

World Catholic Federation for the Biblical Apostolate

Bulletin

*Dei
verbum*

N°12

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*** Annual meeting of the Executive Committee of the Federation: reports of the delegates from different regions (page 4-8 & 13) *** The Bible in the New Evangelization (VI) (pages 9-12) *** New Members of the Federation (pages 13-15) *** Ten Challenges of "DEI VERBUM" (pages 16-17) *** Bible Translations in the Making (pages 18-19) *** Preparing for the 1990 Bogotá Plenary Assembly (page 19) *** "Exegesis Must Serve Evangelization" (page 20) ***

English Edition

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

Translation and distribution of Catholic and 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, lectors and catechists, suggesting ways to form bible groups and recommending the use of both mass and group media to facilitate their encounter with the Word.

The Federation also wishes to promote a dialogue with people who believe only in human values, as well as to encourage an encounter with the sacred writings of other religions. Through such encounters, the revealed Word of God can offer a more profound understanding of God and of human life.

The Federation appeals to everyone to add their personal and community support to those great tasks.

*+ Alberto Ablondi, Bishop of Livorno
President of the WCFBA*

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

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**IN PREPARATION
FOR THE 1990
PLENARY ASSEMBLY
IN BOGOTA**

See details on page 19

Editorial

Are you a musician or designer? If you have an idea as regards the Plenary Assembly theme, "The Bible and the New Evangelization", with the Scripture text "See, I make all things new" (Rev 21,5), try to compose a song or design an emblem (Logo) for our grand meeting in Bogotá. Or perhaps there is a musician or designer among your friends on whom you could call? The competition is open to all.

In May of this year, the members of the Executive Committee met in the Abbey of Maredsous, Belgium for their last annual meeting before the Plenary Assembly. A large portion of this issue of the BULLETIN is dedicated to the activity reports from the various regions. The manifold and enriching experiences exchanged during this meeting can only strengthen and encourage the Federation in its service (p. 4-8 & 13).

The Federation admitted 13 new Associate Members from ten countries. A warm welcome to all (p. 13-15).

In the last issue of the BULLETIN, Fr. Ludger Feldkämper presented his reflections on the theme of the Plenary Assembly along the lines of several church documents. On the center pages you find the remainder of his paper. He outlines "The New Evangelization" and additionally provides some food for thought on the "place of the Bible in the New Evangelization" (p. 9-12).

Next year, 25 years will have passed since the promulgation of the Constitution on Divine Revelation DEI VERBUM - the Magna Charta of our Federation. This event is a welcome opportunity to make the work and the services of our Federation better known to a broader public. Each member is asked to examine the possibilities within the country and to make full use of them: Bible Sunday or Bible Week, seminars, articles in newspapers, etc. Bro. Ferdinand Poswick, OSB, representative of the Associate Members in the Executive Committee of the Federation, reports on the genesis of this document and derives from there "10 challenges" regarding the biblical-pastoral ministry (p. 16-17).

Fr. Piet Rijks, in the General Secretariat responsible for the evaluation of projects, gives short informations on Bible translations which presently are supported by Catholic Funding agencies. The goal to make the Bible accessible in their mother tongue is by far not yet reached! And numerous groups in all the world are dedicated to this goal (p. 18-19)

On the occasion of this year's audience granted to the members of the Pontifical Biblical Commission, Pope John Paul II discussed the various methods for understanding the Scriptures. In the Church, he said, all methods must serve evangelization either directly or indirectly (p. 20).

Marc Sevin

MEETING OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE IN MAREDSOUS

The Executive Committee of the Federation met for its annual meeting in the Benedictine Abbey of Maredsous, Belgium from 4-11 May 1989.

Participants

Ex-officio Members:

Bishop Alberto Ablondi, President of the Federation
Fr. Florencio Galindo, CM, President of the Administrative Board
Fr. Pier Francesco Fumagalli, Delegate of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity

Full Members:

Bishop Cirilo Almario, Philippines
Fr. Ignatius Chidavaenzi, Zimbabwe
Bro. Enrique Garcia, FSC, Chili
Fr. Carlos Mesters, O.Carm., Brazil
Bishop John Onaiyekan, Nigeria
Fr. Paul Puthanangady, SDB, India
Dr. Silvia Schroer, Switzerland
Abbé François Tricard, France

Associate Members:

Sr. Annuntia Im, SOLPH, Korea
Fr. Gerard Lesch, SVD, Zaire
Fr. Leo Mahon, USA, Moderator
Bro. Ferdinand Poswick, OSB, Belgium

General Secretary:

Fr. Ludger Feldkämper, SVD, Stuttgart

Regional Coordinators:

Fr. César Herrera, CSsR, Colombia
Fr. Wim Hoekstra, Australia
Fr. Norbert Höslinger, Can.Reg., Austria
Bishop Antonios Naguib, Egypt
Fr. Wim Wijten, SVD, Philippines

Liaison Officer in Rome:

Fr. Pietro Sessolo, SVD, Rome

Guests:

Fr. Valmor da Silva, OFMCap., Brazil
Fr. Michael Walsh, USA

Stuttgart Secretariat:

Mrs. Linda Bryan, Secretary
Miss Christa Wehr, Secretary

Agenda

After having heard the activity reports, the Committee concentrated on preparations for next years Plenary Assembly in Bogotá. The following is a summary of the various reports and of the most important decisions of the Executive Committee.

The Reports

The Federation can conveniently be considered as active in four regions: Africa

Asia and Oceania

North and South America

Europe and Middle East

Each of these regions is further divided into sub-regions and represented with 15 to 19 Full Members each in the Federation.

AFRICA

• Report of Fr. Ignatius Chidavaenzi (Zimbabwe)

Africa so far is in a difficult situation as there is not yet a central/regional organization that has been able to give consistency and common thrust uniting the various efforts in the biblical-pastoral ministry throughout the entire continent and smaller regions within. The representatives of Africa on the Executive Committee have decided to take a close look at a special region within Africa:

- Bishop John Onaiyekan: West and Central English-speaking Africa

- Bishop Antonios Naguib: Arabic-speaking North Africa

- Fr. Gerard Lesch: West and Central French-speaking Africa

- Fr. Ignatius Chidavaenzi: South Africa including Zimbabwe and Malawi.

The countries in southern Africa, at the time of the EC meeting, had planned to organize their first congress on the biblical apostolate in January 1990. An earlier date was not possible due to the preparations for the Pope's visit. Various Bishops' Conferences have put a reflection on the importance of the biblical apostolate once again into their pastoral program. A visit of the General Secretary of the Federation is desired. It would give recognition to the biblical pastoral projects already in operation and give new suggestions that could result in impulses for further biblical pastoral work.

- Report from Fr. Gerard Lesch (Zaire)

Toward the end of February, representatives from all three Associate Members of the Federation in Zaire, met for an exchange of opinions.

The Centre pour l'Apostolat Biblique (Center for the Biblical Apostolate) in Bandundu completed the series *Ta Parole - Ma Lumière* (Your Word - My Light), 30 booklets on the Old Testament and 20 on the New Testament. The English edition of this series was not continued after Number 12 because of distribution difficulties. The main task at the moment is the "Basic Bible Seminar" based on that of the John Paul I Biblical Center in the Philippines. These seminars are very popular and translations have been made into French and Kikongo. A Lingala translation is being prepared.

The Centre Saint Irénée in Kikwit organizes Bible courses and is involved in the Bible translation into Kikongo. Another project idea is to republish the liturgical texts with annotations.

The publishers "Verbum Bible" in Kinshasa have two major projects at this time: the publication of the New American Bible and/or the Jerusalem Bible; and a pastoral Bible for francophone Africa.

The Archdiocese of Kinshasa, Zaire, mentions the biblical apostolate in its Synod documents (cf. BDV No. 9, p. 18-19).

The National Center for Catechesis in Senegal has worked out a biblical catechesis program. Fr. Eugene Gallon is involved in biblical apostolate through the radio and television media.

The Biblical Center of Lomé (Centre Biblique de Lomé, CEBILO) in Togo, continues the publication of its biblical magazine *Ecoulez et Annoncez* ("Listen and Proclaim").

In Benin, the Bible translations into the Fon language continue but still demand much time.

In Angola, the catechetical institute in Luanda is engaged likewise in biblical pastoral work.

In Rwanda a meeting for exegetes is being planned.

Several responsables for the local churches discussed the possibility of a formation course for biblical animators in French modeled after the biblical pastoral course "DEI VERBUM" in Nemi. The establishment of an ad hoc commission seems to be necessary if this plan is to be further developed and realized.

