

We are the servants of the Word

Let's not forget it

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Modern man is constantly in front of us carriers of the Good News, he is begging for peace and hungry, he sees himself reduced day by day; he stretches his hand to feed his starving soul of peace and love. He confesses his weakness, him human, and his remedy is to listen to us talking about his Savior, to see Him on our faces, and feel Him in our behavior.

The only panacea for evil in this world is faith, if it is taught and communicated properly. I believe that God, as he had done for His prophets and apostles, He has done for us. He has chosen us, called after us, taught and launched us into this world in order to preach as Lady Wisdom who invites the world to her table (Pr 9).

Why do we then have to give a finite to someone looking for the infinite, we, who have been selected among thousands by the Lord? All this does not denote a small tremor in our faith...?

During the last PA (Plenary Assembly) we talked about peace, justice and reconciliation (cf. 2 Co 5,19-20). Isn't it sad not to go ahead and fulfill our commitment? All this time, thoughts, efforts and money should not be discarded and thrown away! It would have been better to spend them on hunters eager for peace.

Like many others I'm here, just like all of us who wish to continue their mission for the good of human soul. God gave us, and our duty is to give. Whatever happens, we ought to give, and if we are short of supplies, He is here to provide us. What are we lacking of, we, who have everything, why should I hunt for more somewhere else? All the gold on earth won't be sufficient to give us as much joy as the one given by witnessing a hunger of the Word of God being fulfilled.

We all are responsible; we might have behaved in a way that is a little unworthy of the trust that God placed in us poor humans. It is time for the disrupting and disturbing events that took place within the Federation, to be buried in the past.

So, I discontinue my speech for 2 minutes in order for us to reread in our heart our manners and conceptions since the outbreak of the CBF crisis, let us judge ourselves and for each one of us his own verdict, but to all of us a new birth in a never-ending faith and as eternal as His Word.

God is among us, and I am sure that He already forgave us. Let us win back His trust and move forward, by giving peace to each other. Let us keep our hands together, so we start a new commencement worthy of our mission, let us attack the world with the most beautiful peaceful weapon, His Word, generously offered to us; let us uproot ignorance and plant new trees of hope, love and peace in the heart of all those who were driven by false doctrines that lead to death.

Let's set a table worthy of the body and blood of Christ, let us wear His face, dress our hearts with love and charity, giving the maximum of ourselves, even if we have to give all of ourselves, each country in its own way and with its own menu, a French baguette, an Arabic bread and Asian spring rolls.

A good organization is a must for a better rendering. We are not just colleagues, but far more, we are brothers and sisters, and our Father alone applies His law. He provided us with everything to reveal his Word (cf. Ac 20,32 ; 1 Thes 2,13). Let us give each of us a chance to excel in his-her own field and in his or her own region. In one word, let us all be responsible.

Lately, in January 2011, the XIIth Biblical Congress took place in Lebanon, organized by the CBF MO. This Congress, like all those done every two years, brings together hundreds of lay Christians, priests and religious, from the Arab countries, around a determined biblical theme, with around thirty lectures given all along the 6 days. Thomas Osborne experienced it and might have more things to say about it. Residents under the same roof, we shared the same biblical and spiritual provisions. Many others came to join us. This combination, as every two years, strengthens our lines under one and only head, Christ. Each one has his own experience, each has his own problems, each country has its own war or persecution, but we all share the same concern which is the future of Christians in our region with a large Muslim majority. We continuously help each other. We truly feel like being brothers and sisters, and we do worry for each other. That's what I call a real "Federation".

Rich and poor, doctors in Bible or simple parishioners, bilingual, trilingual or arabophones ... we make no difference because everyone has been given a gift from heaven. Everyone has a role to play. Isn't it true that all colors form a rainbow? There is neither superiority nor inferiority relationships. We all respect each other and the "ALL" in here, means 5 to 6 and even 7 different rites and 7 different countries. There are even Orthodox and Protestants among the members of our Federation in the Middle East, who are as much active as we Catholics, and are delighted to form one body with us, united by Jesus and his Word.

Why am I telling you all this? Simply because I think that we are an example to follow. We do not lock up Christ in a bureaucratic system with one chief above and one top place to win. Christ the redeemer is free, He moves from a heart to another without formality or control, because our aim is clear and our investment is even more: helping each other in order to make

Him being known by as much people as possible, as the one who has the sovereignty of our souls. Our solidarity is beautiful and carries great fruits.

The Catholic Youth of Austria, the *Yungshar*, assists us financially in concretizing our Congresses, showing us the sense of brotherhood between Christians in the Middle East and those in Austria giving us also the opportunity to incessantly reinforce fraternity among us Christians in the Middle East. Self sufficient, indeed we are, but the only thing we are asking for is a united family (CBF) in its diversity that enriches our activities (cf. 1 Cor 12,4-11).

In my opinion, and in order to succeed the best our mission, we need dedicated representatives who practiced and experienced on ground "coordination" and "animation", thus avoiding sterile perspectives and trying to focus all activities on the achievement of reliable methods on ground.

Regionalization is a key to improve particularities and identities within the Federation. These regions and sub-regions already enjoy financial autonomy assisted by funding agencies. The delegates of these regions are the only mediators between the central office and the local Christian institutions of their own area. The decentralization that we favor does not abolish federalism, the power will remain given to a "superior" echelon, a term that I do not appreciate much in a Christian context, because to God we all are equal. A transfer of certain prerogatives of power to these regions allows the latter to really activate enthusiastically and succeed the best in their mission, thus responding to the needs of their fellow citizens. Ideally, the Executive Committee should be formed by this group of servants who have thoroughly explored the ground. I believe this initiative will save the CBF family, where everyone will have its own specific role and the know-how suitable for his or her perimeter.

The only law to follow and that concerns us, is the one of the Gospel, decreed by our Church. We have chosen to devote our lives to Christ and to spread His Word (cf. 2 Thes 3:1; DV 26). Let us not dwell on conflict, but rather let us in chorus, fight it. We belong to one family and we want it to prosper so then, let us work on it. We should listen to each other, respect each other's ideas. We should avoid falling into the mundane games; we should understand each other, defend each other. We need compassion, brothers and sisters, just compassion.

Christ walked with us as he did with the disciples of Emmaus (cf. Lk 24,13-35); He let us do as it pleases us. Forgetting his Word, will make us lose the way. He manifested His love for us, let's not ignore it, he insisted, and ultimately he manifested *himself* entirely in order to bring us back on the right track. Do we accept today, keeping the wheel set on our destination? It is up to each one of us and our responsibility to choose whether to sink the CBF, or moor it at the right port. The needle of the CBF's compass depends on our votes. The federation is in the hands of our consciousness of baptized and confirmed Christians. We should act as such and save the drifted family and this world that is a member of it.