of the General Secretariat to reduce expenses have netted good results which permits us to approach the future with more serenity. Funding agencies submit to the Stuttgart office biblical-pastoral projects for evaluation. This important and much appreciated work is accomplished in the Stuttgart office by Fr. Piet Rijks.

Publications

The BULLETIN DEI VERBUM seems to be much appreciated. A calendar for greater collaboration on the part of the regions in the publication of the BULLETIN has been established. The Stuttgart office likewise envisions to produce leaflets or brochures on question of the biblical apostolate or biblical pastoral work which would be of interest to all the members.

Biblical-Pastoral Course

The pilot course which took place at the Dei Verbum Center at Nemi, Italy, was the object of a positive evaluation. It seems that this kind of courses responds to a real need. It would be good to envisage similar formation centers in other parts of the world. The next course in Nemi is scheduled for 4 Aug.-8 Dec. 1988.

The Synods

The declaration of the Executive Committee Meeting of 1987 on "The Bible in the Vocation and Mission of the Laity" made in the perspective of the Synod of 1987, has been published in the BULLETIN DEI VERBUM, and in a number of other publications.

Conforming with the decisions of the last Plenary Assembly of the Federation in Bangalore 1984, the President of the Federation and the General Secretary have recommended to all the Bishops participating in the Synod of 1987 to have as the theme of the next Synod "The Role of the Bible in the Life of the Church". Only three answers to that appeal were received. Last March, a new letter was sent to the Presidents of the Bishops' Conferences affiliated with the Federation and so far 16 encouraging responses have reached us. (cf. p. 6).

The Plenary Assembly of the Federation

Every six years the Plenary Assembly of the Federation is held. The last one took place in Bangalore, India, in 1984. The next is scheduled to be held in Latin America, to be precise in Bogotá, Colombia, at the end of September or the beginning of October 1990. It is necessary to begin reflecting on this now. A Preparatory Committee was set up. The theme of the Assembly will be "The Bible in the New Evangelization". BULLETIN DEI VERBUM will publish materials regularly in preparation for this Assembly.

Other Questions

Other questions dealt with by the Executive Committee:

- the amendments of the Constitution of the Federation, to be submitted to the Plenary Assembly in 1990;
- relations with the United Bible Societies;
- the date and the place of the next Executive Committee Meeting in 1989.

Informations:

For additional information on the Executive Committee Meeting on the whole or on any point in particular, please write to the General Secretariat of the WCFBA, Mittelstraße 12, P.O. Box 10 52 22, D-7000 Stuttgart 10.

A Synod on the Bible

The delegates to the Plenary Assembly in Bangalore (1984) have decided to invite all Federation members to promote with the bishops the idea of envisioning a Synod on the place of the Bible in the Catholic Church. On 29 Feb. 1988, Bishop Ablondi, President of the Federation, made use of an ongoing solicitation in the search of possible subject matters for the next Synod: he addressed a letter to Cardinal Willebrands, President of the Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity, to inform him about the wishes of the Bangalore Assembly. In his reply dated 22 April, Cardinal Willebrands acknowledged Msgr. Ablondi's letter saying that he welcomed the suggestion and that his Secretariat had worked out a proposal that the next Synod be centered on the theme "The Word of God in the Church" (cf. p. 7).

The following texts are Bishop Ablondi's letter to the Presidents of Bishops' Conferences affiliated with the Federation plus a photocopy of Cardinal Willebrand's reply to a similar letter from Bishop Ablondi.

Your Excellency:

The Holy See requests that within a few weeks, Bishops' Conferences propose possible topics for the next Synod of Bishops in 1990. In this regard, we write to you as the President of a Conference which through an officially recognized organization for the biblical apostolate is affiliated with our Federation.

We draw your attention to a resolution passed by the WCFBA's Plenary Assembly in Bangalore, India, in 1984: "To propose to the Holy See a Bishops' Synod on the biblical apostolate in the Church" (3.2.7.)

Such a Synod would be an answer to two challenges:

1. *The present situation of the biblical movement within the Church 25 years after the Second Vatican Council.*

There exists a gross imbalance between the "hunger for the Word of God" (Amos 8, 11) which is experienced in many parts of the Church and recognized as one of the "signs of the times" and, on the other hand, the neglect of the Constitution DEI VERBUM of the Second Vatican Council, lamented both by the Fathers of the Extraordinary Synod of Bishops 1985 and by the Holy Father himself (April 7, 1986 to the WCFBA Executive Committee).

2. *The New Evangelization as the third millennium approaches.*

The Holy Father spoke of this - and continues to do so - on numerous occasions. Though "new evangelization" may assume different meanings and practical implications, the Latin

American Bishops in their III Assembly in Puebla in 1979 have stated a principle of universal validity: "Sacred Scripture must be the soul of evangelization."

Concrete issues that come to mind with this twofold challenge are:

1. The intimate relation between the bread of the Word and of the Eucharist;
2. The liberating and transforming power of the Word of God;
3. The Bible and the laity;
4. The various ministries of the Word and appropriate formation for these ministries;
5. The ministry of the Word and exegesis;

6. The danger of fundamentalism;
7. The Bible and ecumenism;
8. Inculturation/incarnation of the Word of God;
9. The Bible and other sacred scriptures, etc.

We would be grateful, if you, time permitting, would include this proposal in the discussion of this matter by your Conference.

Our Federation has been founded in order to help Bishops in the realization of the Council's directives on Sacred Scripture in the Life of the Church (DV, ch. VI). In line with this purpose of our Federation we would like to offer you whatever service we can render in ministerio Verbi.



SECRETARIATUS
AD CHRISTIANORUM UNITATEM FOVENDAM

E Civitate Vaticana, die

22 aprile 1988

PROT. N. 1578/88/a
(In risposta alla nota numero 1578/88/a)

Eccellenza Reverendissima,

La sua lettera del 29 febbraio u.s., nella quale Ella mi esprimeva, a nome della Presidenza e della Segreteria della Federazione Cattolica Mondiale per l'Apostolato Biblico, la proposta - sostenuta dal consenso di molti Vescovi - che il prossimo Sinodo dei Vescovi si ispirasse alla Parola di Dio, mi è giunta più che gradita ed ha stimolato il lavoro del nostro Segretariato per l'unione dei cristiani.

Accogliendo i suggerimenti che Ella ha formulato, nonché gli altri elementi emersi sia durante le conversazioni con il rev.mo p. Ludger Feldkämper, sia durante il congresso tenuto in Segretariato nello scorso mese di marzo, è stata elaborata una proposta per il prossimo Sinodo, incentrata sul tema "La Parola di Dio nella Chiesa".

Nell'affidare ora alla preghiera il delicato compito di discernimento che tocca a coloro che vaglieranno, in docile obbedienza allo Spirito Santo, le proposte pervenute, Le confermo il mio ringraziamento e la mia fiducia per il vostro prezioso lavoro a servizio della Parola di Dio nel mondo intero.

Il Signore benedica ogni vostro sforzo e lo renda fecondo di frutti evangelici.