• Report from Bishop John Onaiyekan (Nigeria)

From an official church standpoint, little progress has been made as regards the coordination of the biblical apostolate in Africa. On the whole, the Federation will have to continue to maintain links with the African Church through regional groupings and especially through the Full Members of the Federation. Every other year, the African exegetes have their "Journées Bibliques Africaines" (African Bible Days) with the next one scheduled for July 1989 in Nairobi.

In Nigeria, the Catholic Biblical Movement of Nigeria (CBMN) is the instrument by which the Bishops' Conference seeks to coordinate and supervise biblical apostolate activities in the country. It is organized on diocesan, provincial and national levels, and offers annual meetings and seminars. The theme for reflection and program for action for 1988/1989 is "Training Bible Study Group Leaders" (cf. BDV No. 9, p. 17).

A Catholic English Bible edition for Nigeria is the most important biblical pastoral project for the Nigerian church at the moment. Worth mentioning also is the preparation of a Catholic Bible translation into Yoruba.

ASIA-OCEANIA

• Report from Bishop Cirilo Almario (Philippines)

The Second Asian Workshop for the biblical apostolate took place in Singapore in Dec. 1988. The BULLETIN reported on this event (cf. BDV No. 10, p. 5-7).

Within the Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences (FABC), the Department for the Laity is the official contact for the WCFBA. At the Pan-Asian Conference on Evangelization held in South Korea August 1988, Bishop Almario spoke on "The Biblical Apostolate and Evangelization".

In the Philippines, the 4th National Workshop for the biblical apostolate was held 14-17 Feb. 1989, in Guiguinto, Bulacan on "The Bible and Evangelization in the Philippine Context". Present were some 90 delegates from all over the archipelago.

During its meeting last January, the Bishops' Conference declared 1989 National Bible Year. Reasons for such a national celebration were:

1. To satisfy the hunger and thirst for the Word of God among the faithful;
2. To help deepen the knowledge of the faithful about the Word of God;
3. To obliterate the growing influence of fundamentalist groups among our people.

Pentecost Sunday, 14 May, marked the official launching of National Bible Year. Various suggestions and initiatives are offered on all levels - among them the National Bible Congress scheduled for the last week of November. The Bible year will conclude with the celebration of Bible Week during the last week of January 1990.

• Report by Fr. Paul Puthanangady (India)

This year again in India a one month course was offered on biblical spirituality with a view to prepare animators for biblical apostolate in the country. Bishops and major religious superiors were personally approached and invited to send people for this ministry in the dioceses and religious congregations. The course has three major thrusts:

1. Knowledge of the content of the Bible. This varies from year to year: each year takes up a particular theme. So far, the

following themes have been dealt with: experience of God according to the Bible, Covenant, Kingdom of God. The purpose is to provide a model for evolving a specific theme. This year's theme is "Man's Dynamic Response to God's Word";

2. Reading the biblical texts in the context of the religious experience of other faiths;

3. Initiating the participants into practical ways of conducting the biblical apostolate through the various means available in the mass media, catechesis, liturgy, prayer session, Bible sharing, Bible courses, etc.

The overall purpose of the course is to create "Communities of the Word" by enabling them to make the transition from the book and the ritual to word and sign. It is only then that the Gospel is proclaimed and the kingdom inaugurated.

The Indian church plans to use the coming decade in the preparation for the third millennium by forming the faithful to an authentic "Community of the Word". From Advent 1989 to the end of Advent 1999, a detailed plan of action is envisioned with a special commission to work out these programs for the various levels. During the Advent Season of these ten years, specific programs are to trigger a reflection on the theme "The Community of the Word":

1. Christian Life in the Family:
 - 1990 - Word: Biblical Apostolate;
 - 1991 - Faith Formation: Catechesis;
 - 1992 - Worship: Liturgy;
2. Christian Life in the Ecclesial Community:
 - 1993 - Word, Faith Formation and Worship in the Parish;
 - 1994 - Word, Faith Formation and Youth;
 - 1995 - Word, Faith Formation and Parish Association and Basic Groups;
3. Christian Life and New Society:
 - 1996 - Word, Faith Formation and Worship: Socio-economic Context;
 - 1997 - Word, Faith Formation and Worship: Multi-Religious Context;
 - 1998 - Word, Faith Formation and Worship: Evangelization;
 - 1999 - With Christ into 2000.

The Bible correspondence course, begun two years ago, continues successfully with 4000 participants and increasing popularity.

Several interconfessional Bible translations into the various languages of India are progressing well: the Marathi Bible has been completed while translations into Tamil, Kannada, Ho and Assamese are in progress. The negotiations for an interconfessional version of the Hindu Bible continue.

The Catholic Bishops of Kerala have published a pastoral letter, "Preaching the Word of God", in connection with Bible Week in May of this year. This letter stimulated a series of biblical-pastoral activities.

The First National Workshop on biblical apostolate is scheduled for 5-10 June 1989 in Bangladesh.

In Bangalore, a South Asian Workshop on "The Reign of God" is scheduled to take place 10-19 Oct. 1989. The participants will treat the theme of the Plenary Assembly from the perspective of the region. One cannot think of evangelization in the region with its context of world religions in term of only Baptism and the establishment of the Christian community of the world or the institutional church. One cannot think of a community of the Word within our multi-religious situation. Hence, the choice of the theme, "The Reign of God". What is the role of the Bible in creating this community of the Word and what should be the methodology in fulfilling the biblical apostolate in this context and with this aim?

• Report from Fr. Wim Wijtten (Southeast Asia)

The two Asian Workshops for the Biblical Apostolate - Hong Kong 1985 and Singapore 1988 - have stimulated the biblical-pastoral ministry in Southeast Asia: confirming and strengthening existing programs, leading to a more comprehensive biblical apostolate vision, and giving birth to new, dynamic programs and activities.

In Indonesia, in July 1989, a meeting of the diocesan biblical apostolate coordinators was held in Jakarta with the objectives: to improve the organizational structure and quality of the biblical apostolate especially in relation to the liturgical and catechetical movements; to exchange ideas in preparation for the Plenary Assembly in Bogotá; and to discuss the 1989 Bible Month theme, "The Church in the Acts of the Apostles". In January, 1988, a Bible center in Bandung was begun and the opening of another biblical school for laity in Jakarta is scheduled for July 1989.

Malasia: each year, laity, religious and priests of Malaysia participate in the "Scripture Ventures" biblical course in Baguio, Philippines.

Singapore: the Singapore Archdiocese was the local organizer and host of the Second Asian Workshop for the biblical apostolate. The priests of the diocese made the recommendations of the workshop their own: they decided to celebrate Bible Sunday, to promote Bible enthronement in the home and to organize Bible courses.

Thailand: Bishop George Phimpisan was elected chairman of the General Committee - the highest UBS body - during the 14-21 Sept. 1988 UBS General Council Meeting in Budapest.

Philippines: On the occasion of the 10th anniversary of John Paul I Biblical Center in Vigan, from 24-26 Oct. 1988, a Workshop of the five Philippine Regional Centers took place under the theme: "The Bible in the New Evangelization". At this time, a brochure *The Word in Alive in Asia* was published. This collection of pertinent biblical-apostolate statements, recommendations, and reflections, commemorates the 20 years of service of the WCFBA and contains reflections on the Bogotá theme.

Hong Kong: A Catholic Biblical Institute was opened in 1988 and offers a three year biblical course for laity.

Bible Week 1989 was celebrated under the theme "The Bible in the New Evangelization".

The Hong Kong Catholic Biblical Association is charged with preparing the 2nd Catholic Chinese Biblical Apostolate Workshop for Mandarin-speaking Chinese to be held 22-28 April 1990. Some 60 Chinese participants from different countries are expected.

Good relations are maintained with the United Bible Societies in the Asia/Pacific Region. There is great interest and many initiatives in the biblical apostolate especially with the youth.

AMERICA

• Report from Fr. César Herrera (Latin America)

This year, the campaign for Bible Month/Bible Week continued. Bible Week materials and manuals for biblical circles, catechesis sessions and liturgical celebrations were published in a double issue of *La Palabra Hoy* (The Word Today).

The attention was focused on the situation of many parishes who have just started with the biblical-pastoral ministry and need materials to initiate this work.

As Bible text for this year, we have chosen the Book of Ámos in view of the situation of social injustice.

The preparatory committee for the second Latin American meeting on biblical-pastoral ministry, 17-23 July 1989 in Mendes, Brazil, met several times.

