

The Same Bible For All Christians

(BY RELIGIOUS NEWS SERVICE)

A unified Bible acceptable to both Protestants and Catholics is being discussed by American Biblical scholars as a real possibility. Such a Bible, it is commonly agreed, is actually indispensable if Christian unity is ultimately to be achieved.

The proposal for a common translation of the Bible has been discussed — publicly, at least — mainly by Roman Catholic experts, but it is reported to have aroused much interest and sympathy also in Protestant circles. Apart from its theological implications, it is regarded as a potentially vital contribution to the cause of intercreedal co-operation and understanding.

A widely-publicized article in this week's issue of America, national Catholic weekly, stressed that the possibility of a common Bible has already been heartily endorsed by some of the country's outstanding Catholic Biblical scholars.

However, the article, written by Father Walter M. Abbott, S.J., an associate editor of the Jesuit-published magazine and an active member of the Catholic Biblical Association, cited especially an endorsement by two outstanding Protestant scholars—Dr. Robert M. Grant, professor of New Testament on the Federated Theological Faculty of the University of Chicago and president of the Society of Biblical Literature and Exegesis; and Dr. J. Coert Rylaarsdam, another member of the Federated Theological Faculty.

In the joint statement, both agreed that the ecumenical significance of a generally accepted English version of the Bible would be "hard to overestimate." They said a common translation could "exercise a unifying influence theologically and become a tremendous cultural force."

Father Abbott also cited Dr. Robert C. Denton, an Episcopalian scholar and professor at General Theological Seminary in New York, as emphasizing the common interest in the Bible as a source of unity.

The idea of a unified Bible, although apparently somewhat new in this country, has actually long been under favorable consideration in other countries, notably Germany, the Netherlands, and France, where some translations of the Bible taken from the original texts have been accepted by all denominations.

A major signpost was seen as far back as 1955, when Catholic Archbishop Bernard J. Alfrink of Utrecht, one of the foremost Biblical scholars in the Netherlands, authorized the publication of versions of the Old and New Testaments translated into the Frisian language by a Protestant theologian. This is the language used largely in the Netherlands' northwestern province of Friesland and of the West Frisian islands.

Meanwhile the ecumenical significance of a unified Bible was underscored last August when Father Alexander Jones, S.S.L., an English Biblical scholar, told the first National Biblical Congress in Sydney, Australia, that it could lead to a "possible rapprochement or even union" between the Christian Churches.

One of the first in this country to publicize the idea of a common Bible was the late Father Robert A. Dyson, S.J., professor of Sacred Scripture at Weston (Mass.) College, who had formerly served for 20 years as professor of Biblical exegesis at the Pontifical Biblical Institute in Rome.

In a talk last January in which he noted that one of the purposes of the Ecumenical Council planned by Pope John XXIII is to discuss how best to "restore the unity we have lost," Father Dyson said that "if we are going to work for unity, one of the vital things is to have all Christian denominations using the same Bible."

Father Dyson said that only a comparatively few irreconcilable differences in Protestant and Catholic interpretation existed in either the Old or New Testaments, and that difficulty could be obviated by Protestants publishing the corresponding Catholic texts in footnotes, and vice versa.

In his article, Father Abbott disclosed—probably for the first time here—that something like a joint translation of the Bible had come close to reality in England. This was when the late Bernard Cardinal Griffin, Archbishop of Westminster, gave permission to a group of British Catholic scholars for publication of a commentary on the Bible that would have presented the Revised Standard Version of the Bible as the text.

The RSV is the work of a group of Protestant scholars who revised the American Standard Version of 1901, in turn a revision of the King James Version published in 1611. The British plan called for some revisions, but the cardinal died before the project could be carried out.

Writing in Worship, published by the Benedictine Order in Collegeville, Minn., two Catholic Biblical scholars have proposed that Catholics adapt the RSV into a Catholic edition as a means of furthering Christian unity.