Mi confermo, Eccellenza, con fraterni saluti,

Suo devotissimo nel Signore


+ Johannes Card. Willebrandt
Presidente

Sua Eccellenza Reverendissima
Monsignore Alberto ABLONDI
Vescovo di Livorno
Presidente
Federazione Cattolica Mondiale per l'Apostolato Biblico
via del Seminario, 61
57100 LIVORNO

BIBLE WEEK

On their last meeting in Chicago, the delegates of the Executive Committee repeated their suggestion that the members of the Federation take the initiative of a "Bible Week" as an opportunity to promote the biblical apostolate. Five delegates defined some guidelines which could be helpful in this endeavor:

Why a Bible Week?

1. Response to the recommendation of Vatican II DEI VERBUM (22) "Easy access to Sacred Scripture should be provided for all the Christian faithful".
2. Encouraged by Pope John Paul II.
3. Fulfills the role of the WCFBA in:
 - Cautious coordination
 - Supporting
 - Initiatives of the biblical apostolate.
4. Helps the Church in the ministry of the Word especially to the poor.
5. Meets pastoral and liturgical needs.
6. Useful for ecumenical witness and collaboration.
7. Responds to the challenges of fundamentalism.

To Whom Is a Bible Week Observance Proposed?

1. All Bishops' Conferences, especially members of the WCFBA.
2. Individual dioceses especially associate members of the WCFBA.
3. Other members and organizations associated with the Federation.
4. Religious orders and congregations.
5. Liturgical and pastoral agencies.

Who Participates In (Celebrates) a Bible Week?

1. Parishes.
2. Lay and religious movements, associations, Bible sharing and ecumenical groups.
3. Schools.
4. Religious orders and congregations.
5. Mass media.

How to Promote a Bible Week?

1. Analysis of a national or regional situation (experiences already available).
2. Offering the choice of an annual theme for presentation by successively different countries.
3. Cooperation with the delegates.
4. Make suggestions only for the outline of the Bible Week, leaving the specific time and place for the celebration open for determination at a convenient time.

How to Celebrate a Bible Week?

1. Popular Bible courses in pastoral dimension and cultural context.
2. Availability of low cost Bibles and biblical materials.
3. Conferences, seminars and workshops on biblical themes.
4. Celebration of the Word and periods of prayer.
5. Collection of money for Bible distribution or Bible projects.
6. Promotion of formation for Bible sharing groups for living the Word.

Concrete Steps to be Taken

1. Countries with experience in Bible Weeks/Sundays should send information to the Stuttgart Secretariat. One issue of the BDV will be reserved for presenting a model of Bible Week chosen from this material.
2. The Stuttgart office contacts missionary organizations which distribute the Lenten veil to find out whether or not we may link into their world-wide project.

The New Evangelization and the Bible

The next Plenary Assembly of the Federation will have as its central theme "The Bible in the New Evangelization". To help our members prepare for this important event, the BULLETIN DEI VERBUM will publish reflections on this theme. The following paper by César Herrera, Latin American Coordinator of the Federation, was presented at the Executive Committee Meeting in Chicago. This paper is Fr. Herrera's personal understanding of the meaning of the "New Evangelization" and presents some of his interpretations of the principle characteristics. The original text in Spanish can be obtained from the Secretariat in Stuttgart.

1. THE KINGDOM OF GOD.

The kingdom of God, as the plan of the Father's love, is the proclamation of Jesus repeated for every generation and every person through the Church. The love of God and his plan of salvation which he addresses to everyone remains alive and active and we are the mediators of this liberating power of Jesus Christ. This gospel is expressed in a normative way in the New Testament and we can not expect a different one.

2. THE NEWNESS OF EVANGELIZATION.

The newness of evangelization results from the new challenges of contemporary humanity for the action of God's love and his kingdom. As the awareness of historicity is intensified in modern man/woman, the newness of the historical situation in relation to the past can be better perceived. The Church has to answer these new challenges with new strategies. It is in this light that new evangelization presents itself.

For greater clarity, we divide our presentation into two parts: first we describe the global claims we make on evangelization at the present moment of history; then we examine the answers given in relation to the creative presence of the Holy Spirit in the Church.

3. THE NEW CHALLENGE.

3.1. Present history as the task of new evangelization.

In the conception of former theology, the accent was on preserving and transmitting the treasure of truth and doctrine in order to illuminate the human mind with the light of faith. In the document about revelation prepared for the II Vatican Council, we find a good and sanctioned formulation of this mentality. It's an expression of a theology which was very faithful to the

past. I cite here some characteristic formulations in order to show the change. The title of the document is significant: on the preservation of the deposit of faith (*De deposito fidei custodiendo*). "Revelation includes universal truths of the natural and supernatural realms."

The total of the revealed truths is, in accordance with Vatican I, rightly entitled "The Doctrine of the Faith"...Events do not belong to the realm of revelation except through the truths contained in them and as related to them." Luis Alonso Schökel, (*Commentary to the Constitution Dei Verbum*, BAC, pg. 46ss). The duty and mission of the Church is to transmit these truths which make up the treasure of faith preached by the apostles and found in two sources: Scripture and Tradition.

The Council rejected this partial way of understanding revelation and taught us to discover the presence and the action of God who saves and reveals himself in events and words, that is, in the history of salvation and revelation. The question is to find in Jesus Christ, the Saviour and the revealer of the Father, the meaning of history and to change it through the power of the Holy Spirit.

We can say that this understanding of revelation is basically new; from this, all other characteristics of new evangelization result. The claim is no longer to transmit the contents of truths in order to illuminate the spirit but to interpret and change history.

3.2. The Gap Between the Rich and the Poor in the Christian Context.

The scandalous accumulation of goods created by God for everyone and the progressing poverty which leads to dehumanization of large masses who are systematically pushed to the margins of society, is a new fact which characterizes our modern historical situation. We have to add that this situation does not only appear in pagan population but also in communities of Catholics baptized in the Church of Jesus Christ. Those who enslave and oppress call themselves Christians as do those who are enslaved and oppressed. From this follows the violation of human rights for life, health, education, shelter and work.

This situation on the other hand, sanctioned and legitimized by laws and institutions, amounts to a state which could be called institutionalized violence.

3.3. Cultural Invasion and Pluralism.

In the first evangelization, one started from the presupposition of a close cultural unity possessed both by the conquerors, and by the indigenous of America.

The groups of people which are evangelized today, do not in the first place possess a homogeneous culture. Frequently, they do not possess a cultural identity even supposing they are consid-

ered as Whites, Indians, Mestizos or Negroes.

To this is to be added a cultural invasion or colonialization promoted gradually through the media of social communication via satellites. This constitutes an enormous possibility of the creation of a new culture or of cultural oppression affecting both the conqueror and the American Indian.

3.4. The Mobility of Human Life.

Stability was one of the characteristics of traditional culture which gave security and identity to a people or a parish like the social womb which generated personal maturity of a certain style and of a clear identity. One could have called this an obligatory and non-optional community.

Today the points of reference in order to establish an identity in a group follow very different parameters and remain at the mercy of individual liberty and of the impressions coming from others. The mobility of persons and families and the lack of a traditional community impose essential tasks on new evangelization.

3.5. The Social and Political Conscience.

In the past, the realm of the political was the concern of the king and the prince. Some were destined to govern and others to obey. The way Christianity was lived in this situation generated an apolitical attitude and an individualistic one in one's relation to God.

