

# 'Common Bible': What It Would Mean for Catholics

(The author of this article is a U.S. priest who is assistant to Augustin Cardinal Bea, S.J., president of the Vatican Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity, for biblical ecclesial matters. He is the Vatican liaison officer with the United Bible Societies.)

By FATHER WALTER M. ABBOTT, S.J. (NC News Service)

Shortly after the close of Vatican II, Pope Paul encouraged the predominantly Protestant Bible Societies to take seriously the possibility of collaboration with Catholics when he gave Augustin Cardinal Bea, S.J., and the unity secretariat a mandate to study implementation of the Vatican II decree on the Bible, which recommended cooperation with "the separated brethren" in translation of the Bible.

Up to now, the only Bible accepted by all churches, and therefore worthy to be called common, has been an edition of the Greek New Testament based on the best manuscripts. Agreement on im-

provements in these editions critically established by modern interdenominational scholarship has been assured by establishment of an editorial committee of Catholic and Protestant scholars.

The term "common Bible" has been used in recent years to describe not a fact but a hope namely, that the various Christian denominations and Jewish scholars would be able to agree on a translation of the Hebrew and Greek texts which would be acceptable to their various constituencies.

The "common Bible" provided for in the document published by the Vatican and the United Bible Societies will contain agreed translations of all the biblical books including the deuterocanonical texts, which most Protestants call "Apocrypha." The order of the books, however, will not be the same as that found in Catholic Bibles.

The arrangement of the books in a Bible is simply a disciplinary matter which a Pope can alter for good reasons. Pope Paul VI's reasons

## Guidelines Established

Vatican City—(RNS)—Agreed norms for joint Catholic-Protestant Bible translations have been issued by the United Bible Societies in conjunction with the Vatican's Secretariat for Christian Unity.

The document, released simultaneously in London and in Rome, is entitled "Guiding Principles for Inter-confessional Cooperation in Translating the Bible." It was worked out by an inter-confessional group under the sponsorship of the two agencies and suggests procedures and principles to facilitate the production of "common" or joint Bibles, acceptable to both Catholics and Protestants.

The United Bible Societies links 35 national Bible societies currently working in 150 countries. The Secretariat for Christian Unity, headed by Augustin Cardinal Bea, undertook cooperation with the Societies under the direct authority of Pope Paul VI in the light of recommendations of Vatican II.

In the official release it is stated that "Although the agreement does not specify the types of translations to be produced, there is a common concern, both among the Bible Societies and in Roman Catholic circles, that versions of the Scriptures should be as far as possible in the living, current language of the people, and based on the best scholarship available in all Christian traditions."

for approving the new order of books to be found in the "common Bible" reflect the new spirit of respect and esteem for other Christians.

In the same spirit the Protestants in the Bible Societies were willing to include the deuterocanonical texts in a common Bible wherever Catholics request them provided the order already mentioned was preserved.

Some people thought it would be hard for the different denominations to decide what explanatory notes

should be introduced in the "common Bible," but this problem was solved rather easily.

Catholic Church law requires such notes in all Catholic editions of the Bible. Vatican II added that these notes should be "necessary" and "adequate" to convey the meaning of the Scriptures and to express their "true spirit."

The Bible Societies, following a general trend among Protestants, have usually produced Bibles with no notes at

all. The constitutions of the oldest societies called for Bibles "without note or comment."

In conferences between the Bible Societies, Cardinal Bea's secretariat and the Pontifical Biblical Commission, it was seen that requirements of the Catholic Church and of the Bible Societies could be met in common Bible publications by having aids for readers that avoid controversy. This solution now has the approval of the highest Catholic authority and all 35 national Bible Societies.

The common Bible envisaged in this document will be the work of Catholics and Protestants combined in the following committees: 1) Working Committee, which does the basic translation work; 2) Review Committee, made up of experts in exegesis and style who will check the translators' work; 3) Consultative Group, consisting of 25 to 50 persons (Catholic bishops and other Christian leaders) who will review the work for approval of their Churches.

Will it work? Can these groups always agree as they translate the various books of the Bible? Only one project has published its work in part, but it is a stunning proof that the job can be done. The French common Bible project, which involves practically all leading Catholic and Protestant biblical scholars who speak French, produced agreement not only on the translation and notes but also on a great amount of interpretation.

It is no secret that some of the fundamentalist groups look at all this collaboration and agreement with some apprehension. They fear there may be a Roman plot afoot to tamper with the Scriptures, to infiltrate Roman Catholic doctrine into text or notes, and gradually to take over the Bible Societies.