Fathers Bernard Orchard and Edmund Flood, both Benedictines, stressed that a Catholic RSV edition, if Church approval could be obtained for one, would not replace the Latin Vulgate edition of the Bible used in Catholic services. But they said if Catholics and Protestants accepted the same translation of the Bible, "a long step would be taken toward the reunion of Christendom."

Active collaboration in the field of Biblical research is regarded as an obvious prelude to any project for a common Bible. Some of the Catholic scholars who have been outstanding in urging such co-operation, according to Father Abbott, are Father Robert North, S.J., American scholar of the Pontifical Biblical Institute in Jerusalem; Father John L. McKenzie, another noted Jesuit scholar; and Father Brendan McGrath, O.S.B., of Lisle, Ill., former president of the Catholic Biblical Association, who has hailed as highly encouraging the greater attention being given by Catholics to the work of Non-Catholic Biblical experts.

Father McGrath emphasized that Catholic scholarship would never compromise defined questions of Catholic Faith with any openly contradictory positions. But, at the same time, he called on Catholic scholars to pursue the truth in that free spirit of enquiry encouraged by Pope Pius XII when he warned that "all should abhor that intemperate zeal which imagines that whatever is new should for that reason be opposed and suspected."

In concluding his article, entitled "The Bible is a Bond," Father Abbott said: "It would be, indeed, a great achievement in the history of Christianity if co-operation in Biblical scholarship could give us a common translation of the Bible. We would then be talking about the same Commandments and there would be hope for better observance of the one great Commandment of mutual charity."

Joseph Breig

Red Commercial

In his TV talk before departing from America, Khrushchev delivered what amounted to a 60-minute commercial for communism.

Nothing like the translator's voice came close to making it a singing commercial.

Khrushchev did not call communism communism. He called it socialism.

The reason is obvious enough. The word "communism" is loaded with memories of cruelties against humanity, justice and religion.

One of Khrushchev's purposes was to make us forget those abominations, and to beguile us with campaign promises of a child-like heaven on earth.

THE GENERAL effect of his sales pitch was that everything would be ducky if only we would let the Krem. In turn, he turned the earth into a kind of asylum for the simple-minded, with us as inmates and the bosses of communism as keepers.

In this never-never land, everybody would be fed, housed, clothed, schooled, medicated, paid to bed, got out of bed, worked a little, vacationed a lot, and eventually all apprehensions would be under the benign dictatorship of the polestar, operated by Grampa Khrushchev & Co. with the clerical help of Papa Mao Tse-tung, as demonstrated in Tibet.

I wonder what the advertising chaps were thinking as they listened to Grampa Khrushchev. In their commercials, they promise a lot, but they are not free to promise everything.

Khrushchev promised everything.

BUT WAIT A minute — not quite everything. He offered everything except the right of a man (or woman) to call his soul his own.

Khrushchev said that apartment buildings are going up all over in Moscow. But he did not say that a family under communism can own its own home, or lock the front door, or sleep at night without fear of a government agent's knocking in the wee hours. It can't.

Good old K said the Russians are better fed every year. We hope they are. But he did not say that a farmer could have his own farm, or that a housewife could shop in a store not operated by the Kremlin.

He said the Kremlin pays for school. He did not say that anybody could choose a school.

HE SAID THAT if a Russian needs an apartment, the government pays. He did not mention that the Russian goes to the doctor. He is ordered to go to, whether or not he considers the man competent.

Jolly old Khrushchev assured us that pretty soon there would be any taxes in the Soviet Union. He neglected to mention that not long ago, the Kremlin confiscated the savings of the people—after forcing them to save in the first place—and that whatever you buy, you buy from the government, at prices set by the government, with the wages the government allows you to have.

Kindly old Khrushchev forgot to mention that we are not children who have never reached the age of reason. If we were all simpletons . . . but we aren't.