The situation in this field has been radically changed by the consciousness of historicity and of the responsibilities of each and every one for the common good. This change resulted from the democratic system of politics.

3.6. The Religiosity of Popular Catholicism.

The understanding of God's revelation through nature has also been modified through science and technology. The change has been twofold: a popular religiosity which remains alive as in the past; and a new secularizing attitude which substitutes religion with materialism and secularism.

4. THE ANSWERS TO THE CHALLENGES.

4.1. The presence of the Spirit wants to make itself more vigorously felt at the dawn of the third millenium under the charismatic aegis of the II Vatican Council. Could this new zeal be compared with the pleiads of Spanish and Portuguese missionaries who sailed to all corners of America, in order to announce the gospel?

We can encounter the novelty, so to speak, in the subject of this impulse to evangelization. Previously evangelization was the task of the missionary priests in the context of a rigid distinction between clerics and lay people. More recently, in the 30's, one thought of permitting lay people a collaboration in the apostolate of the hierarchy of the Church. Under the impact of the Council, this position has been profoundly modified: in the Extraordinary Synod of 1985, in an effort to evaluate the effects of the Council, it was said with all clarity "evangelization is the primordial task not only of bishops, priests and deacons, but of

all the Christian faithful as well". The Holy Father has made this global affirmation his own and has given it a new impetus.

Evangelization as the task of the total Christian community constitutes without any doubt an unmistakeable characteristic of new evangelization.

4. 2. History as Task of Evangelization.

New evangelization does not limit itself to the transmission of a deposit of doctrine. We understand it as a reality which is much more complex in as much as it concerns the entire human being, society, culture, in a word - history. Evangelization implies the building of community in the social context and in the context of relationships with other nations. From this flow numerous aspects which give evangelization a new dimension on the eve of the third millenium: economy, culture, technology, human rights, women, youth, politics, ecology, arms race, etc.

4.3. The Gap Between the Rich and the Poor in the Christian Context.

Face to face with the scandal of inhuman poverty which forces us to announce the gospel to people living in substandard conditions, the Church proposes in the first place to make the love and the reign of the Father become a historical reality. But the love of the Father wants to make itself the protagonist in the conflict in order to give it a solution. What are the implications of this decision? It demands to follow Jesus Christ adopting with full clarity his program of liberation (Lk 4, 18-21). The program of Jesus implies:

4.3.1. A radical option for the poor in order to save the rich and the poor. The same way as God and Jesus placed themselves on the side of the poor, the child, the sinner, according to gospel categories, new evangelization makes its option for the poor (the captives, the blind, the oppressed).

4.3.2. To make the option for the poor implies acceptance of them as mediators of evangelization. That is to say, to permit oneself to be evangelized by them in an experience of communion of life. Liberation is realized in the ecclesial community.

4.3.3. This implies, moreover, accepting the responsibilities and the actions of the poor within the ecclesial community. Men and women have a right and an obligation to offer their contribution to the development of community. This implies the right to Christian formation.

4.3.4. The total of these characteristics form the so-called liberating evangelization. It aims at integral liberation from all kinds of slavery.

4.4. Pluralism and Cultural Invasion.

Taking as our starting point the understanding of salvation in history in general, and the increasing consciousness we have concerning the efficacious salvific will in favor of all human beings, we have come to the conclusion that evangelizing does not mean imposing, dominating or dogmatizing, but rather entering into dialogue and creating a productive tension which

provokes the growth and maturity of persons in the thrust of the gospel. Here opens out the vast field of intercultural salvific dialogue.

Intercultural salvific dialogue does not only consist between faith and the great cultures like those of India and China, but between faith and all our cultural expressions which enrich each other day by day. This cultural growth is mediated by modern technology and the electronic brain.

Moreover, this salvific dialogue exists also between faith and the so-called western Christian civilization.

This salvific dialogue implies the total use of cultural expressions which humans create continuously as well as the use of all communication media which are the laboratory of culture. Here enters the vigorous missionary dimension which characterizes the new evangelization. This aspect is one of the more glamorous signs of the Church today.

4.5. The Mobility of Human Life.

It belongs to the essence of the experience of the Christian faith that it is communitarian in such a way that the persons of the community form part of the Good News of the gospel. Being community is an essential part of Christianity which functions as the sociological presupposition for communicating the doctrine of the faith.

The new evangelization counts on this presupposition and consequently must engage in the task of creating the communitarian context of evangelized and evangelizing people as an integral part of evangelization. This new creation of the Good News is called Basic Christian Community.

4.6. Social and Political Conscience.

The awareness of the fact that the persons in the society are the historical protagonists of evangelization and the understanding of the mission of the ecclesial community in the world places evangelization far from individualism and apolitical privacy. Evangelization places people in the socio-political context not only of their neighborhood or national community, but also of the international community with all the consequences this implies.

4.7. Popular Catholic Religiosity.

New evangelization pays particular attention to the preparation for evangelization (pre-evangelization) which manifests itself in religiosity; but at the same time it is conscious that the gospel is not identical with a selfish kind of religiosity of people but that it expresses itself in living, creative, and transforming love.

5. TWO GLOBAL RESPONSES.

5.1. Historical Spirituality.

New evangelization becomes a synthesis of a new life according to the Spirit which draws all of history and in particular the persons of brothers and sisters into trinitarian relations. It is the mystery of the Trinity made fraternal and transforming history. From a theological and contemplative spirituality, we pass on

to a christological and pneumatic spirituality in order to arrive at the experience of trinitarian relationships with God in the historical relationships with people following Jesus.

5.2. Reading of the Bible by the People.

Formerly evangelization neglected the reading of the Bible by the people and entrusted direct contact with the Bible to the priests confined in the Latin culture. Even more, speculative theology was interposed between the Bible and the priest in such a way that the priest had to give total priority to doctrine and use his intelligence to care that doctrine was in accord with the Bible (see first schema of *Dei Verbum*, *De Deposito fidei custodiendo*).

To a certain degree, the faithful had a catechism as a substitute for the Bible, whereas the Bible remained in the hands of the Protestants. The catechisms used by the Catholics of our continent were composed in the 16th century and were the incontestable norm until the II Vatican Council. We can say that the means of communication, normative in biblical-pastoral practice and a symbol of the former evangelization, was the catechism. The historical dimension had the sacraments as its center.

The Council brought a fundamental change in this situation. First of all, it taught us to discover God in the history of salvation and, in the second place, it decided to provide for all the Christian faithful, easy access to sacred Scripture.

We can say that the proof of the application of the Council and of the new evangelization is the common reading of the Bible by the people of God. At the same time it is the motor of the new evangelization in building community around God's Word which is Jesus Christ.

The total richness of tradition is preserved and revitalized when Christians view their lives in the light of the history of salvation as described in sacred Scripture and at the same time read the Bible in the light of their and the ecclesial community's experience of life. This interaction guided by the Holy Spirit and in full communion with the Church, is not a reform of a law, a practice, a costume or a definition, it's a global change which concerns all the aspects we have underlined in the new evangelization.

The central point of the new evangelization is the Word of God with its historical expression which is the community of the Church. This centrality of God's Word translates itself in an operative way in communities which read the sacred Scriptures in order to define the salvific sense of history through faith in Jesus Christ.