A Bible for the basic catechist, prepared with the collaboration of two teams - one of catechists and the other of biblical pastoralists - under the supervision of the Episcopal Council of Latin America (CELAM) and coordination of the Office of the Federation (FEBICAM), has been proposed.

There is a proposal to begin a course of biblical studies for Latin America in Medellin that would provide students with an opportunity to specialize in this field and finish with an academic degree.

December 1988, 45 people from various sections of the country took part in the Second National Encounter of the Biblical-Pastoral Ministry in Colombia. They studied the different methods of reading the Bible while simultaneously analyzing the situation.

The study concerning the criteria of biblical-pastoral ministry which had already been started in the First National Encounter was expanded. Further, some projects were studied seeking a more dynamic organization of biblical-pastoral ministry in the country.

• Report from Sr. Suzanne Bolduc (Canada)

The Société Catholique de la Bible (SOCABI, Catholic Biblical Association) has worked in the past year on the following:

Productions:

- two books: one on the Gospel of Luke, the other a vulgarization of semiotics
- 4 audio cassettes: on the Acts of the Apostles
- a Bible quiz on the New Testament for youngsters
- 5 editions of the magazine "Parabole": the Psalms, Eliha and Elijah, The Kingdom, Traveling in Old Biblical Times, and The Angels in the Old and the New Testament.

Activities:

- 3 Bible weekends on the Acts of the Apostles (Community and Mission) with 700 participants
- 5 days retreat on Gn 17, 6
- Travelling Expo Bible
- 32 sessions and seminars
- correspondence course

Members of the team have contributed to various magazines and participated in a consortium for the elaboration of a manual and a video on the various techniques for reading the Bible directed at catechesis - a work accomplished under contract for the Ministry of Education.

The celebration of the 50th anniversary of SOCABI is scheduled for Spring 1991 with the following objectives:

- a celebration for the 196 members of SOCABI
 - a meeting of biblical animators in French speaking Canada in order to evaluate what has been done and to plan the biblical-pastoral ministry for the future
 - to find a way to create a biblical activity for the public at large. Toward this end, the Museum for Civilization in Quebec city has agreed to sponsor an exposition "Bible and Culture" for 4 to 6 months beginning in March 1991. The museum estimates 300,000 to 500,000 visitors.
- SOCABI is requesting materials for this Bible Expo in 1991.

EUROPE

• Report from Fr. Norbert Höslinger (Central Europe)

After the foundation of the Federation in 1969, the Catholic Biblical Associations of Belgium (Flemish speaking part), the Federal Republic of Germany, Holland, Austria, German-speaking Switzerland, and Southern Tyrol (Italy), joined together to form the Arbeitsgemeinschaft Mitteleuropäischer Bibelwerke (AMB - Community of Central European Biblical Associations). Annual meetings were agreed upon with the primary goal of providing an exchange of experiences. The support of the colleagues in eastern Europe quickly became another important concern.

The first meeting of the AMB took place in 1970. As a new task, it was decided to look into the distribution of Bibles in Eastern Europe. The Austrian Catholic Biblical Association (Österreichisches Katholisches Biblwerk - ÖKB) was asked to assume the role of the European secretariat since "Austria, because of its central location in Europe, offers the best conditions for this".

Delegates from Eastern European countries like the German Democratic Republic, Poland, Hungary, Yugoslavia, Czechoslovakia and Romania were invited to participate in the AMB meetings. Since 1970, the AMB has handled biblical-pastoral projects for Eastern Europe. It began with financial subsidies for the Czech New Testament followed by support for a Polish New Testament. The entire Bible in Hungarian was published in 1974, the New Testament for Slovenia in 1985; the entire Bible in Czech was the focal point of support until 1988. The promotion for a New Testament in Lithuania is in progress at this time.

In addition to these major projects, smaller ones are continually supported; exegetical literature for seminaries and formators; biblical materials for catechetical centers; invitations to exegetes from Eastern Europe for study tours to the lands of the Bible.

During each AMB meeting, representatives from the various countries give reports on their experiences. There is strong evidence that in all countries the interest in sacred Scripture is increasing, that many Bible groups are being formed and that in eastern Europe biblical sciences in the theological faculties have reached a high level. Lacking in these countries, however, is contact between exegesis and the biblical-pastoral ministry.

Every two years in Vienna, a "Colloquium Biblicum" is held with participants both from eastern and western countries. There were 56 exegetes from Eastern European countries present at the "Colloquium Biblicum" in 1987.

Within the AMB, the members of the German-speaking associations (Austria, Federal Republic of Germany, Switzerland), work closely together in different areas because of their common language. This includes the common publication of the two reviews *Bibel Heute* and *Bibel und Kirche*, as well as organizing tours to the lands of the Bible.

The German-speaking members of the AMB and the Dutch meet every year with the German-speaking Bible Societies to plan the materials for the annual Bible Sunday.

• Report from Fr. François Tricard (France)

The French Catholic Biblical Association, *Evangile et Vie*, is active in publications and practical biblical-pastoral ministry. In the series *Cahiers Evangile*, commentaries appeared on Deuteronomy, on the Prophets Amos and Hosea, on the Letter to the Romans, on the First Epistle to the Corinthians, and on the Acts of the Apostles. A bibliography to the French speaking publications in the biblical-pastoral ministry is in the press.

The *Dossiers de la Bible* appear five times a year and are addressed directly to the members of the numerous Bible groups. The last issues had the following themes: "The Resurrection", "The Bible Narrates of God", "Reading the Bible in Common". These issues serve as the exchange platform among the many Bible groups. Last year's meeting of the biblical animators served the same purpose - namely, the exchange of experiences in working with Bible groups.

The team of the biblical association, *Evangile et Vie*, collaborates with other biblical-pastoral organizations like: "Le Centre National de l'Enseignement Religieux" (*National Center for Religious Education*) or "Le Centre National de Pastorale Liturgique" (*National Center for Pastoral Liturgy*). Together with the ecumenical team for biblical research (Equipes Œcuméniques de Recherche Biblique) *Evangile et Vie* publishes twice a year the *Bulletin d'Informations Bibliques* (Bulletin for Biblical Informations) which serves some 500 Catholic and Protestant biblical animators.

• Report from Dr. Silvia Schroer (German-speaking Switzerland)

Bible Sunday 1988, in German-speaking Switzerland, was most successful. Women were especially encouraged to prepare the materials within their parishes. As the Swiss Catholic Biblical Association is a small institution, it was decided to look for closer and ecumenical cooperation with other organizations such as the movement "World Prayer Day for Women" and with the funding agencies. Together these organizations propose the following themes for Bible groups: "Our Father", "Psalm 104", "The Parable of the Judge and the Widow".

• Report from Bishop Alberto Ablondi, President of the Federation

Aside from his normal tasks as President of the Federation (contact with the Pontifical Council for the Promotion of Christian Unity and with the General Secretariat in Stuttgart, and various meetings), Bishop Ablondi participated in 1988, in the Second Asian Workshop for leaders in the biblical apostolate. This meeting resulted in making the Word of God more tangible for all of Asia. Bishop Ablondi wrote various articles for Catholic papers on this meeting. In addition, he participated in the UBS General Council Meeting in Budapest and in the Ecumenical Assembly on Justice, Peace and Preservation of Creation in Basel. After his visit to the international training course for leaders in the biblical apostolate and the biblical-pastoral ministry in Nemi, the Bishop expressed his conviction for the value of this kind of initiative.

In conclusion, Bishop Ablondi recalled the 20th anniversary of the foundation of the Federation this year. The Federation, he pointed out, is very useful in the service of the biblical apostolate world-wide. He suggested that the members of the Federation take advantage of this anniversary to offer, for example, a Bible to the authorities of their countries, to the handicapped or to representatives of the mass media. Another suggestion could be to introduce as an ecumenical endeavor the celebration of National Bible Week in those countries where this practice does not yet exist. These are only a few examples of how to utilize this opportunity to publicize the work and goals of the Federation. Members are challenged to be creative in this regard and to link the 20th anniversary with the forthcoming Plenary Assembly in Bogotá, for the Federation was founded after the Second Vatican Council from the imagination of Pope Paul VI and of Cardinal Bea and because of their love for the Word of God.

THE BIBLE IN THE NEW EVANGELIZATION (VI)

In preparation for the next Plenary Assembly of the Federation which is scheduled for 1990 in Latin America, the BULLETIN DEI VERBUM has regularly published in its central section contributions on the theme of this meeting: "The Bible in the New Evangelization".

