



The Holy See

LETTER OF POPE JOHN PAUL II

TO PACKHIAM AROKIASWAMY, ARCHBISHOP OF BANGALORE, AND TO THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE WORLD CATHOLIC

FEDERATION FOR THE BIBLICAL APOSTOLATE *To my venerable and dear Brother Packhiam*

Arokiaswamy

Archbishop of Bangalore Through you I send cordial greetings to those who are participating in the General Assembly of the World Catholic Federation for the Biblical Apostolate and I assure them of my spiritual closeness. I am happy to be informed that this assembly has found inspiration for its theme in the words of Moses, "Would that all were prophets", and that it has applied this expression to the tasks that it will undertake. Almost twenty years ago, the Federation was established under the auspices of the Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity through the initiative of Cardinal Augustin Bea, then its President. At this time, it may be helpful for the Federation to review the goals that it has set out to attain. The commitment of the Federation is one of helping Catholics all over the world to have easy access to the Word of God in order that its saving message may animate their daily lives. Indeed all activity and all witness in the Church should flow from the living Word, as read and interpreted in the community of faith, under the guidance that the Holy Spirit furnishes through the Magisterium. The work of the Federation is not a private one. Rather it is a work of the Church. The Federation's membership consists of "biblical organizations which throughout the world work together with the Bishops to discharge their responsibility to make the Word of God available to all". This implies that their efforts are to be made in close collaboration with different groups in the Church, and in particular with Episcopal Conferences. The "prophetic office" of the People of God must be consciously exercised as a true service of the Word. The faithful are called to serve God's Revelation, rather than to use the Word to further their own ideas, however lofty they may be. One cannot forget that the Word is "entrusted to the Church" and that the Church's teaching office bears responsibility for authentically interpreting its message. The Federation seeks to promote a universal vision which aims at establishing close working relationships between the local Churches. In this regard, those communities that have been privileged to receive the Word of the Lord long ago should be encouraged to assist those who have more recently received this gift from God, and who in their own turn will share it with others. The universal character of the Federation lends itself, within certain clearly defined limits, to a diversity of approach to biblical spirituality. God's communication to mankind is rich in content and its inexhaustible message may inspire various forms of response. Care must always be taken to avoid permitting the revealed Word to serve a particular ideology. The Federation collaborates with many Christians, sometimes organized in world-wide and very active societies, who strive to make the Word known, through appropriate translations, to as many people as possible. Among these are the United Bible Societies. I encourage the General Assembly to continue its cooperation with these various groups. By participation in the work of translation, publication and the diffusion of the Word, one is engaged in satisfying the needs of those who hunger and thirst for the Word of God. This applies as

well to the work of forming those who will one day dedicate themselves to teaching and preaching Holy Scripture. Invoking the guidance of the Holy Spirit upon the deliberations of the General Assembly, I pray that the efforts of the World Catholic Federation for the Biblical Apostolate will enrich the Body of Christ with an ever deeper appreciation and love of the Incarnate Word. In the words of Saint Paul, "Grace be with all who love our Lord Jesus Christ with love undying". With these sentiments I cordially impart to the members of this gathering my Apostolic Blessing. *From the Vatican, 6 August 1984.* **IOANNES PAULUS PP. II** © Copyright 1984 - Libreria Editrice Vaticana

Copyright © Dicastero per la Comunicazione - Libreria Editrice Vaticana