This reading of the Bible by the people with all catechetical elements offered by the tradition of Church, provokes the putting into practice of the ecclesiology of Vatican II and the maturing of Christians through salvific and missionary dialogue.

César Herrera, CSSR,
Regional Coordinator of the World Catholic Federation
for the Biblical Apostolate in Latin America

New Evangelization in the Words of His Holiness, Pope John Paul II



“We cannot hope for greater vitality in the Church if we do not at the same time intensify our New Evangelization.”

To the bishops of Granada and Seville, Spain, November 14, 1986.

“Evangelization is an ongoing responsibility and basic demand of the living Church, as the Second Vatican Council explained so fully.”

To the Ambassador of the Dominican Republic, February 2, 1987.

“The Church is preparing to begin the third millennium of her pilgrimage toward the heavenly Jerusalem. This provides an opportunity for you to renew your commitment and fidelity to the mission of evangelization.”

To priests, brothers, deacons and seminarians, Santiago, Chile, April 1, 1987.

“Renew in your minds and hearts the ultimate and eminent goal of evangelization. You have been called that you may feel within you and live in all its consequences the motto of St. Paul, which should be the basis of your daily examination: ‘Woe to me if I do not evangelize!’” (1Cor 9,16).

Homily during Mass at Velez Sarsfield Stadium, Buenos Aires, April 10, 1987.

“Evangelization is the work of all the members of the Church: bishops, theologians, priests, religious and laity, both adult and youth.”

To the bishops of Belgium, April 24, 1987.

“We must continue our task of evangelization with courage and trust, even if the times are more difficult than in the past.”

To the Pontifical Mission Aid Societies, May 8, 1987.

“From my apostolic visits to all the continents, I have reached the conclusion that evangelization in today’s world is underway as never before...Conscious of this the Church feels strongly committed to the dual task of evangelizing the world, and re-evangelizing our own Christian people.”

To the faithful at the Marian Shrine, Valleverde, Italy, May 25, 1987.

The General Secretary of the Federation

Since 1973, the office of the General Secretariat is located in Stuttgart.

Among its tasks are:

- to foster and inform about the activities of the Federation. The General Secretary of the Federation visits the members regularly. These visits provide an opportunity to obtain an overview of the work of the Federation.

- to establish contact between the members of the Federation in order to coordinate their efforts in view of greater efficiency.

- to bring the Federation to places where it is not yet known.

- to publish quarterly in three languages (English, French and German) a bulletin aimed at passing on information to the members.

- **to procure funds for the translation, production and distribution of the Bible as well as for the preparation of aids for Bible reading.**

- to organize biblical-pastoral workshops and seminars.

- to compile a complete catalog of all Bible translations made by Catholics.

- to organize regular meetings under the leadership of the Regional Coordinators; to call a Plenary Assembly every six years offering the Federation an opportunity to review its work and give new orientation.

- to establish contacts with Church leaders especially with the Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity.

General Secretariat
Mittelstr. 12, P.O. Box 10 52 22
D-7000 Stuttgart, FRG
Telephone: 49-(0)711-609274

Brief History of the Federation

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|-------------|--|
| 1965 | Recommendation of the Second Vatican Council: "Easy access to Sacred Scripture for all" (DEI VERBUM 22). |
| 1967 | Cardinal Bea makes contact with Catholic Biblical Associations to initiate the implementation of the Council recommendations. |
| 1969 | Under the auspices of the Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity, these biblical associations establish the World Catholic Federation for the Biblical Apostolate. |
| 1972 | First Plenary Assembly of the Federation in Vienna. Cardinal König of Austria becomes its first President. |
| 1978 | Second Plenary Assembly of the Federation in Malta with the theme: "Biblical Spirituality". Nomination of Cardinal Zoungrana of Burkina Faso as President. |
| 1984 | Third Plenary Assembly in Bangalore, India, with the theme: "God's Prophetic People". Bishop Ablondi of Livorno, Italy becomes the successor of Cardinal Zoungrana. |
| 1985 | After revisions in the Plenary Assemblies of Malta and Bangalore, the Constitution of the Federation is approved by the Vatican according to the norms of the new code of Canon Law. |
| 1990 | The next Plenary Assembly will take place in Bogotá, Colombia. |

WORLD CATHOLIC FEDERATION FOR THE BIBLICAL APOSTOLATE

"Coming as you do from many different countries, you and your colleagues are able to make a significant contribution to the Church's mission of evangelization. You help the Church to respond faithfully to the mandate of our Risen Saviour: "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you."
(Pope John Paul II to the members of the Executive Committee, 7 April 1986)

The World Catholic Federation for the Biblical Apostolate (WCFBA) is represented in 90 countries:

- **65 Full Members** (organizations on national level entrusted with the biblical apostolate by their respective Bishops' Conference)
- **143 Associate Members** (other Catholic organizations involved with the biblical apostolate).

The WCFBA is an "international Catholic organization of a public character" (cf. Code of Canon Law, 312.1.1).

"God's Word reveals the mystery of God and of man and woman".

(Bishop Ablondi, President of the Federation)

The biblical apostolate facilitates access to the Word of God and thereby contributes to the evangelization mandate of the Church.

The **World Catholic Federation for the Biblical Apostolate** is an international organization composed of Catholic organizations active in the biblical pastorate. Its members endeavor to respond to the needs of the local Churches through mutual support and financial aid. Main objectives of the Federation are:

- **Translation, Production, and Distribution** of Catholic or interconfessional Bible editions
- **Fostering Bible studies** and compiling **instructional materials** for a better understanding of the Bible
- **Formation** of ministers of the Word (biblical animators and catechists)
- **Organization of Bible Groups**
- **Celebration of Bible Weeks** on national level
- **Use of media** to make the Word of God accessible
- **Cooperation with organizations of other Christian Churches** active in the biblical apostolate

The Federation relies on individuals and communities who are willing to support the Federation towards the realization of its goals.

Donations may be deposited in one of the following accounts: Commerzbank Stuttgart, Germany, 84 24129 (BLZ 600 400 71) - Postgirokonto Stuttgart, Germany, 35 590-707 (BLZ 600 100 70) - Raiffeisenbank Klosterneuburg, Austria, 48 900 (BLZ 32 367)

Some Projects...

The members of the Federation try to be active in every area of the biblical pastorate and biblical apostolate. The following are examples of some projects supported by the Federation.

Translation, Production and Distribution

For the Centennial Celebration of the evangelization of Mali, the translation of the New Testament into Bambara was begun. It will be the first Catholic translation of the entire New Testament in a language spoken by 6 million people in Mali, Ivory Coast and Senegal.

Czechoslovakia

Presently 20,000 editions of a new interconfessional Bible have been printed and plans are to increase this figure to 100,000.

Oceania/Solomon Islands

The translation of the New Testament into the Lau language is continuing with 48% of the work completed. An estimated 32,000 people who speak Lau exclusively will benefit from it.

Zaire-Kabinda

For ten years now, a team of catechists and lay experts has been working on a translation of the Bible into Kisongye. In 1987, the translation of the Psalms was published. Kisongye is spoken by more than 500,000 people.

Zimbabwe

The revision of the Bible translation into the Shona language is progressing under a team of experts representing four different Christian denominations. An estimated 7 million people speak Shona in Zimbabwe.