Fr. Ludger Feldkämper, General Secretary of the Federation submits here Part Two of his reflections on this theme. Part One, published in the last issue of the BULLETIN DEI VERBUM (No. 11, p. 9-12) tried to shed some light on why frequently in recent church documents there is talk of "New Evangelization" and what is meant by this expression. This second part gives concrete orientations for the biblical-pastoral ministry according to the actual situation in the different continents.

PART TWO

EVANGELIZATION IN THE REALITY OF TODAY'S WORLD

I. World and evangelization (Proclamation of the Kingdom of God).

1. The world in which we live, the world at the turn of the millennium.

1.1. The world becoming smaller and smaller - the world population will have grown from 5 billion people today to 6 billion people by the year 2000. This growth is greatest in Africa, Asia and Latin America where the portion of the population under 15 years of age is between 40% and 50%; in the United States and in the Soviet Union, the growth will come to about 0.9% (youth under 15 years of age 22%), and in Europe, it will remain stable (youth under 15 years of age only 20%).

- Combined with the growth of the population in general is its concentration in huge metropolises. An example: Mexico City's population was 3.5 million in 1950 and had expanded to 19 million by 1988. By the year 2000, the city's population is expected to be 30 million.

1.2. The goods of this world are increasingly distributed more unjustly.

Approximately 80% of all raw materials and energy resources are used by only 20% of the population. The rich become richer, in many ways, while the poor become poorer - due to rising foreign debts and unjust commercial treaties, and the escalating arms race.

The era of colonialism came to an end in the 1950's and 60's, yet new dependencies were created through economic neo-colonialism.

1.3. The environment is constantly threatened by air pollution, water contamination, dying forests, the wanton killing of animals and natural catastrophes, such as tropical rain inundations....

1.4. The world of technology has its advantages: communication; but also its disadvantages: unemployment.

2. It is a world in which:

- 2.1. the human dignity, fading into anonymity, is increasingly endangered,
- 2.2. the human community disintegrates more and more due to the deprivation of freedom;
- 2.3. the living space is increasingly threatened.

3. As never before, this world stands in need of the message of the Kingdom of God.

For Fr. Georges Soares-Prabhu, S.J., this message which Jesus proclaimed as the Good News essentially consists of:

- 3.1. freedom: the message of God's love liberates the individual and the community from all want and enslavement.
- 3.2. brotherhood/sisterhood in reciprocal care for and commitment to one another: the new commandment makes genuine community possible.
- 3.3. justice: the genuine community provides equal chances for living and just distribution of wealth.

(G. Soares-Prabhu, *The Kingdom of God: Jesus' Vision of a New Society* in: D.S. Amalorpavadas, ed. *The Indian Church in the Struggle for a New Society*, NBCLC, Bangalore, 1981, p. 601-607).

"The Kingdom of God proclaimed by Jesus leads to freedom, brotherliness and justice." (p. 605).

II. Church and Proclamation of the Kingdom of God

The Church is charged with the mission of proclaiming the message of the Kingdom of God to the world of tomorrow, that is with the mission to evangelize it. She herself, however, must first listen to this message anew time and again; she herself must live it.

1. The Church of today and of the year 2000 - to be evangelized in order to evangelize: How does she present herself?

1.1. Christianity finds itself more and more in a diaspora situation:

For example: From 1963 to 1973, church attendance in West Germany dwindled from 52% to 19%. In Vienna, the number of church attendance is quoted as 10%; in French cities, 3% to 5%.

There were 2 billion non-Christians in 1965. In the year 2000, we estimate 4 billion. Non-Christian religions have been awakened to a new self-consciousness: they will develop both numerically and percentage-wise and pursue their own missionary strategies.

1.2. Christianity is shifting from the northern into the southern hemisphere (of the poor) as the following comparison shows:

	1900	1960	1970	1980
Northern hemisphere	77%	51.55%	48.14%	42.44%
Southern hemisphere	23%	48.45%	51.86%	57.56%

Of the 57.56% reported in 1980, the distribution of Christians in the southern hemisphere is as follows:

Africa	7.5%
Asia	8.0%
Oceania	0.7%
Latin America	41.4%

1.3. Since the 1970's, due to the merits of Pope Paul VI, the Church has indeed become a "world church". Today, 95% of the bishops in Asia are Asians, and in Africa, 75% of them are Africans. That means the former "missions" have become independent local churches which are called upon and enabled to give their own response to the message, the Good News of the Kingdom of God, and at the same time, to thereby enrich the universal church.

2. The church of the future - to be evangelized anew in order to evangelize the world: What could and should it look like?

2.1. P.M. Zulehner has asked and answered this question in his book *Das Gottesgerücht - Bausteine für eine Kirche der Zukunft* (The Rumor of God - Building Stages for a Church of the Future), Patmos, 1987.

He sees the future church of the Gospel as:

- a **mystical church** which is totally rooted in God; otherwise she is can no longer be called the people of God.

Only a mystical church has a message for the world's hunger for God (p. 32-45).

- a **brotherly/sisterly church** in which the recognition of the dignity of human beings as God's creatures leads to genuine community: only a church stripped of excessive clericalism and patriarchalism can credibly proclaim in the world the ideal of community (p. 66-67).

- a **political church** which stands up for a more just distribution of the life chances - following the "praxis" of the God who is clearly on the side of the poor (p. 78-93). Such a church, then, would be a sacrament, that is, a sign and instrument, of the Kingdom of God.

2.2. Fr. W. Bühlmann in his book *Weltkirche. Neue Dimensionen - Modell für das Jahr 2000* (World Church. New Dimensions - Model for the Year 2000), Styria, 1985, investigates what the autonomous local churches of Africa, Asia and Latin America can raise into the consciousness of the universal church from their own encounter with the Gospel read in their respective contexts (*theology in context*, reading the Bible in context). He suggests:

- **Latin America**, where the message of God's preferential option for the poor and of his promise of the Kingdom, is understood as a liberating message can help the universal church to remember anew this aspect of the salvific message as a "mystery of liberation" and to proclaim it as such to the world (cf. p. 37).

- **Africa**, where community mindedness is still strong and an enormous richness of cultures is kept alive, could communicate to the entire church the insight, fallen into oblivion and prey to the centralism, that the "mystery of incarnation" permeates all of salvation history, that the logos (Word) wants to be incarnated in every community and culture (cf. p. 52).

- **Asia**, with its ancient religions, mystics and prophets from the dialogue with these religions and their sacred scriptures could enrich the church and her theology anew through a reflected "mystery of revelation" in order to throw new light on Christian revelation and its Bible (cf. p. 67).

3. Consequently, the evangelization of tomorrow's world through the church of tomorrow - which shape should it take?

The Indian theologian Fr. Michael Amaladoss, SJ, Consultor at the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue, speaks about integral evangelization which comprises three elements: inculturation, dialogue and liberation (M. Amaladoss, "Foreign Missions Today", EAPR 1988/2, p. 104-118). These three elements, however, should not be understood as separate activities but as one activity with three dimensions permeating each other.

"One cannot really inculturate or transform culture with the values of the Gospel without dialoguing with religion that is the animating element of culture and without changing the socio-economic structures that keep people enslaved. One cannot liberate people from all that oppresses them without transforming their world-view and system of values and without dialoguing with the various religions so that religions do not remain forces for division and alienation but become prophetic sources of inspiration, and do so in collaboration with each other - particularly in the multi-religious societies characteristic of Asia. Inter-religious dialogue is indeed meaningless and alienating, if it does not lead to collaboration for the common promotion of human and spiritual values for a holistic liberation and an authentic inculturation. Inculturation, interreligious dialogue and liberation are different kinds of activity with different mediate goals. But they will be alienating if they do not influence and involve each other and lead ultimately to holistic liberation of the human persons-in-community. It is then that they become three integral dimensions of one activity that is evangelization." (M. Amaladoss, "Evangelization in Asia Today: A New Focus?", *Vidyajyoti* 51(1987)12-13)

III. The Bible in the New and Integral Evangelization

Which then is the role and function of the Bible in evangelization as described above?

1. The Bible - the content of the new and integral evangelization.

Jesus' message of the Kingdom of God is the core content of the Bible: he and his proclamation in word and deed are its center. The Kingdom of God is the heart of Jesus' message for us today. (John Füllenbach *The Kingdom of God: The heart of Jesus' message for us today*, Manila, 1987.

Mk 1, 14f; Lk 4, 18f; 43; Mt 5-7: These three programmatic texts of Jesus' message and of the Good News of the Kingdom of God, proclaimed by his followers, convey the contents of the evangelization still valid today: freedom, brother/sisterhood, justice.