KHRUSHCHEV thoughtfully avoided the word "communism." After all, he's our grandpop now. He doesn't want to stir us with memories of Hungary. Or of workers fighting tanks with paving stones in East Germany.

He told us about devastation and death in Russia during World War II. But he didn't mention "communism" because we might remember that World War II started with a pat under which Hitler invaded Poland from the west while Stalin invaded it from the east.

The Great Red Father, with touching solicitude, wanted to spare us thoughts of the enslavement of Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia, Romania, Albania, Czechoslovakia, Bulgaria. He protected us from visions of the millions who fled from communism in Korea and Vietnam, and of those who lost hands or feet — or their lives crawling through mine-laden border areas, thoughtfully provided to keep them from the socialist paradise.

Oh, well — we got the message anyhow.

Challenge To Laymen

New Orleans — (RNS) — A challenge to Roman Catholic laymen to be more alert and active in community affairs was sounded here by a prominent Jesuit editor who stressed that too many of the faithful try to "wall off our religious life from our life as citizens."

Father Thurston N. Davis, editor-in-chief of America, Jesuit weekly published in New York, spoke at the seventh national convention of the Holy Name Society attended by delegates from all parts of the country. His talk was one of a series on "Modern Man and Social Living."

Explaining that he was talking of the average American Catholic, Father Davis said that "at times, it would seem that we are guilty of a sort of schizophrenia, a split personality, a lamentable sundering of our political from our religious life. We understand what it is to light a candle in church, but we fail to comprehend the need for lighting candles, too, in the darkness of the market place."

Father Davis said it would be a form of the heresy of "angelism" — an attitude that despises the legitimate claims of the world of human and material values — to "live in such a way that we do not prize the values and heed the demands of the social order."

"It is a shirking of duty," he said, "to absolve ourselves from all real political responsibility with the cynical dictum that politics are dirty. Politics are only as dirty as we are willing to let them be. The pious fellow who asserts that politics are dirty and, at the same time, proudly tolerates corruption in City Hall is guilty of negligence."

The speaker told his hearers that "in many of the cities you come from the Jews and most Protestants far outdo us in the day-to-day work of being effectively interested in the solution of community problems."

"I am not for a moment," he said, "referring to such immense and complicated questions as the future of the United Nations, the World Bank, economic aid to underdeveloped nations, or anything of that sort. I am talking about crude and simple local questions like making a PTA group run smoothly, aiding a group of immigrant families to get their roots down in an American neighborhood, helping with legislation to clean out a neighborhood slum area, or even supporting a civic campaign to stop reckless driving and needless slaughter on the roads."

Father Davis said that "too often . . . we tend to stand up and play our full role as citizens only when we are in a group or in some way being threatened."

"We turn out to vote in grand style — as indeed we should — when there is a bigoted bill up to tax our schools," he stated, "but we don't crowd the polls the way we should as citizens when the issue is a 'neutral' urban redevelopment plan or a referendum to put a new wing on the local public library."

He said that there is little that "wise, patient, tolerant, well-read Catholic men, men of intense interior lives and undying zeal, cannot do in the name of Jesus Christ."

October, Month Of The Rosary

Hands worn by age and toll devoutly toll beads of the Rosary. The centuries-old custom has received added emphasis in recent years as apparitions of the Blessed Virgin Mary at Lourdes in 1858 and at Fatima in 1917 asked recitation of the Rosary. Pope John earlier this month asked Catholics to observe October, Rosary month in the Church's calendar, by daily recitation of their beads. Meditation on events in the life of the Saviour makes the Rosary a "spiritual television" to draw souls to Jesus through Mary. A still growing practice is for families to say the Rosary together, a custom firmly bolstered by the nightly broadcast of the Family Rosary for Peace from Rochester's radio station W5AY at 7 p.m., a program heard in most every section of the 12 county Diocese.

One Year At Church Summit

By PATRICK GAVAN-DUFFY RILEY

Vatican City — (NC) — Nearly a year has passed since the words "we have a pope" rang across the world from the balcony above St. Peter's Square. In that year Pope John XXIII has left a mark on the Church that will endure forever.