Seminars for Biblical Animators

Australia

In February 1988, the first seminar for those active in the biblical apostolate of Oceania (Australia, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Tonga) was held in Sydney. This event was organized by the Federation.

China

In early December 1987, Mandarin speaking exegetes and those responsible for the biblical pastorate from Singapore, Malaysia, Hong Kong, Macau and Taiwan met to give new impulses to the biblical apostolate within the Catholic Chinese communities.

Indonesia

In December 1987, two workshops were organized by the member of the Federation. The first workshop was for Scripture scholars on a definite theme while the second one was held for all those responsible for the biblical apostolate in the country with the goal of evaluating their previous work and establishing common guidelines.

Near East

Under the auspices of the Federation, Catholic exegetes of the Near East met for the second time in Cyprus in February 1988. They worked on an introduction to the books of the Old Testament giving special consideration to the context and the conditions of their respective countries.

Workshops and Courses

India

Some 2,900 people are participating in a biblical correspondence course offered by an Indian member of the Federation. This course stresses the reading of the Bible in community.

Rwanda

The Secretariat of the Federation, together with the exegetes of Rwanda, offered two Bible study workshops and a biblical-pastoral seminar for biblical animators in that country in August 1987.

Bible Week

Latin America

LA PALABRA HOY, the Spanish review for the Federation, published materials to show new ways to spread the practice of Bible Month / Bible Week in the Spanish speaking countries of Latin America.

Pakistan

The Catholics of Pakistan were invited to celebrate Bible Sunday for the first time on 22 February 1987. The member of the Federation in Pakistan had compiled material for the preparation and implementation of this Sunday.

General Information

LATIN AMERICA: Meeting of the sub-regional coordinators of the Federation.

The sub-regional coordinators of the Federation in Latin America gathered for a meeting in the capital of Colombia from 22-25 Oct. 1987. The following themes were on the agenda of this meeting: the evaluation of the work achieved since the first Latin-American meeting of the Federation; the preparation of the Second Latin American Meeting for the Biblical Apostolate which is to take place in Brazil in July 1989; the preparation of the Plenary Assembly of the Federation to take place in 1990 in Latin America within the frame of the 500th Anniversary of the evangelization of this continent; the planning of concrete activities in the area of the biblical apostolate as for example the organization of a Bible Week (Bible Month); the publication of a handbook for the biblical apostolate; reflections on the necessity of the new Bible translation.

In the following you will find some brief information on the events and activities reported by the countries represented:

Argentina.

In Argentina there is no organization entrusted with the biblical apostolate even though much is being done in this field. There is however, a publication for the biblical pastoral ministry "Palabra y Vida" ("Word and Life") and a biblical correspondence course. In the Theological Faculty of the Catholic University, priests interested in the biblical-pastoral ministry may register for biblical theology as their specialization. Catechesis is well-organized in Argentina; however, there is an urgent need for a well-founded biblical training for catechesis and biblical animators.

Brazil. (cf. BULLETIN DEI VERBUM No. 1, p. 16)

Also in Brazil there is no special organization for the biblical apostolate, yet numerous groups are working in this field: the Jesuits of the St. Ignatius Institute who next year will offer a course for biblical exegesis; the Bible Center SAB (Servico de Animacão Biblica) which prepares the dossiers for the "Bible Month", for Bible Circles, work groups, liturgy, etc.; this Center additionally publishes many pedagogical aids (books, cassettes, video cassettes, posters, songs, etc.); likewise the Center for Bible Studies (CEBI) makes an important contribution to the biblical apostolate on account of its numerous courses, meetings and the publication of pedagogical aids. Last but not least, publishing houses like Vozes and Paulinos are to be mentioned which are equipped with a biblical section as well as the Liga for Bible Studies (LEB) which functions as the connecting link between the various Bible experts and publishes a scientific biblical review.

On the level of the Bishops' Conference, the Department of Catechesis takes pains to coordinate the biblical-pastoral ministry in the country.

In Brazil, biblical themes are given great importance in catechesis. Biblical instruction within catechesis is carefully prepared. Catechists receive a well-founded biblical formation. The publication of a handbook for biblical pastoral ministry and catechesis is in preparation.

Finally it may be pointed out that the idea of a Bible Month was first conceived in Belo Horizonte as early as 1971.

Central America.

In the countries of Central America (El Salvador, Nicaragua, Panama) there is not a national biblical commission, and until now, no national biblical meeting has taken place in these countries. On the level of the local churches, great care is being given to the formation of biblical animators. The Catholic universities offer courses on biblical theology. Yet much remains to be done in order to win the responsible church leaders for the biblical-pastoral ministry. In Nicaragua work has begun on an ABC of the Bible for the "Bible Week".

Chile.

Biblical experts, lay people and priests participated in the first seminar for biblical-pastoral ministry in Chile (cf. *BULLETIN DEI VERBUM* No. 3, p. 18). In Chile there is no organization that specializes in formation in the biblical-pastoral field.

There is a strong and explicitly expressed desire for a catechesis oriented more along the lines of the Bible.

The diocese of Concepcion through its correspondence course on the Old and New Testament makes a significant contribution in the field of the biblical-pastoral ministry in the different cities of the country.

In the publication for catechesis "Noticia" one rubric is dedicated to the training of biblical-pastoral animators.

Three brochures have been published on "Bible Week".

The need for a formation center for biblical experts and biblical animators is widely felt.

Colombia.

Thanks to the support of the Bishops' Conference, the biblical-pastoral work could progress considerably. Criteria for the biblical-pastoral ministry have been elaborated (cf. *BULLETIN DEI VERBUM* No. 4). Formation courses for biblical apostolate increase ever more and more in the country. The universities offer courses in view of the formation of exegetes. Further information: Fr. César Herrera, CSSR, FEBICAM, Transversal 29 No. 354-39, Bogotá DE, Colombia.

CYPRUS:

Second Congress of Exegetes from the Near East.

From 8-13 Feb. 1988, 16 exegetes from Egypt, Syria, Iraq, Israel, and Lebanon met in Larnaca, Cyprus, to link up with their first congress (Nov. 1985) and to evaluate the work done during the past two years in the field of the biblical apostolate. The theme of the meeting was: The Christian Reading of the Old Testament Within the Special Context of the Near East. A detailed report on the various points on the agenda of the Congress is available at:

WCFA General Secretariat, Mittelstr. 12, Postfach 10 52 22, D-7000 Stuttgart 10.

ETHIOPIA: Gospels and Proverbs.

In some countries like Ethiopia life wisdom of the ancestors has been gathered together in proverbs expressing the philosophy, the religion, the moral concepts, the humor, the entire consciousness of the people.

A group of Catholics has collected some two thousand proverbs in the Oromo language and has tried to relate them with the words of the gospel. These proverbs may fortify and strengthen the gospel texts in their message or form a contrast and contradiction. Thereby people are animated to reflection and inspired to discussion. The final goal is to relate all the four gospels with the Oromo proverbs and thus to create for the people a bridge to the gospels.

Further information: WCFBA General Secretariat, Mittelstraße 12, Postfach 10 52 22, D-7000 Stuttgart 10.

FRANCE: The Congress of "Evangile et Vie".