2. The Bible - instrument of the new and integral evangelization.

2.1. Evangelization is to be understood first of all as evangelization “ad intra”: the Church must evangelize herself anew. “One has to go to the innermost center of each nation and convert it to the Gospel. And this is where the mission towards the interior takes on its whole meaning.” (E. Dussel, *From the “External” Mission to the “Internal” Evangelization* paper given at the 1988 IAMS Congress in Rome: “Future of Missions in the Third Millennium”, p. 21-22) Each local church is responsible for this evangelization “ad intra”. In the Catholic understanding, the “newly evangelized” church is the instrument of evangelization “ad extra”. This is realized in dialogue both with other religions and their sacred scriptures and with the secularized world.

2.2. The Bible is the instrument of the new evangelization in as much as it is no longer the monopoly of clergy and scholars and once again becomes the book of the entire people of God, in particular the laity. Basic communities are unthinkable without the Bible and the role it has in them. Precisely in the basic communities and through them, the biblical message is experienced as “liberating”.

2.3. The Bible as instrument of evangelization means inculturation and translation in a three-fold sense, of the biblical message - the Bible must be translated into the respective language of the people so that they are can respond to the Word in their own language.

- the Bible must be translated from one medium (that of the printed word) into another medium (traditional or modern), so that the message really reaches the addressee.

- the Bible must be translated from one culture to another so that the message can be appropriated.

3. The Bible as model of the new evangelization.

During the past decades, biblical science, through form and tradition criticism, has taught us among others the following insights:

3.1. The (individual parts of the) Bible has (have) its (their) respective “Sitz im Leben” : the word, the message, was related to concrete hearers/readers - its formulation was conditioned by their situation.

The “new evangelization” must take the situation of the hearers very serious and must not hand on the old truth like a relic (EN 4).

3.2. Tradition history has made it clear to us that the same message in the process of handing on was adapted time and again to the respective audience; that the message was not (only) fixed but (also) flexible; that we can trace the process of re-reading of the Bible in the Bible itself.

Adapting an insight of K. Rahner’s concerning the theological historical importance of Vatican II, we can speak about three epochs of evangelization and of the world church:

- the first epoch: that of the early church and its entering the Hellenistic-Roman world;

- the second: the period of the early church until the II Vatican Council when the Gospel was carried into the world in a European garment;

- the third phase has only now begun: the Gospel of the “world-church” appears no longer in a “uniform” but in the “multicolored garment” of the local churches and their cultures.

The first and third epochs have in common that the “spreading” of the Gospel puts high demands on its “translation”.

The models for the latter are found in the Bible especially in the Acts of the Apostles and in the Pauline epistles. Little wonder that Pope Paul VI in connection with the first “world church” synod in 1974 which (according to W. Bühlmann), manifested for the first time the “catholic” character of the world church, recommended anew the reading of the Acts of the Apostles!

Conclusion

“Theme” and “vision” must become a “strategy”. This may be asking too much, however, from our Plenary Assembly. For us the World Catholic Federation for the Biblical Apostolate, the role of the Bible in the new evangelization should be our particular and specific concern. A strategic plan for which Karl Rahner is pleading (*Perspektiven der Pastoral der Zukunft* (“Perspective of a Pastoral Ministry of the Future”) in: W. Bühlmann, l.c., p. 220-234) may not yet exist in the Catholic church. Before the theme of our Plenary Assembly can become a strategy, it has to first become a vision (or still even before that, a dream).

• Report from Fr. Ludger Feldkämper, General Secretary of the Federation

Fr. Feldkämper presented a summary of last year's activities of the General Secretariat. He reported on his journeys and on the contacts, he made on behalf of the Federation. He maintains liaison with numerous institutions and agencies which in one way or another are active in the biblical apostolate: the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity, the United Bible Societies, Funding Agencies, Congregations of Religious and Missionaries, Benefactors, the Biblical-Pastoral Training Course in Nemi. Several meetings in preparation for the Plenary Assembly in Bogotá (1990) have already taken place. The General Secretariat offers an important contribu-

tion by evaluating the biblical-pastoral projects for the funding agencies.

The year 1990 is the 25th anniversary of the proclamation of the Dogmatic Constitution DEI VERBUM. Following Bishop Ablondi, Fr. Feldkämper said that members could take this event as an opportunity for a renewed commitment to the spirit of this document. He also hopes that the Federation will pay greater attention to events, statements and declarations which shed light on the present situation of the Church and the world, for example: the Message of the Third Latin American Meeting of the Basic Communities (October 1988), the Declaration of the Asian Conference on Evangelization (Korea, August 1988), or the Congress in Seoul on "Peace, Justice and Preservation of Creation".

NEW NEW MEMBERS OF THE FEDERATION

During its last meeting, the Executive Committee admitted 13 new members into the Federation. Welcome to all! The list and presentation below give evidence to the vitality and growth of the biblical movement within the Catholic Church.

1. Canada

CATHOLIC BIBLE COLLEGE OF CANADA, Canmore

This institute was founded in 1984 in response to the needs of young Catholic adults. Its primary objective is to help them discover more fully the riches of their Catholic heritage through an academic program in community life. "Our mandate is to provide young lay people with an opportunity to study the Scriptures within a Christian lifestyle."

The college, founded by Louis and Suzanne Stoeckle, offers a two-semester live-in course. It has ecclesiastical approval with three bishops on its board of directors.

The Catholic Bible College of Canada
P. O. Box 1410
Canmore, Alberta, Canada

2. Chile

SOCIETY OF THE DIVINE WORD (SVD) Province of Chile, Santiago

The General Chapter of the Divine Word Missionaries (Societas Verbi Divini, SVD) in 1988 declared the biblical apostolate one of their priorities. The Chile Province wants to better coordinate the biblical-pastoral activities of confrères in a more systematic manner. Some years ago, the General Secretariat of the Federation published a brochure on the biblical apostolate efforts of one of the Divine Word Missionaries in Chile. At this time another Chilean confrère prepares for the

task of coordinating the biblical-pastoral ministry within this Province.

Misioneros del Verbo Divino
Provincia de Chile
Ernesto Pinto 11, Cas. 3736
Santiago, Chile

3. Colombia

BIBLICAL CENTRE "LA PALABRA", Bogotá

The biblical centre *LA PALABRA* has as its purpose the biblical-pastoral ministry. It offers its services mainly to the secretariat of the Federation in Latin America and collaborates in creating materials for the biblical apostolate.

Centro Biblica "La Palabra"
Calle 39, no. 22-53
Bogotá DE, Colombia

4. ENGLAND

CATHOLIC BIBLE SCHOOL, Chichester, West Sussex

"As an educational charitable trust, the Catholic Bible School aims to provide opportunities, to all who are interested, to become more familiar with the Scriptures and to experience the power of the Living Word."

The school was opened in 1986 and offers various courses of study. It enjoys Church recognition and has an impressive list of guest speakers.

Catholic Bible School (Renata Trust)
Nutbourne House, Farm Lane
Nutbourne, Chichester, W. SX PO18 8SD, England

5. Germany

KATHOLISCHE BIBELANSTALT, Stuttgart

Katholische Bibelanstalt, an off-shoot of Katholisches Bibelwerk, is a legal entity holding the publishing rights of the

Einheitsübersetzung - the Bible for official use in liturgy and catechesis - for Germany (Federal Republic of Germany and German Democratic Republic) and Austria, as well as for the German-speaking regions of Switzerland, France, Luxembourg, and Belgium. Hence, it is an organization concerned with the translation, publication and distribution of the Bible.

Katholische Bibelanstalt, GmbH
Silberburgstraße 121
D - 7000 Stuttgart 1

6. India

ST. PETER'S PONTIFICAL INSTITUTE OF THEOLOGY, Bangalore

The Pontifical Institute offers the academic degree of the Licentiate in Biblical Theology.

Connected with the Institute is St. Peter's Seminary Press which, among other things, tries to publish inexpensive reprints of biblical literature, e.g. the Jerome Biblical Commentary.

Their Bible Museum, which is the work of seminarians under guidance of Fr. Lucien Legrand, is visited by members of other religions also.

St. Peter's Pontifical Institute of Theology
Malleswaram West P.O.
Bangalore - 560 055, India

LAY APOSTOLATE DIVINE WORD SOCIETY Madras

Founded in 1981, the Society has the objective "to deepen the knowledge of the Word of God and to promote the practices of the Bible ... by sharing this knowledge and good works with others. Our motto is: To read the Bible daily and practice the Bible by word and deed." The Society is run solely by lay people and has been explicitly recognized by the Archbishop of Madras and Mylapore.

