



# BICAM NEWSLETTER

A News Letter of the Catholic Biblical Centre for Africa and Madagascar (BICAM)  
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**Dear Coordinators,  
Dear Animators of  
Biblical Apostolate**

*"But I say this to you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you" (Mt 5,44).*

Almost three months ago, the 7th Plenary Assembly of the Catholic Biblical Federation (FBC) in Dar Es Salaam, Tanzania, was ended. In less than one, from 5th to 26th of October, the Synod of the Bishops on *The Word of God in the life and mission of the Church* will take place in Rome. It is more than ever time to pray for the Synod's Fathers. So I humbly invite you from the bottom of my heart, to journey with our Fathers, in prayers, sacrifices, to express a deep communion around the mystery of the Bible.

As you know, the 7th Plenary Assembly was on a theme linked to the Synod about to be opened in a few days and the Second African Synod in October 2009: *"The Word of God, Source of Reconciliation, Justice and Peace"*. During the Plenary, two Biblical texts were proposed for our daily encounter with the Word (Lectio Divina) : Is 55 and Mt 5. I would personally like to draw your attention on the last verses of the Matthean text :

*"You have heard how it was said, You will love your neighbour and hate your enemy. But I say this to you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you; so that you may be children of your Father in heaven, for he causes his sun to rise on the bad as well as the good, and sends down rain to fall on the upright and the wicked alike" (v. 43-45).*

During our continental workshop in 2007 on "The Bible and Social Issues in Africa", we reached the conclusion that "the question about the brother (and sister): "Where is your brother?" (Gn 4,9a) is a key issue for us. Therefore we understood that we have

to agree to be the guardians of our brothers and sisters (cf. Gn 4,9b) if we want to address from the root our manifold social issues.

In June 2008 issue of the *BICAM Newsletter*, and within the context of the Year of Saint Paul, I shared with you the urgent need for the agents of Biblical Apostolate to be at the same time promoters and "ministers" of reconciliation (cf. 2Co 5,18), justice and peace. I am putting before you today the law concerning loving one's enemy and praying for one's persecutors, in imitating the Universal Goodness of God our Father (cf. Mt 5,43-48). This love of our enemies and prayers for our persecutors is one the efficient Words we are provided with by God to create in Africa a society of reconciled people living in justice and peace and working unceasingly for that.

The Bible tells about the Love of God for human beings, putting before our eyes his Mercy and Love, infinitely beyond whatever we can think or imagine. Let us then commit ourselves, armed with "The sword of the Spirit, that is, the word of God" (Eph 6,17), to elaborate a civilization of love whose hall-mark for a Christian is love for enemies, prayers for persecutors, kindness towards the wicked and the unjust. "The ministry of reconciliation" in Africa and Islands depends on that too.

**Your brother in the service of the Word,**



**Fr. Moïse Adeniran ADEKAMBI  
Director, BICAM**

## NEWS FROM BICAM, NEWS FROM OUR REGIONS AND COUNTRIES

### NEWS FROM BICAM

#### \* June 24 - July 3 2008 DAR ES SALAAM - TANZANIA:

The 7th Plenary Assembly of the Catholic Biblical Federation (CBF) was held. It was under the theme *"Word of God - Source of Recon-ciliation, Justice and Peace"*. Over 230 specialists in biblical pastoral ministry from over 80 countries met. About 56 participants from 26 African countries were present. The meeting took place in Africa for the first time in the nearly 40 year history of the organization. During the Plenary, committee members were elected and the on-going work of the Federation discussed. More important were the common Lectio Divina and mass, and particularly the exchanges on relevant biblical pastoral themes and ideas, the building of international networks and the planning of new initiatives that often transcend individual countries and continents

#### \* 14 - 19 July 2008 CAR

A seminar was initiated by BICAM to ponder on the following issues:

a) The Biblical Pastoral Ministry by catechists who are in touch with churches in the ACERAC Region;

b) To put in place a structure for Biblical Apostolates with a commission. The workshop brought together the following countries: Cameroon, Gabon, Congo Brazza-ville, Tchad and Central African Republic. The participants were 20 including bishops responsible for Biblical apostolate in their countries and dioceses.

#### \* 9 - 25 August 2008, Ifrane, Morocco

The Director of BICAM attended the last part of the first seminar ("Ouvertures", 3rd to 12th August 2008) and to the second seminar

("Fondations", 6th to 24th August 2008) of the "Université d'été",

organized by the "Aumônerie des Etudiants Catholiques Africains au Maroc" (AECAM-Chaplaincy of the Catholic African Students in Morocco. There were 29 participants for the first seminar: 22 students and 7 animators; and 28 for the second one: 23 students and 5 animators.

#### \* 25 August - 5 September 2008, Tunisia

It was an official visit to keep abreast with the realities of Biblical Apostolate in the country. The Director of BICAM was guided by the chaplain of the Tunis branch of the "Jeunesse Chrétienne Africaine en Tunisie" (JCAT - African Christian Youth in Tunisia).

### NEWS FROM OUR REGIONS (July - September 2008)

**ACERAC:** The maiden meeting for Biblical Pastoral Commission was held in Bangui during a seminar initiated by BICAM. The meeting was chaired for the first time under the chairmanship of the President, Mgr Cornelius ESUA. Fr. Philippe GREBALET was nominated by the bishops as the Coordinator of Biblical Pastoral Commission in the ACERAC region.

**AECAWA:** Regional Workshop in Nigeria from 23 - 30 September, 2008. There were 73 participants from all the Anglophone countries in West Africa.

### NEWS FROM COUNTRIES AND DIOCESES (July to Sept. 2008)

**CAMEROON:** Fr. Yves Lucien has been elected as the Vice President of the Board of Directors of the Bible Society of Cameroon. We congratulate him and ask you to pray for him.

**Nsawam, GHANA:** September 11, 2008 marked the opening of the fifth Dei Verbum Course in Biblical Pastoral Ministry at the Divine Word Catholic Conference Centre. The course was organized by the Divine Word Missionaries Ghana Province in collaboration with the Catholic Biblical Federation (CBF), the Biblical Centre for Africa and Madagascar (BICAM) and the office of the Pastoral Care of the Ghana Bishop's Conference. The theme was *"Do you understand what you are reading?"* (Acts 8:31-32). There were 24 well motivated participants from 10 dioceses from Ghana. During the opening ceremony, Very Rev. Gabriel Kumordji svd, said that there are many people in our society today, who read the Bible regularly but do not understand what they read. These people he said are also in our parishes, our work places and in our homes. He therefore underscored the need for proper and genuine interpretation of the Bible as the Word of God.

**TCHAD:** A Biblical Session was organized for priests, religious men and women, and the laity from 15th to 18th September, 2008. It was aimed at preparing the way for the second Africa Synod and mostly for the socio-political situation across the country.

**Alindao -CAR:** A biblical session for charismatics was organized from 24th to 27th September, 2008 under the theme *"Listen to the Word of God in the assembly of prayer."* It was aimed at ensuring diocesan coordination for shepherds and groups responsible for different ministries. There were 65 participants from different dioceses.