

BICAM ESTABLISHMENT DOCUMENT

SACRED SCRIPTURE IN THE LIFE OF THE CHURCH AND IN THE CHURCH'S MISSION OF EVANGELIZATION

A. PREAMBLE

- 1.1 The Church receives and offers life to the faithful from the Scriptures together with Sacred tradition which regulates and nourishes all the preaching in the Church for “the word of God is living and efficient and is able to build and give the inheritance among all the sanctified.”
- 1.2 For the Church's mission of bringing the salvific news of Jesus Christ all people in the task of Evangelization and deepening of the faith, enlightened and “easy access to Sacred Scripture should be provided for all the Christian faithful” with special editions and distributed to non-Christians.
- 1.3 Given the opportunity and the approval of the Church authority, translations into different languages in Africa, Madagascar and the islands are to be produced in cooperation with the separated brethren.
- 1.4 The Word of God is the basis of theology, pastoral preaching, catechists, and all other Christian instruction. All Clergy, Religious, Deacons, Catechists, pastoral Agents and the Laity must therefore read diligently and study Sacred Scripture carefully. The faithful are urged to learn to know Christ Jesus through Sacred Scripture by reading and prayer, through the Liturgy and instruction. It is the responsibility of the Bishops to give instruction and guidance to their faithful in the right use of the Divine Books.
- 2.1 The Symposium of Episcopal Conferences of Africa and Madagascar (SECAM) ever mindful of the task of Evangelization and the place of the Sacred Scriptures in the life of the Church gave a mandate to the World Catholic Federation for the Biblical Pastoral Work in the countries of Africa and Madagascar through the African Service of the WCFBA.
- 2.2 Having studied carefully and reflected on the seven years of the Biblical in Africa, and taking their responsibility of Evangelization and bringing the message of the Gospel of Jesus to the Faithful and in order to respond adequately to the needs – the hunger and the thirst for the Word of God – of the clergy, religious and especially the laity, THE SIXTH PLENARY ASSEMBLY OF SECAM, held at YAOUNDE, CAMEROUN from the 29th June to 5th July 1981 has decided to give a new character, life and a proper structure to the Africa Service of the Biblical Apostolate so that it can fulfill at the scientific and pastoral levels the needs of the Church from the point of view of authentic and ecclesiastically accepted biblical scholarship with special emphasis on pastoral diffusion of the Sacred Scripture in all its aspects.
- 2.3 The standing committee of SECAM has therefore decided the following:
 1. “The Biblical Centre for Africa and Madagascar” (BICAM) has been established under the aegis and umbrella of SECAM, to succeed and take the place of the WCFBA Africa Service which has now ceased to exist.
 2. The BICAM is an organ responsible to the SECAM Standing Committee and shall function under the general guidance of the Biblical Committee of SECAM. It shall operate under a Board composed of not less than five and not more than seven members, viz. two Bishops one of

whom shall be the Christian, a Priest who is the Director of the Centre, and Priests religious of laity all Specialists in Biblical Studies.

3. The members of the Board shall meet once a year. At these annual meetings, the Report of the activities of the BICAM shall be prepared and presented to the SECAM Standing Committee.
4. Members of the hierarchy, Priests Religious and Laity may be called for their expertise and experience from various regions of Africa, Madagascar else where to form a “Consulta” to give advise and assist in the realization of specific programmes and projects. Members of the Consulta may give advice and assistance individually or collectively by correspondence, direct personal consultations or periodic Workshops, Seminars and Working Sessions.
5. Members of the Board as well as the experts mentioned in (4) and the professional biblical pastoral staff and Secretariat staff shall be chosen for their competence, specific biblical pastoral expertise and experience coupled with dedication and diligence in providing for enlightened and “easy access to Sacred Scripture for all the Christian faithful; and faithfully putting into effect the teachings and directives of the ecclesiastical Magisterium.
6. The members of the Board of BICAM including the Director and his Deputy shall be appointed by SECAM Standing Committee. The Biblical Pastoral experts of the Consulta are appointed by the Board of BICAM. The Director of BICAM in consultation with the Chairman of the Board is empowered to recruit and appoint Secretariat and Supporting Staff.
7. The Board of the BICAM shall make Regulations and Standing Orders governing the running of the Centre and these may be amended from time to time by the Board.

B. COMPETENCE

3.1 The Biblical Centre for Africa and Madagascar under SECAM has competence in all matters concerning the translation, production, distribution and pastoral diffusion of the Sacred Scripture in Africa, Madagascar and Island.

3.2 It is at the Service of the Episcopal Conferences of SECAM, Dioceses and ecclesiastical institutions and shall offer help in matters biblical, pastoral and information expertise, dissemination of ideas and undertake biblical pastoral projects on the instruction of the Bishops.

3.3 In particular the task of BICAM in Africa, Madagascar and the Islands shall include the following and as directed by SECAM Biblical Committee in accordance with the needs of the Church.