On 9 and 10 April 1988, the Catholic Biblical Association "Evangile et Vie", full member of the Federation for France, together with the Protestant organization "Equipes de Recherche Biblique", organized in Nantes a National Congress for those responsible for the biblical-pastoral work. The goal of the meeting was to evaluate the work done and to reflect anew on the practice of the biblical apostolate. This Congress drew once again the attention to the importance of formation of biblical animators which emerges from the great popularity of biblical courses (one French Catholic out of one thousand participates in a biblical course).

Further information: Fr. Francois Tricard, Evangile et Vie, 6 Avenue Vavin, 75006 F-PARIS

INDIA: The Biblical Apostolate in the State of Bihar.

The 6th meeting of biblical animators in India offered the representatives of the State of Bihar the possibility to evaluate the work of the last years.

The following picture resulted from this review: the promotion of pre-marital biblical catechesis and the animation of youth for biblical apostolate were the two important concerns during the last three years; unfortunately, there was not as much progress as had been hoped for. The translation of the Bible into Hindi for students, however, could be published. There has been an intensified use of mobile audio visual units of biblical cinemas, slides and dramas in villages. The faith renewal retreat ministry has been found extremely valuable for the biblical apostolate in the villages since it made possible a deeper experience and better assimilation of the Word of God. The following points may be listed as further positive results: the instruction for the annual celebration of Bible Month; translations of the Bible or of the New Testament in the different languages of the region; Bible camps and Bible dramas; biblical songs; family catechesis based upon the Sunday readings; and publications in preparation for the Sunday liturgy. On the other hand, there are insufficient Hindi Catholic Bibles to reach all of the Catholic families. Even

though 6 million people (among them 20 thousand Catholics) speak Bhojpuri, there exists still no Bible translation in this language. Christian Community animators of our villages are not equipped to help the people interpret their lives in the light of the Word of God.

There is still much to be desired before the goal of a biblical apostolate has been reached - a biblical apostolate which takes the social context of the country into consideration.

This task does not become any easier with the present lack of dialogue and collaboration between social and biblical animators in the Church.

Further information: Navjyoti Regional Pastoral Center, Patna 800 010, Bihar, India.

IRAQ: Biblical Apostolate.

The Catholic Church in Iraq has no official organization for the biblical apostolate. A community of five Iraqi Dominicans is engaged in the distribution of the Bible. Two government recognized book stores sell the Bible, one in Bagdad the other in Mossoul. The importation of thousands of complete Bibles, New Testaments and biblical publications in 1985 has helped fill this need. Two centers for theological studies in Bagdad and Mossoul offer biblical formation for five hundred young people. Biblical instruction takes a high priority. Also the pastoral ministry of young students in Mossoul is marked by biblical spirituality.

The revised version of the New Testament, first published 100 years ago and to this day highly esteemed by the faithful, is expected in the near future. Further aids for the Bible are still in the making.

Further information: WCFBA General Secretariat, Mittelstraße 12, Postfach 10 52 22, D-7000 Stuttgart 10.

IRELAND: What can we do?

Around the beginning of the 19th century, an observer in the South of Ireland estimated that more than one third of the Protestant families owned Bibles, and of the Catholics, not one family in 500. It is reported that owning a Bible was deemed to be a sin by the Catholic Church in Ireland until 1972.

In 1973, a copy of St. Luke's gospel was distributed to every home in Ireland.

In 1985, a reporter asked a young Orange man what he most feared about a united Ireland. His response was "to be ruled by people who don't read the Bible."

Times have changed. Great efforts have been undertaken to implement the recommendations given by the Vatican Council document *Dei Verbum*. In the following we reprint some of the consultations published in the review "Intercom" for the priests of the country:

"Can you do something?"

1. Have you a Bible study group in your parish? If not, perhaps you could get one started this Advent - even if just for three or four meetings. If you have little experience in this field, we are ready to provide you with simple aids. You may have some group or lay person(s) or religious in your area who could help. Such a group could organize its own Bible exhibition, to

focus either on the Bible itself or on the biblical message, and on a date you decide for example, Christmas.

2. Get together with other churches in your area, and work with them: perhaps an illustrated talk on the Bible, or film of the Holy Land, etc. This could prepare the way for an inter-church group next Lent.

3. Encourage Bible reading, perhaps through weekly preparation of the Sunday readings. Display the reading program in a newsletter or on a notice board. Give extra publicity to any local Bible group.

4. Have a "Shrine" of the Table of the Word so that visitors can have Scripture available when they visit your church. Perhaps a Lectionary open to the readings of the day; some Bibles and related materials. Your Bible study group or prayer group might be willing to service this. A "Wayside Pulpit" notice board outside your church with an eye-catching Scripture message changed regularly.

5. Ask local schools to emphasize Scripture during this Bible Week.

6. Speak of the Bible in other countries: translations, apostolate, etc.

7. To support you in your work, several organizations offer aids and materials you can demand.

8. Tell how Scripture has made a difference in your own life! The Word of God is not a book - nor even a whole library of books - it is a living, creative Word which is seen to be alive when it takes flesh in your life and in mine.

Further information: Fr. Padraig McCarthy, 31 Herbet Avenue, Merrion, Dublin 5, Ireland.

ITALY: The Bible Study Weeks of the Italian Biblical Association.

The Italian Biblical Organization (Associazione Biblica Italiana, ABI) organizes biblical study weeks for priests, religious and lay people every year. These courses are open for everybody while each of them aims at a definite audience. The structure of all the courses is similar: regular conferences followed by discussion, times of communal prayer and a friendly atmosphere.

Here is the program of 1988:

March: Bible Week for Lay People with the theme "Towards the Completion of Time" (the books of the Chronicles and of Maccabees; Christ encounters humans).

April: Encounter with the gospel according to John.

4-9 July: Bible Week for priests on "The Psalms".

23-30 July: Bible Week for lay people on the "Johannine Epistles".

First week of August: Bible Week on "Genesis and Paul".

22-27 August: Bible Week for religious on the "Letter to the Hebrews".

Further information: A.B.I., via della Scrofa 80, I-00186 Rome.

KENYA: Activities at the Pastoral Center in Nairobi.

The Pastoral Center St. Balikuddembe in Nairobi endeavors to meet the needs for training basic Christian communities in the

archdiocese. Thus during the last year several Bible study courses have been conducted. Here are some of the themes treated:

- Justice and Peace, Biblical Vision and Daily Experience.
- Christian Community in the Bible, the Bible in Christian Community.
- The Bible and African Culture.
- Women in the Bible.
- Youth and the Bible.
- The Worker, the Bible, the Church.
- The Family in the Bible, the Bible in the Family.
- The Role of the Catechist in the Church Today.

All in all 565 people engaged in community and parish work participated in these courses. Encouraged by this positive result, the Center has decided to offer similar bible courses on the deanery and parish level in 1988 also.

Further information: Fr. Max Stetter, St. Balikuddembe Pastoral Center, Box 1310, Thika, Kenya.

LESOTHO: Department of Biblical Apostolate in the Bishops' Conference.