Lay Apostolate Divine Word Society
"Logos", Plot No: 1141, 16th Avenue
Ashok Nagar, Madras - 600 083, India

7. Indonesia

ANGELA MERICI BIBLICAL CENTER, Bandung

This Center established in Jan. 1988., is operated by the Ursuline Sisters. In the beginning it served the diocese of Bandung but has expanded its services to other dioceses.

For the time being, the Center is named after the foundress of the Ursulines, *Angela Merici*; but the team is still searching for a fitting Indonesian title.

The directress, a trained teacher and bible translator, was a participant in the 2nd Biblical-Pastoral Course in Nemi. The following activities are envisioned:

- a two year Bible course for novices;

- Basic Bible Seminar;
- Bible Camp for Children and Youth.

Angela Merici Biblical Center
Supratman 1, Tromolpos 49
Bandung 40002, Indonesia

8. Italy

BIBELZENTRUM NEUSTIFT Brixen/Bressanone

This Center was founded in 1984 in the famous Monastery of Canons of St. Augustine. Its purpose is the ongoing formation of priests, religious and especially lay people in Southern Tyrol (German-speaking part of Northern Italy).

Bibelzentrum Neustift
Neustift 1
I - 39042 Brixen/Südtirol

BROTHERS OF THE CHRISTIAN SCHOOL (de la Salle), Rome

Following the spirituality of its founder, the Generalate of the Congregation of the Brothers of the Christian Schools wants to promote the biblical apostolate in the academic, spiritual, catechetical, educational and editorial fields.

Casa Generalicia F.S.C.
Via Aurelia, 476
I - 00165 Rome

ASSOCIAZIONE BIBLICA SALESIANA, Rome

Established in 1983, this Association has as its goal to promote, coordinate and unify the biblical activities of the Salesian Congregation of Don Bosco for the benefit and service of the entire Salesian family. It wants to offer its biblical pastoral service within the Church with the Salesian qualities.

Associazione Biblica Salesiana
Piazza dell' Ateneo 1
I - 00139 Rome, Italy

9. Papua New Guinea

SOCIETY OF THE DIVINE WORD (SVD)

Province of Papua New Guinea, Mt. Hagen

The Provincial Chapter in March 1988 recommended that the Divine Word Missionaries (SVD) of the Province of PNG become an Associate Member of the WCFBA, "to be inspired and enriched by the world wide endeavor in the Biblical Apostolate".

"The Mission of the Church in PNG is to bring about the transformation of the people into a Society motivated by Gospel values... As SVD members, we consider this a challenge. The Bible plays an instrumental role in the vocation and mission of the laity. The Biblical Apostolate, therefore, should

become an essential part of our missionary activity. We take up this challenge by:

- * Educating people on various levels (e.g. the family, Basic Christian Community, the parish, etc.) to read and listen to the Word of God;
- * Organizing biblical seminars to initiate the laity to read and listen to the Bible in the light of the signs of the times;
- * Training facilitators to conduct such seminars on the community level;
- * Emphasizing biblical catechesis in the formation of catechumens and newly baptized Christians;
- * Stressing the call of every christian to spread the Word of God;
- * Convincing every christian that the Bible must become an efficacious instrument in building up a just society." (9th Province Chapter)

Divine Word Missionaries
Papua New Guinea Province
P.O. Box 68
Mt. Hagan, W.H.P., Papua New Guinea

10. USA

BIBLE DEPARTMENT OF CATHOLIC THEOLOGICAL UNION, Chicago, Illinois

During its 1988 meeting, the Executive Committee visited the Chicago Theological Union (CTU). The President, Fr. Donald Senior, renowned Scripture Scholar, applied for Associate Membership for the Bible Department of CTU which has a tradition of "combining excellence in scholarship with concern for pastoral ministry".

"The CTU is one of the largest Roman Catholic Schools of Theology in the United States. Sponsored by twenty-nine provinces and abbeys of religious communities, it offers quality preparation for ministry to committed men and women,

both religious and lay. CTU is located in the ecumenical Association of Chicago Theological Schools, and functions in a collaborative arrangement which includes some 120 faculty and one of the world's largest library resources for the study of theology. Graduates serve in 35 of the United States and in 25 nations throughout the world."

The Department of Biblical Studies:

"The Department of Biblical Studies at CTU, is comprised of a group of scholars noted for their extensive publications, their challenging teaching and personal dedication. The school, founded in 1967, was from the outset fortunate in having a strong Scripture faculty. In periods of renewal, the Church turns to Scripture as its inspiration and ever challenging source of life."

The Biblical Spirituality Program:

"The Biblical Spirituality Program is designed for those seeking to enrich and integrate their personal spirituality, ministerial skills, and life experience by means of a fuller and deeper appreciation of the Bible. The program runs for three quarters, the Jerusalem phase (Fall quarter) and the Chicago phase (Winter and Spring quarters). While it is a non-degree program, the courses obtain graduate credit and students may extend their study at CTU for an additional year to earn the degree of Master of Theological Studies."

The Israel Study Program:

"The Israel Study Program is a unique eleven week (end of August to mid-November) experience sponsored by the Bible Department of CTU. It combines study of the Scriptures and exploration of the lands that shaped the Bible."

Department of Biblical Languages and Literature
Catholic Theological Union
5401 S. Cornell Avenue
Chicago, IL 60615-5698, USA

An Appeal to the Members of our Federation



THE BIBLE IN THE NEW EVANGELIZATION

"See, I make all things new" (Rev 21,5)

To adequately represent the theme of our Plenary Assembly, we solicit from among our readers:

- * the creation of an emblem (Logo)
- * the composition of a Song.

Please send your proposals as soon as possible to the General Secretariat in Stuttgart.

The Constitution DEI VERBUM

In 1990, 25 years will have passed since the publication of the Council Document DEI VERBUM. The Federation was founded following this Council and has received from this document especially, the inspiration for its work in the biblical-pastoral ministry. Therefore we invite the members of the Federation to mark this event. With the following text, Bro. Ferdinand Poswick, OSB, from the "Centre Informatique et Bible" (Maredsous, Belgium), reminisces on the importance of the Dogmatic Constitution DEI VERBUM which still today retains its validity.

Approved on 29 October, 1965, by a vote of 2,081 in favor, 27 against and 7 abstentions, the Constitution *DEI VERBUM* (DV) of the Second Vatican Council was promulgated on 18th November 1965 by Paul VI. It is presented as an introduction to all the texts of the Council and more particularly to the Constitution on the Church, *LUMEN GENTIUM*.

The fascinating story of the creating of this text in the course of the Council underlines the spirit of the Fathers gathered in Council, seeking for the Church of this time the best expression of what it seemed must be the foundation, the principle or the (doorway/cornerstone) of its faith and the driving force of its action.

The first draft was rejected. It proposed a dualistic view of the "sources of the faith" (Scripture and Tradition) which would have taken the Church to a position prior to the encyclical *DIVINO AFFLANTE SPIRITU* of Pius XII (28 September 1943).

One will note that, in the Special Commission, set up after this rejection by John XIII to resolve the situation and propose a new text, the members of the Secretariat for Christian Unity were invited to a formal sitting; especially involved was Cardinal Bea, at whose initiative, and following on from the Secretariat of Christian Unity, would be founded, in 1969, the World Catholic Federation for the Biblical Apostolate, one of the rare concrete realisations born after the Council in direct application of the Constitution *DEI VERBUM*.

The spirit of the Fathers shown by this Constitution had therefore clearly given its approval to catholic biblical renewal, such as had been undertaken by the courageous efforts of great scholars such as Père Lagrange and others, members of the Pontifical Biblical Commission and the appropriation of the biblical text in the pastoral life of the Church which had been developing, particularly since 1945.

The reaffirmation of the foundational character of the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, read within the context of a vibrant transmission, leaves largely open the possibilities

and the needs for a critical approach to foundational documents, and it proposes further (DV Ch. VI), a real appropriation of these foundational expressions by all Catholic faithful with a view to making the Scriptures a source of life and the need to transmit this life.