Quickly, in acts as vigorous and clear as the voice with which he first gave his blessing to the City and the World, Pope John set the tone of his pontificate.

Almost his first act as Pope was to bestow his cardinal's skullcap upon the monk-servant who ceremonially handed him the white skullcap of the papacy. He thereupon signified his intention of raising the monsignor to the College of Cardinals, and restored a custom in disuse for 50 years.

He soon created 23 new cardinals and increased total membership of the Sacred College to 75. In 1958 Pope Sixtus V had ordained that the College of Cardinals should be limited to 70 members.

The first public speech of his pontificate was an appeal to the world's rulers to work for peace. Pope John was striking the keynote of his predecessor, Pius XII, the Pope of Peace.

These three acts — acts respectively of restoration, innovation and preservation — were indicative of the man's temper and symbolic of his pontificate.

In the same speech in which he appealed for peace the Pope also urged all separated Christians to "return to the house of the common Father." His language had a fatherly warmth the world would soon learn was characteristic: "To these (Non-Catholic Christians) we say we open our heart most lovingly, and extend our open arms."

The address also glowed with Pope John's now familiar love for past associates, for places in which he worked and the See of Venice over which he ruled.

From the well of the prison rotunda the Pope spoke to the 1,200 inmates. Some stood several deep in front of the walls and others watched through the bars of the cells that rose in four circular tiers up the interior of the rotunda.

"Well, I have come," he said. "You have seen me. I have fixed my eyes on yours; I have joined my heart to your heart." He told the prisoners to write their loved ones and relay his promise to pray his Rosary and celebrate his Mass for the prisoners' intentions.

The Pope raised his hand in blessing. Twelve hundred prisoners knelt. Then a cheer went up that echoed with such violence inside the tower that at least one sound-recording apparatus was unable to capture it without heavy distortion.

A reporter said afterwards:

"I never saw so many people crying in all my life. The Pope was crying. The governor of the prison was crying. The prisoners were crying. The guards, the priests, everybody was crying. I thought the place would dissolve in a flood of tears."

Less than a month after the prison visit Pope John sprang into the headlines as a sign with a historic announcement: an ecumenical council of the Church's ruling bishops and other officials would be called.

To a group of 17 cardinals assembled at the Basilica of St. Paul-Outside-the-Walls on January 25, feast of the Conversion of St. Paul, the Pope said:

"We announce to you, indeed trembling a little with emotion but at the same time with humble resolution of intention, the name and the proposal of a two-fold celebration: a diocesan synod for the city (Rome) and an ecumenical council for the Universal Church."

He continued: "They will lead happily to the desired and awaited updating of the code of canon law, which should accompany and crown these two tests of the practical application of the provisions of 'church discipline.'"

The Pope gave no date for the ecumenical council. But preparations for it began almost immediately. By early summer of 1959 more than 2,700 of the world's ruling bishops, abbots and major religious superiors were



Pope John gives Communion to young workers in a "poor parish" in Rome — one of his many unprecedented actions during his first year as Supreme Pontiff.

THE CATHOLIC
Courier Journal
OFFICIAL NEWSPAPER OF THE ROCHESTER DIOCESE

Friday, October 23, 1959 Vol. 71 No. 4

MOST REV. JAMES E. KEARNEY, D.D., President
MAIN OFFICE — 55 S. S. BAKER 4-2110—Rochester 4, N. Y.
AUBURN OFFICE — 41 Grant Ave., Auburn 2-3516
ELMIRA OFFICE — 112 Realty Bldg. — Phone RE. 3-4438 or RE. 2-3423
Entered as second class matter in the Post Office at Rochester, N. Y.
As required under the Act of Congress of March 3, 1879.
Single copy 10c; 1 year subscription in U. S. \$4.00
Canada \$5.00; Foreign Countries \$12.00