The Department of the Bishops' Conference of Lesotho entrusted with the biblical apostolate takes pains to pay special attention to biblical themes like peace, justice and reconciliation since in the actual situation of the country these seem to be indispensable. In preparation of the pastoral visit of the Pope in the region, the faithful are called upon to reflect on the pastoral ministry of the people of God (Moses, David, Peter) from a biblical viewpoint. For this Marian Year, the bishops recommended to their faithful to meditate on the biblical theme of Mary as mother of a family in need of reconciliation.

Further information: Joseph G. Brossard, OMI, LCBC Biblical Apostolate Secretary, P.O. Box 200, Maseru 100, Lesotho.

MALTA: Renaissance of a Biblical Review/Bible Camp.

The Bible Society of Malta is a member of the Federation. Together with the Catholic Institute of Floriana, Malta, it has published during the years 1969 through 1976 a biblical review with the title "SIJON". However, since much time had to be given to the translation project of the Bible into Maltese, the Bible Society had to discontinue the publication of this review. The translation work is now complete and the Bible Society is once again publishing the review with a new format. The magazine contains practical aids geared towards Maltese readers engaged in pastoral activities in the schools, in the religious communities or in prayer circles.

During the three days after Easter, the Bible Society of Malta organized a Bible camp for youth. The theme was "The Life of the Early Christians". In spite of the intense program - no less than five seminars for each day - the youth expressed their joy over the fact that they once again experienced the Bible as the Book of Life. It was decided to offer this experience again and to offer Bible camps for schools and youth organizations.

Further information: Ghaaqda Biblika, Institut Kattoliku, Il-Furjana, Malta.

PAPUA NEW GUINEA-SOLOMON ISLANDS: Sub-commission for the Biblical Apostolate.

From 29-31 Jan. 1988, the sub-commission for the biblical apostolate in the region of Papua New Guinea and Solomon Islands gathered for a meeting. First point of concern was the Bible Week planned for this year. The following texts were chosen for the Sunday liturgy at the end of Bible Week: Is 55, 8-11; Ac 1, 12-14; Lk 8, 19-21 or Jn 19, 25-27. In order to prepare the dioceses and parishes for this Bible Week, members of the commission are putting together a relevant workbook with the theme "Mary, the First Disciple". Additionally all directors of pastoral centers received a circular. Regarding the implementation, several proposals have been submitted, for example, the organization of a song festival with a Marian theme, bible reading plans for the week, slide shows on Jesus of Nazareth, and others.

Several bible seminars are planned for the entire region for this and the coming year. The first, a basic bible seminar and a course for biblical animators will be conducted in Kefamo, Goroka, from 17-27 Oct. The study of the Infancy Gospels has also been put on the schedule. This seminar may result in a program which could be worked out for each diocese represented.

Further information: Fr. Gunther Koller, SM, Liturgical Catechetical Institute, Drayton Street, P.O. Box 347, Goroka, E.H.P., Papua New Guinea.

PHILIPPINES: Publication of a review.

The Episcopal Commission for the Biblical Apostolate in the Philippines has published a new quarterly to serve the biblical apostolate - "Sharing God's Word". Msgr. Cirilo Almario's article, "The Word of God in the Life and Mission of the Church", opens the first issue. The following contributions are "The Bread of Life in John VI", "The Bible in Adult Catechesis" and "Guidelines to the Right Interpretation of Sacred Scripture". The last pages contain Bible news on the national level and from around the world.

Further information: Msgr. Cirilo Almario, Bishops' Residence, Malolos 3000, Bulacan, Philippines.

PHILIPPINES: Ninth Regional Meeting for Biblical Apostolate in Northern Luzon.

"Life-Scripture-Eucharist-Community" was the theme of the Ninth Regional Workshop for the Biblical Apostolate in Northern Luzon in October 1987. In the following, we render the topics/questions discussed during this meeting.

1. Scripture as the book of evangelization. In Latin America the catechism is considered as the handbook of the first evangelization while the Bible is called the handbook of the second evangelization. Can we make Scripture the soul of evangelization?
2. The hunger and thirst for God's Word frequently develop in renewal groups. Can we cooperate with these groups and are we catering to them increasing their openness for God's Word?

3. The Bishops' Conference of the Philippines initiated the project "A Bible for Every Family". How many families in our dioceses are using their bible as a family prayerbook? Does Scripture play a significant role in our family?
4. The relation between Scripture and life.
5. The Bible as the book of the community.
6. The role of the laity in their service of the Word.
7. The problem of sects and the danger of fundamentalist interpretation of the Bible.

Further it should not go unnoticed that thanks to hard work, endurance and ecumenical collaboration for many years now, the new Lectionary based on the popular version of the Bible in Ilokano, could be published. This easily understandable version should improve the people's access to the Bible in Northern Luzon.

Further information: Fr. Wim Wijten, SVD, John Paul I Biblical Center, Vigan, Ilocos Sur, 0401, Philippines.

SRI LANKA: Activities of the National Catechetical Liturgical Biblical Center.

The National Catechetical Liturgical Biblical Center (NCLBC) in Colombo, Sri Lanka, offers throughout the entire year 1988 a basic bible course for biblical animators in the parish. From 4-11 Dec. 1988, the Center will also organize a Bible Week on the national level.

Further information: NCLBC, 11 Borella Cross Road, Colombo 8, Sri Lanka.

SRI LANKA: A Leaflet on "Bible Sunday".

From the same Center (NCLBC) we received a leaflet on the Bible Sunday celebrated during December last year. To pass on this experience and to give some suggestions to those who want to organize these celebrations of such a Bible Sunday for the first time, we reprint the contents of this very simple leaflet:

BIBLE SUNDAY: (date)

WHAT

- The day on which we are reminded of the centrality of the Sacred Scriptures in the life of the Church.
- An occasion to intensify our knowledge and use of the Scriptures.
- The day to offer aid to millions of Christians who cannot afford a Bible.
- A day for ecumenical witness to the Word of God in the Scriptures.

HOW - By announcing this important event.

- Organizing Bible related activities, posters and signs,
- Bible exhibition featuring Bible editions, tracts, biblical literature, maps, photographs of the Holy Land, etc.,
- Biblical News, etc.
- Enthronement of the Bible in homes,
- Making the Scriptures available,

- The day's liturgy adapted to the biblical apostolate,
- Biblical formation programs:
- Bible Quiz (individual, groups or families),
- Bible study sessions,
- Ecumenical Bible discussions,
- Collection for the biblical apostolate,
- Biblical plays, dramas, songs, etc.

WHO - Pastors, religious, catechists, parents, youth.

WHERE - Family, church, Sunday school, youth sessions, lay apostolate meetings.

Pope John Paul II says "The Bible Sunday to be pastorally effective should be preceded by an entire Bible Week".

Vatican II "The Church has always venerated the divine Scriptures just as she venerates the body of the Lord, since from the table of both the word of God and the body of Christ she unceasingly receives and offers to the faithful the Bread of Life." (DEI VERBUM 21).

Further information: NCLBC, 11 Borella Cross Road, Colombo 8, Sri Lanka.

SUDAN: National Bible Seminars.

In spite of the present difficulties, the National Pastoral Liturgical and Catechetical (Palica) Center of Juba together with Sr. Theresa Nyathow Daniel, responsible for the biblical apostolate in Sudan succeeded in conducting a national bible seminar last year on the theme "The Law, the Prophets, the Scriptures of the Old and the New Testament" in relation to the suffering and resurrection of our Lord. For this year, a special seminar is planned for teachers, which will be conducted in English in the North and in Arabic in the South. Some 100 participants from all parts of the country are expected.