For one who considers this source of life, it is interesting to note that the elements of which it is composed are viewed in the broadest manner and not limited to the letter of any particular fixed text:

"This economy of Revelation is realized by deeds and words, which are intrinsically bound up with each other. As a result, the works performed by God in the history of salvation show forth and bear out the doctrine and realities signified by the words; the words, for their part, proclaim the works, and bring to light the mystery they contain." (DV 2)

This realism of the history of salvation by which God reveals himself finds its complete dimension in the person of Jesus Christ, his coming and his word; it is carried on in its manner of transmission, even to this day:

"The Tradition that comes from the apostles makes progress in the Church, with the help of the Holy Spirit. There is a growth in insight into the realities and words that are being passed on. This comes about in various ways. It comes through contemplation and study of believers who ponder things in their hearts (cf Luke 2.19,51). It comes from the intimate sense of spiritual realities which they experience. And it comes from the preaching of those who have received, along with their right of succession in the episcopate, the sure charism of truth. Thus as the centuries go by, the Church is always advancing towards the plenitude of divine truth, until eventually the words of God are fulfilled in her." (DV 8).

This realism lays the basis for the declaration that opens Chapter VI on Sacred Scripture in the Life of the Church:

"The Church has always venerated the divine Scriptures as she venerated the Body of the Lord, in so far as she never ceases, particularly in the sacred Liturgy, to partake of the bread of life and to offer it to the faithful from the one table of the Word of God and the Body of Christ." (DV 21)

From this text, the Constitution draws, moreover, a series of applications for the life of the Church, of which one can ask oneself, following John Paul II (in his audience with the Executive Committee of the Federation and his message to the extraordinary Synod in 1986), how will these have been understood and put into operation at all levels of the Church since 1965.

Notably:

1. - "It follows that all the preaching of the Church, as indeed the entire Christian religion, should be nourished and ruled by Sacred Scripture." (DV 21)
2. - "Access to the Sacred Scripture ought to be open wide to the Christian faithful." (DV 22)
3. - "As the Word of God must be readily available at all times,

the Church ... sees to it that suitable and correct translations are made in various languages..." (DV 22)

4. - "Catholic exegetes and other workers in the field of sacred Theology ... should together set about examining and explaining the sacred texts in such a way that as many as possible who are ministers of the divine Word may be able to distribute faithfully the nourishment of the scriptures of the people of God." (DV 23)

5. - "Therefore, 'the study of the sacred page' should be the very soul of theology." (DV 24)

6. - "The ministry of the Word too - pastoral preaching, catechetics and all forms of Christian instruction, among which the liturgical homily should hold pride of place - is healthily nourished and thrives in holiness through the Word of Scripture." (DV 24)

7. - "... all clerics, particularly priests of Christ and other who, as deacons or catechists, are officially engaged in the ministry of the Word, should immerse themselves in the Scriptures by constant, sacred reading and diligent study." (DV 25)

8. - "... the sacred Synod forcefully and specifically exhorts all the Christian faithful, especially those who live the religious life, to learn the 'surpassing knowledge of Jesus Christ' (Phil 3.8) by frequent reading of the divine Scriptures ... let them go gladly to the sacred text itself, whether in the sacred liturgy, which is full of divine words, or in devout reading, or in such suitable exercises and various other helps which ... are happily spreading everywhere in our day." (DV 25)

9. - "It is for the bishops...to suitably instruct the faithful entrusted to them in the correct use of the divine books..." (DV 25)

10. - "Moreover, editions of Sacred Scripture, provided with suitable notes, should be prepared for the use of even non-Christians, and adapted to their circumstances. These should be prudently circulated, either by pastors of souls, or by Christians of any rank." (DV 25)

These formal injunctions, which point to precise categories of faithful - translators, bishops, exegetes, ministers of the word, theologians, teachers of religion, priests, deacons, religious, faithful, editors, non-Christians - could constitute the fundamental charter of Catholic biblical work in the spirit of the Fathers of Vatican II and they should shape the reorganization of the missionary task of the Church which will be defined more precisely in the Decree on the Missionary Activity of the Church (*AD GENTES*).

How far along the road are we then as we celebrate the twenty-fifth anniversary of this text next year and at this time when the members of the Federation are preparing their Plenary Assembly (Bogotá 1990)?

With all the sacramental seriousness which this occasion implies, one should take the trouble to reflect on the strict parallel between the Bread of the Word and the Eucharistic Bread, as found in the epilogue of the Constitution *DEI VERBUM*.

"Just as from constant attendance at the eucharistic mystery the life of the Church draws increase, so a new impulse of spiritual life may be expected from increased veneration of the Word of God, which 'stands forever' (Isa 40.8; cf 1 Pet 1.23-35)".

Biblical-Pastoral Center DEI VERBUM Nemi (Rome)

The next formation course for leaders in the biblical-pastoral ministry is scheduled to be held in English from:

23 Aug. 1990 to 20 Dec. 1990

Registration deadline is: 30 Apr. 1990.

Applicants for this course should write as soon as possible to :

Missionari Verbiti
Director, DEI VERBUM
Via dei Laghi 52
00040 Nemi (Rome), ITALY
(Tel: 0039-6-936 83 66)

Please communicate this information to others who may be interested in this course

THE 20TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE FEDERATION

On 16 April 1989, the Federation celebrated its founding 20 years ago. To mark this occasion, many friends have written to our President, Bishop Abondi and to the Secretariat in Stuttgart wishing them many blessings for their future activities. A sincere thank you to all!

The Federation counts on your continued support for the next 20 years!

Bible Translations in the Making

Easy access to sacred Scripture for all the Christian faithful in their mother tongue - one cannot emphasize enough the importance of this endeavor. Everywhere in the world numerous translation teams are at work to do justice to this concern. Fr. Piet Rijks, who evaluates these projects in the General Secretariat of the Federation in Stuttgart, has collected the following information concerning some of these biblical-pastoral tasks.

AFRICA

Central African Republic

Bangui - The new translation of the New Testament in SANGO, the official language of the country was published by Verbum Bible, the publishing house of the Divine Word Missionaries in Kinshasa, Zaire. For 20 years, a team has been working on this translation. Throughout these years, several parts of the Bible were published. The edition of the New Testament in one volume, at a reasonable price was made possible due to the assistance of several funding agencies: Missio-Munich, the Pontifical Mission Society of Spain, the Mission Society of Children Aachen, and the Society of the Divine Word. The edition of 40 thousand copies was printed in Spain.

Mali

Fr. Marc Angelier, a White Father from France who has been in Bamako since 1 May 1939, together with his team, has recently completed the Bible translation in BAMBARA, the official language of the country. The manuscript contains 4,798 pages and weighs 43 kilos - the result of 18 years of work. Last year the Bishops' Conference of Mali could finally have the New Testament printed - thanks to the help of the St. Peter Claver Sisters and of Missio-Aachen. The printing of the Old Testament is not yet assured financially.

South Africa

Tzaneen - The South African Bible Society will soon publish the new Bible translation in TSONGA, the mother tongue of more than 1 million people in South Africa and more than 2 million in Mozambique and Zimbabwe. Catholics and Presbyterians want to also translate the Deuterocanonical Books. With the help of Missio-Munich, Fr. Joseph Sandri, MCCJ, and his collaborators were able to finalize this project.

Togo

Dapaong - Because of the difference of the common popular dialects in this diocese, numerous Bible translations are currently in use. Many of these are first attempts. Preliminary Bible editions, therefore, are unavoidable and necessary before one can agree upon a final edition. Still today, after each revision of their work, the translators have to cut their stencils anew. Fr. Pierre Reinhard, a French Franciscan and Apostolic Administrator of the diocese, would like to accelerate the work of the translators; he has appealed to the Secretariat in Stuttgart for a personal computer for this translation team. The Katho-

liche Jungschar Österreichs (Catholic Youth Organization of Austria) has agreed to finance a personal computer and printer for this diocese.

Zaire

Kinshasa - In 1986, Verbum Bible was likewise able to publish "Biblia Takatifu", the Bible in SWAHILI. Swahili is the predominate language of 4 million Zairians in the eastern sector of the country. Within a few months, the first edition of some 30 thousand copies was sold out. A second edition was necessary as Swahili is the language of the liturgy in 6 dioceses. Subsidies from the Katholische Jungschar Österreichs and the diocese of Rottenburg-Stuttgart made this new edition possible.

ASIA

Burma

Taunggyi - Msgr. Matthias U. Shwe has requested financial support for the printing of the Gospels in KAYAN. This language, a dialect of KAREN, is the mother tongue of more than 2 million people in the eastern and southern portions of the country as well as in the central region and along the border of Thailand. One distinguishes between "red" Karen, the mountain people and "white" Karen, those living in the plains. The color refers to the turban worn by these groups. The Karen received public attention in the aftermath of their guerrilla fight against the central government. Until now there was no Bible translation in this language. The funding agency, Church in Need, will support this project.