- a) The BICAM shall foster, promote and be itself energetically in Biblical Study and Scientific Scriptural investigations with African perspectives.
- b) The pursuance of such Biblical Study and Investigations shall be undertaken with a view of making a contribution of African Scholarship to the efforts of the Universal Church and specialized institutions for a better and deeper understanding of the Word of God.
- c) Bible translation and interconfessional Bible projects and annotation with the emphasis on THE SACRED SCRIPTURE for PROCLAMATION and WORKSHOP viz the Lectionary.
- d) Publication and dissemination of Biblical materials eg. Biblical pastoral correspondence courses, Handbooks, pamphlets and Biblical Pastoral Bulletin.
- e) Integrated Biblical formation and education at all levels with the emphasis on the gospel of Christ as a way of Life and the way to life.
- f) The BICAM highlights the Biblical foundations and perspective of pastoral activities in the Church’s work of evangelization especially in the areas of Christians marriage and family life, Social Justice, Peace and other topical and current issues and themes taking the lead and follow-

up from the SECAM General Assemblies, and regional or national Assemblies of the Episcopal Conferences.

- g) The BICAM shall give orientation, regulate and sustain the activities of Bible movements and study groups and foster sound Biblical spirituality among the faithful, youth and students in the schools, colleges and universities.
- h) The BICAM shall liaise with approved International Catholic Bible Organizations and federations, and cooperate and collaborate with other non-catholic Bible organizations and Societies.
- i) The BICAM shall encourage and develop Catholic Biblical scholarship, foster the formation of National, Regional and Continental Biblical Associations and especially the “Journées Bibliques Africaines” to apply the fruits of biblical scholarship to life.
- j) The BICAM shall initiate Research into Biblical thought and African Cultures as a pedagogical bridge in evangelization and Christianization not only of the individuals but also of the cultures of Africa, Madagascar and the Islands.
- k) The BICAM shall endeavour to collaborate closely with the Pontifical Biblical Commission in sensitizing the commission on the questions posed by the encounter of life between Christianity and the African Cultures and on the other part by the life of the Christian communities of Africa.
- l) The BICAM shall liaise and collaborate with other organs of SECAM, Regional and National Episcopal Conferences, with the Pontifical Mission Work and with the Roman Curia in matters connected with the Biblical Pastoral Work in the Secretariat for Christian Unity and other Pontifical Councils and Secretariats.
- m) The BICAM shall study, plan, initiate and do the necessary consultancy work for Biblical, pastoral projects in Africa, Madagascar and the Islands. All organizations both Catholic and non-Catholic involved in Biblical Apostolate or promoting the course of the bible in any form by financing or undertaking Biblical projects in Africa at local, diocesan, regional and continental levels shall liaise with BICAM.

3.4 The Director of BICAM is empowered by SECAM to raise funds from the funding Agencies and other approved sources with the recommendation of the competent SECAM authority; and he shall open and operate Bank Accounts for and on behalf of the BICAM in pursuance of the aims and objectives of the Centre.

C. PROGRAMME

To promote the understanding of the Word of God and the spreading of the Good News of Jesus Christ at all levels in the Church, the BICAM shall pursue a programme of:

1. Research
2. Formation and Training
3. Evangelization and Diffusion
4. Sacred Scripture in the life of the church – Liturgy + Prayer.

1. BIBLICAL STUDY AND RESEARCH

“Journée biblique”, Biblical Congress and Research Seminars shall be held periodically (Once in 3 years) for specialists on the Biblical message and Inculturation, Evangelization and other biblical themes.

2. BIBLICAL FORMATION AND TRAINING

- Biblical Sessions for priests.
- Updating Courses

- “Sessions de Recyclages”.
- Formation for animators and those who form others (“formation pour les formateurs”) : priests, religious, catechists and pastoral agents.
- Permanent, on-going, formation of the faithful on the “mysterium salutis”.
- Biblical Workshops, Bible Sunday, bible Week and Seminars.
- Formation for Seminarists, novices, postulants, religious and students in theological faculties and specialized Institutions.
- Biblical Catechesis on topics like Marriage and Family Life, Social Justice, etc.
- Pastoral biblical Correspondence Courses.

3. EVANGELISATION AND DIFFUSION

BIBLE translations in collaboration with organizations and agencies which promote finance for Bible translations. Subsidized Bibles should be made available to the faithful in the language they understand at a price they can afford.

- Simple Bible Handbooks and Commentaries
- Bringing the Word of God direct to pre-literate people by means of NON-PRINT MEDIA.
- Publication of Biblical Bulletins – periodicals treating the major cycles of the Bible, Booklets and pamphlets for the instruction of the faithful answering the questions the people are asking eg. Sickness, death and resurrection and Bible texts that are being misused by sects against our faith.
- Appropriate Biblical teaching aids- audio-visual aids-diapositive, film strips and cassettes.
- Biblical almanacs
- Diffusion of biblical programmes and experiences from different dioceses and countries.

SACRED SCRIPTURE IN THE LIFE OF THE CHURCH

- Lectionary series following the Liturgical year with commentary (eg. “Living with Christ”)
- Biblical Prayers and hymns (Psalms and Canticles)
- Orientation and guidelines for Bible Study/Sharing Groups.
- Biblical retreats designed to interiorize the Word of God and apply it to daily life.