Further information: Palica Center, Juba, c/o P.O. Box 21102, Nairobi, Kenya.

SYRIA: The Biblical Apostolate.

For more than ten years centers for specialized religious studies in Damascus and Aleppo have offered Bible courses. For five years, Bible groups have been functioning in Aleppo. Under the guidance of a priest and a religious, these groups are involved in a deepened study of sacred Scripture using the Etienne Charpentier's "Reading the Old Testament" and "Reading the New Testament" in Arabic.

Several apostolic movements (groups of Equipes Notre Dame, Legion of Mary, scouts, guides, renewal movements like "Foi et Lumière" (Faith and Light) and Catholic Action) regularly choose biblical themes for their summer camps, their courses, their spiritual work throughout the year and for their retreats. As a follow-up to the visit of Bishop Naguib, Regional Coordinator of the Federation, and of Fr. Feldkämper, General Secretary of the Federation, the Assembly of Catholic Bishops of Syria established as an official contact office for pastoral and apostolic activities the "Episcopal Commission for the

Biblical Apostolate in Syria". We list some of the activities of this Commission during the past year:

- An exhibit of biblical books in collaboration with Protestant Churches and the Bible Society of the Near East.
- The statistics on the activities of all apostolic renewal movements in Syria undertaken with the goal of drawing attention to the Bible.
- A Bible refresher course for priests and religious in September last year with the theme "A Christian Reading of the Old Testament". This course took place in Damascus and Aleppo in French and in Homs in Arabic for married priests. The course was very well attended.
- The preparation of a "Vade Mecum" for the reading of the Old and New Testament by Fr. Boutros Mrayati.

Further information: WCFBA, General Secrétariat, Postfach 10 52 22, D-7000 Stuttgart 10 FRG.

TAIWAN: The First Chinese Workshop for the Biblical Apostolate.

From 29 Nov.-5 Dec. 1987, for the first time, a meeting was held in Taipei of people responsible for the biblical apostolate in Singapore, Malaysia, Hong Kong, Macau and Taiwan. The following resolutions for the promotion of the biblical apostolate were accepted:

1. Formation of more local ministers of the Word;
2. Establishment of Chinese biblical communication centers;
3. Organization of similar bible workshops or assemblies from time to time;
4. Organization of training sessions for the formation of bible facilitators, giving priority to young people;
5. Extensive use of the mass media in the promotion of the biblical apostolate;
6. Intense promotion of the celebration of Bible Sunday and the organization of Bible Week;
7. Proposals for the establishment of bible associations, in accordance with the pronouncements of Vatican II and the Holy Father as well as the documentation on the Synod of Bishops 1987, to be presented to bishops of all regions and enforcing promotion of the biblical apostolate.

Further information: Fr. Gaspar Han, OFM, Vicaria Franciscana Reginae Sinarum, 96-8 Kun Ming Street, Taipei, Taiwan, R.O.C.

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA: A Pastoral Declaration: "Biblical Fundamentalism".

In the last issue of BULLETIN DEI VERBUM (No. 6, p. 16-17) we referred to the document "les enjeux d'un fondamentalisme catholique" (the challenges of a catholic fundamentalism) published by the Secretariat of the French Bishops' Conference. Now the American Bishops' Conference has published a paper, which gives in seven columns pastoral guidelines for Catholics who are inclined towards biblical fundamentalism unaware of the serious weaknesses of this trend. The leaflet points out that biblical fundamentalism is

only one form of a far more comprehensive fundamentalism outside of religious context, influencing both the political and the social behavior of the individual. The characteristics of biblical fundamentalism are dealt with in order to draw attention to its dangers and to examine the serious motivations leading certain faithful to assume this fundamentalistic attitude. The bishops point to the encyclical of Pope Pius XII, *Divino Afflante*, and to the dogmatic Constitution *Dei Verbum* in order to recall once again the need for a critical reading of the Bible, the Word of God in human words. The distinctive feature of biblical fundamentalism consists in this - that it leaves out of consideration the divinely instituted Church through which the sacred Scriptures have been handed to us.

The importance of the Church must consequently be explained anew to the faithful who lean towards biblical fundamentalism. The bishops admit that for historical reasons the Catholic Church in the past did not foster biblical studies as it should have. Today the situation is different. The Second Vatican Council encourages Catholics to possess the necessary aids to become Christians who know and love the Word of God and live according to it, and they urge that these means be made use of more extensively.

Further information: (A Pastoral Statement for Catholics on Biblical Fundamentalism), U.S. Center for the Catholic Biblical Apostolate, 1312 Massachusetts Avenue, NW, Washington, D.C. 20005, U.S.A.

NEW MEMBERS OF THE FEDERATION

During its last meeting, the Executive Committee had the pleasure of receiving the following new members into the Federation:

Africa

Associate Member = AMECEA Pastoral Institute (GABA), P.O. Box 908, Eldoret, Kenya.

Asia

Associate Member = Tamilnadu Biblical Catechetical and Liturgical Center, Tindivanam, 604 002, South Arcot Dt., Tamilnadu, India.

Associate Member = Saint Sulpice Seminary, 1-1-1 Matsuyama, Jonan-Ku, Kukuoka, 814-01 Japan

Associate Member = Studium Biblicum Franciscanum, 4-16-1 Seta, Setagaya-Ku, Tokyo, Japan.

Europe

Full Member = Diocese of Luxembourg, B.P. 419, 4 rue Génistre, L-2014 Luxembourg.

Associate Member = Center Catholique Romand de Formation Permanente, 31 Bd de Grancy, 1006 Lausanne, Switzerland.

Associate Member = Schwestern der Liebe vom Kostbaren Blut, Deutsche Provinz e.V., Helleter Feldchen 51-53, 5102 Würselen-Broichweiden, FRG.

Latin America

Full Member = Episcopal Conference of Argentina, Calle Paraguay 1967, 1121 Buenos Aires, Argentina.

Full Member = Bishops' Conference of Salvador, 15 Av. Norte 1420, Col. Layce, Apartado 1310, San Salvador, El Salvador.

Associate Member = Centro Biblico-Verbo, Rua Verbo Divino 993, C.P. 12.605, Santo Amaro, 04798, Sao Paulo, Brazil.

Associate Member = Instituto Teologico del CELAM, Calle 19 N0. 80A-40, (Bélen, La Nubia), Apartado Aéreo: 1931, Medellin, Colombia S.A.

Associate Member = Centro Biblico Verbo Divino, Ap. 403, Cuenca, Ecuador.

Associate Member = Instituto de Sagrada Escritura, Messt, Tecoyotitla 88, Col. Florida, Alvaro Obregon, 01030 Mexico D.F.

Associate Member = Misioneros del Verbo Divino, Provincia Mexicana, Apartado Postal 21-991, Coyoacán, 04000 Mexico D.F.

North America

Associate Member = Logos Translators, 343 Partridge Run Road, Gibsonia, PA 15044, USA.

Associate Member = Society of the Divine Word, Chicago Province, Techny, IL, 60082, USA.