This, however, overlooks the fact that the guiding principles copublished by the Vatican and the UBS apply only to editions of the Bible where cooperation of Catholics and Protestants is desired and agreed upon. The blueprint in no way affects existing

editions of the Scriptures, such as the King James Version which some fundamentalist groups regard as the only acceptable English translation.

The Bible Societies can, and no doubt will, continue to provide Bibles with neither deuterocanonical texts nor notes for all groups that request them, just as Catholic publishing houses can, and no doubt will, continue to produce editions of the Bible with the books in the Tridentine order and with notes that give copious catechetical or homiletical material.

It is likely, of course, that a good common Bible translation in any given language will prove to be immensely popular and will achieve wider circulation than any previous edition of the Scriptures. All who are dedicated to the word of God should rejoice that the message will thus reach more people than ever before.

If the common Bible translation also brings the Churches closer together and makes the Christian message more credible to the non-Christian world, we must surely conclude that it is the work of the Holy Spirit in our time.

### Hey, Mrs. Santo



Wednesday is Prince Spaghetti Day... make it official with Prince Sauces.

## Commission's Findings:

### Sex Education Mainly Home Responsibility

Washington—(NC)—The Interfaith Commission on Marriage and Family Life has issued a statement on sex education, which advocates more effective sex education programs but cautions that introduction of sex education in the schools presents a "most difficult problem."

recognize certain basic moral principles, not as sectarian religious doctrine but as the moral heritage of Western civilization.

Commission members, who are representative of Protestant, Jewish and Catholic organizations, issued the statement (June 6) after a series of bi-monthly discussions in New York.

Catholic representatives on the commission include Father James T. McHugh, director, Family Life Bureau, United States Catholic Conference; Msgr. William McManus of the New York archdiocese's family life bureau; Dr. Margaret Beard, sociology professor, New Rochelle (N.Y.) College; Dr. Ann Lucas, chairman, psychology department, Fairleigh Dickinson University, Rutherford, N.J.; and William Maughan, New York City public relations executive.

The statement underscores that responsibility for sex education belongs primarily to parents or guardians. It states that sex education is not only for the young, but entails a life-long task.

"It is important that sex education not be reduced to the mere communication of information," the statement continues. "Rather, this significant area of experience should be placed in a setting where rich human, personal and spiritual values can illuminate it and give it meaning. In such a setting, we are convinced it is not only possible but necessary to

### Sister to Chair Liturgy Panel

Washington—(NC)—Sister Carol Frances, B.V.M., of Mundelein College, Chicago, was elected chairman of the Subcommittee on Liturgical Adaptation, a consultative body to the U.S. Bishops' Committee on the Liturgy.

Matters under discussion include: Forms for the celebration of Mass in groups of children, with the mentally retarded, among young people, and in small groups. Also, liturgy for parish missions and related services, rites for the celebration of marriage and the wedding Mass, services of reconciliation, anointing of the sick, catechetical preparation before the celebration of baptism, especially the liturgical catechumenate, and rites of ordination.

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### A YEAR LATER

THE HOLY FATHER'S MISSION AID TO THE ORIENTAL CHURCH

Dear Friends: The crisis in the Holy Land is worse. I was there just weeks ago. I thought of you, and I prayed for you. Easter Monday morning, not far from Amman, I visited a refugee camp where 50,000 new refugees are living in the desert, which is hot. The camp is actually a city of tents, some of them backyard tents like the one we had when we were young. In the kitchen tent I saw mothers jostling other mothers for food for their children. Who are these refugees? They are but some of the 1.4 million farmers, teachers, housewives, children who lost their farms, their homes, everything they owned, as a result of the Arab-Israeli wars. Since June 1967 their lives hang in the balance.

I used immediately the check the Holy Father had given me. With his help and yours, we distributed tons of food, clothing, medical supplies. We have given the refugees tents and primitive cooking-stoves. We are teaching youngsters reading, writing, arithmetic, and Religion. So much more has to be done.

May I ask you again to take part in what we're trying to do? We'll make your gift stretch very, very far!

In Rome the Holy Father asked me to thank you for what you have done already, and he extends to you his "special, fatherly" Apostolic Blessing. I thank you now for your continuing generosity in the Holy Father's name.

In the hands of our priests, Sisters and lay missionaries, your gift (large or small) will brighten lives. It will brighten yours as well! Please send something today.