India

Baroda - GAMIT is one of the many languages of the "casteless" Indians (Adhevasis). In 1982, Fr. Joseph Lobo, SJ, professor for exegesis in Ahmedabad and an expert in SANSCRIT, had published the New Testament for this group of 150 thousand people. Now he has finished the translation of a selection of the most important texts of the Old Testament. The Lenten Fund of the Swiss Catholics has allocated financial aid for this project.

Malaysia

Miri - IBIAN is one of the many languages of this archipelago of 300 thousand inhabitants on Sarawak, Sibuan, Saba and Brunei as well as by 1 million people in Indonesia. The New Testament was published in 1981 and the Old Testament in 1986. This interconfessional translation, however, did not enjoy much success. The major problem encountered here by the missionaries is illiteracy; thus, the directors of the audio-visual center of the diocese had the idea to put the Gospels on cassette tapes. Since then, the demand for these cassettes has greatly increased. Missio-Munich has financed this project for the diocese.

OCEANIA

Kiribati

Tarawa - Last year the diocese of Tarawa and Nauru in the Republic of Kiribati (Gilbert Islands) celebrated the arrival of the first Catholic missionaries (Sacred Heart Missionaries)

100 years ago. However, one had to wait for the publication of the New Testament in KIRIBATI until 1945. Now after eight years of work, the French missionary, Fr. Joseph Kerouanton, has finished his revision of the Bible in Kiribati and asked the Federation to help him in the financing of this long awaited Bible translation.

Papua New Guinea

Port Moresby - In 1969, after 13 years of efforts, the New Testament was published in TOK PISIN, the official language of the Republic. This year, 20 years later, the various churches rejoice over the completion of the entire Bible translation. The Bible Society hopes to be able to hand over the first 60 thousand copies of this edition in early August this year. Approx-

mately 15 thousand copies of these will also contain the Deuterocanonical Books. Another 40 thousand are to be printed before the end of the year. For this, however, the churches still need additional financial aid of \$500,000.

Solomon Islands

Guadalcanal - In early 1988, after eight years of work, Sr. Marie-Theresa Douillard, Mission Sister of the Society of Mary, has finished the translation of the New Testament in GHARI, one of the main languages of the Solomon Islands. The Australian Bible Society has accepted the responsibility for the publication of this edition. Sr. Marie-Theresa and the catechist Martin Sebo have now begun the translation of the Old Testament. The Swiss Lenten Fund supports this project.

IN PREPARATION FOR THE BOGOTA PLENARY ASSEMBLY

With the Plenary Assembly less than a year away, the General Secretary, Fr. Feldkämper formulated a questionnaire concerning the various areas of the biblical-pastoral ministry. Re-emphasizing the importance of the Assembly, we list here the pertinent items of that questionnaire hoping our members will find them useful in their preparations. The areas of the biblical-pastoral ministry about which we suggest some questions are the following:

Conscientization: *Creating awareness of the Bible as the soul of all of the life of the Church, of all forms of evangelization. This could be done effectively through the celebration of an annual Bible Sunday/Bible Week/Bible Month.*

Do you as a member of the Federation have experience in this area? What do you want to do to initiate or improve it? Drawing on your experiences, what would you communicate or suggest to other members of the Federation and to the Federation as a whole?

Provision: *Producing and making available:*

- pastorally useful editions of the Bible;
- Bible-related literature and media as aids to the biblical-pastoral ministry;
- information on the biblical-pastoral ministry.

This is a field in which authors, publishers and distributors work together.

What do you consider a pastorally useful Bible (cf. "Dei Verbum", 25)?

Are they available? Or: How do you judge the existing Bibles in the language(s) of your area?

What would be desirable and what do you suggest?

What kind of Bible - related to literature or media - is available to you? What do you find particularly valuable and would, therefore, like to recommend to other members?

Are you familiar with LA PALABRA HOY and BULLETIN DEI VERBUM? Do you find them helpful? What do you like about them? What do you suggest?

Which other publications of this type do you know and recommend? What is lacking or desirable (needed)?

Formation: *Helping people grow in the love and knowledge of Sacred Scripture and providing skills for the biblical-pastoral ministry.*

In the area of formation, there seems to be a two fold need - aside from the formation of the traditional ministers of the Word (seminarians, catechists, lectors, lay preachers) - among Catholics:

- initiating and accompanying Catholics in the responsible use of the Bible;
- provide formation for formators, animators, facilitators of Bible Groups, etc.

What kinds of formation programs or centers at various levels (local, diocesan, national or international) are known to you? Which can you recommend? What do you feel is lacking or desirable (needed)?

Organization: *Creating structures and programs which assure the smooth running and continuance of biblical-pastoral activities.*

We are a Federation, i.e. an organization of autonomous members for mutual support in the biblical-pastoral ministry. Organization is not an end in itself. It has meaning if it helps towards obtaining, to a significant degree, the goals of the biblical-pastoral ministry.

In which areas have you as a member benefitted from the Federation? On which level - national, regional, international - should the organization be improved?

What do you consider as most desirable (beneficial)?

Pastoral Research and Evaluation: *Exploring new ways and means for the advancement of the biblical-pastoral ministry.*

Biblical-pastoral ministry revolves around two poles: the Bible as a book of a time and culture different from our own with a message, "whose servant we are"; and the pastoral situation(s) of today: our world and our Church to whom the biblical message must be transmitted "living and intact" (EN 4).

In your experience, what can you say about the efforts of "bridging the gap" between biblical scholarship and the pastoral ministry? What concrete suggestions do you have?

EXEGESIS MUST SERVE EVANGELIZATION

On Friday, 7 April 1989, the Holy Father received in audience the members of the Pontifical Biblical Commission who were gathered in Rome for their plenary meeting. Addressing the 30 theologians, the Pope underlined that all methods of biblical interpretation must be at the service of evangelization. The text of this speech follows:

The topic of your common research is vitally important for the entire Church, in that it involves biblical hermeneutics with regard to historical and critical methods. The Council reminded us that all of the Church's preaching must be "*nourished and ruled by sacred Scripture*" (Const. *Dei Verbum*, n. 21). The first question which arises is the one found in the Acts of the Apostles in the episode of the Ethiopian whom Philip asked, "*Do you understand what you are reading?*" (Acts 8:30). The Ethiopian needed an interpretation; an interpretation cannot be made without a method.

Your President just mentioned the multiplicity of methods proposed to exegetes at the present time. This is not a new development. Since patristic times different schools of exegesis, were distinguished precisely by their methods of interpretation and thus they gave sacred Scripture complementary clarifications. If the great number of methods sometimes gives the impression of a certain confusion, it nonetheless presents the advantage of making more apparent the inexhaustible riches of the Word of God.

It is true that, more than once, certain methods of interpretation seemed to constitute a danger for the faith because they were used by nonbelieving interpreters with the intention of submitting the statements of Scripture to a destructive criticism. In a case like that it is necessary to make a clear distinction between the method itself which, if it corresponds to the authentic demands of the human spirit, will contribute to the enrichment of knowledge and, on the other hand, questionable presuppositions of a rationalist, idealist or materialistic kind which can influence interpretation and invalidate it. The exegete who is enlightened by faith cannot, obviously, adopt such premises, but he can at least profit from the method. Since Old Testament times the People of God have been encouraged to "*enrich themselves on the spoils of the Egyptians*"!

Every method has its limitations; it is necessary to recognize them. That is part of the scientific spirit, which is distinguished from "scientism". If they truly have a scientific spirit, the believing exegetes will be aware of the relative value of the results of their studies, and their modesty, far from harming the influence of their work, will guarantee its authenticity.

In the Church all methods must be directly or indirectly, at the service of evangelization. In recent times we have heard many Christians complain that exegesis has become a scholarly art, with no relationship to the life of the People of God. This complaint can obviously be disputed; in many cases it is not justified. However, there is some cause for paying attention to this. Fidelity to the task of interpretation demands that the exegete is not content merely to study the secondary aspects of biblical texts, but that he emphasizes the main message which is a religious one, a call to conversion and the good news of salvation, capable of transforming every person and the whole of human society, introducing it into the divine communion.

On Easter night, in revealing himself to the disciples, Jesus "*opened their minds to understand the Scriptures*" (Lk 24:45). I wish the same grace for you, so that your work may be truly fruitful for the Church and the world. With that intention I cordially impart to you my Apostolic Blessing.