Gratefully, Sincerely in Christ, Monsignor Nolan

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MSGR. JOHN G. NOLAN, National Secretary Write: CATHOLIC NEAR EAST WELFARE ASSOC. 330 Madison Avenue - New York, N.Y. 10017 Telephone: 212/YUKON 6-5840

### Ma

By FATHER VINCENT MALLON, M.M. (NC News Service)

Caracas, Venezuela — Radio Hawkins Day all year Venezuela. The country's F Lady continuously campaigning legitimize the unions of thousands of Venezuelans who together without the benefit holy wedlock.

Opinion of all shades been expressed privately concerning Mrs. Carmen Ame Leon's efforts to get Venezuelans married.

The matrimony problem Venezuela is this. A very large percentage of the poor class set up housekeeping without getting married, for a variety of reasons.

Some do not have the documents demanded by complicated government.

### 'War and

New York — (CPF) — Russian-made film version Tolstoy's "War and Peace" the longest and most expensive movie ever made — has greeted by the National Civil Office for Motion Pictures as not only "an absorbing Jewish experience" but also "a singularly spiritual one well."

"War and Peace" which more than six hours long cost more than \$100 million being distributed in the U.S. and Canada by the Peter Reade Organization.

NCOMP described the central theme as one which shows "that life emerges and re-emerges in unexpected and mysterious patterns" that "in the grip of national cataclysm, man still want heal the personal injuries has inflicted on others."

### LBJ Names Prie To Advisory Pan

Austin, Tex. —(NC)— Fr John E. Walsh, C.S.C., U.C. of Notre Dame vice president academic affairs, was named 14-member advisory comm on the Teacher Corps by F dent Lyndon B. Johnson.

Purpose of the commi which includes representa of business, labor, associa and foundations, is to help tain the best teachers avail to serve poor children in city rural slum area schools.

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## POP TOPICS

Dear Friends, When the school year is over many POP groups drift into a summer slump. Labels accumulate in kitchen drawers or worse yet, are tossed into the wastebasket by normally watchful housewives. Plan a strategy to offset this possibility in your POP group. As we suggested last week, make sure that school children and club members have an up-to-date list of POP products, and that a convenient drop-off point for labels is provided. This will make labeling an easier task for all. During the summer an occasional reminder in the church bulletin or group newsletter will jog the memory of those inclined to forget. Also, that POP sticker placed in the neighborhood food store will serve as a reminder to Shop POP and To Save POP Labels.

Besides being the month of brides and graduates, June is also National Dairy Month. Milk (including butter, cheese, etc.) is at its production peak at this season of the year. Watch for Dairy Month specials at your local store, particularly that rich and true Land O'Lakes Butter. It's used as a prime ingredient in this

#### Real Scotch Shortbread

2 cups flour  
6 oz. Land O'Lakes Butter  
1/2 cup sugar

Lightly butter 11 x 7 baking pan. Knead flour, butter and sugar until soft and pliable. Press into pan. Bake at 400 F. for 30 minutes. Remove from oven and allow to cool. If desired, "frost" with a melted bar of sweet chocolate spread over cooled shortbread. Cut into finger length pieces.

#### Swiss Noodle Casserole (serves 6 to 8)

2 cups commercial sour cream  
8 oz. Prince Noodles  
1/2 lb. Swiss cheese (grated)  
1 Tbl. Worcestershire sauce  
1 medium onion, grated or blender chopped  
1 Tsp. Land O'Lakes Butter  
Salt and pepper to taste  
Cornflake crumbs

Boil and drain noodles. Sauté onion in butter until golden; mix onions, sour cream, Swiss cheese, Worcestershire sauce, salt and pepper with the noodles. Pour into a buttered casserole (12 x 8) and cover with cornflake crumbs. Dot with additional butter. Bake one hour in a 350 F. oven.

Speaking of butter and Prince, did you know that in addition to its Italian foods—pasta, sauces, grated cheese—Prince also makes superb butter cookies? These come in over 100 varieties, flavorful and attractively shaped. (For weight-watchers there are 29 varieties of sugar- and salt-free Diet Cookies.) Prince Cookies are packed in deluxe decorator tins in 1, 2, or 3 pound assortments, and in 2 pound and 5 pound trays. These varied and gaily-decorated taste treats make a delightful gift or a highly tempting addition to your own tea table or other spread of party foods.

Although Prince Butter Cookies are not usually available in ordinary retail stores, they can be ordered directly from the company. For price and other information, just call 454-7040 (Mr. Melsenzahl, manager) or write The Prince Macaroni Company, 428 State St., Rochester 14608. Be sure to identify yourself as a POP enquirer. Our advertisers appreciate your interest in all their products.

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