**THE ANNUAL REPORT**

**OF**

**THE REGIONAL**

**TNBC COMMISSION FOR BIBLE**

**Submitted to the**

**TNBC ANNUAL MEETING**

**held at, POONDI SHRINE**

**On 15th – 19stJuly, 2018**

**Approved by**

His Excellency **Most Rev. Dr. M. Devadass Ambrose**

**Bishop of Thanjavur**

**&**

**Chairman, TNBC Commission for Bible**

**Rev. Fr. M. Ubald**

**General Secretary, TNBC Commission for Bible**

**TNBCLC, Tindivanam**

**2018**

**ANNUAL REPORT**

2017-2018

**TNBC COMMISSION FOR BIBLE**

**CHAIRMAN: Most Rev Dr. M. Devadass Ambrose**

**SECRETARY: Fr. M. Ubald**

**I. Regular activities**

1. **Seminars, Classes, Courses and Retreats:**

One of the aims and objectives of the Commission is to spread the Biblical messages to all the Christians in all spheres of life. Hence attempts were made to convey the biblical ideas and ideals, messages and meanings of biblical persons and passages to various sectors of the people through seminars, retreats and classes in the diocesan, vicariate and state level meetings and also in the formation houses. The positive reaction of the participants signaled the message that more and more such meetings, seminars, and trainings would try to quench the thirst for the Bible Messages.

1. **Vacation Bible School (VBS)**

VBS is another yearly feature of the Commission. As usual the commission prepared the basic lessons for teachers, manuals for the students and dramas, songs and history of the apparition of our Lady of Fathima. An audio CD with 12 songs was released for the use of the children and others with the theme on “Uravagum Viviliam”. The VBS training was conducted in three zones in Tamil Nadu as north, west and south. Some 240 teachers as recourse persons participated in these basic training programmes and later on, these resource persons trained the teachers in their respective dioceses. Apart from zonal trainings, some dioceses, as per the need and convenience of more participation of the local teachers, opted to have the trainings in their dioceses and accordingly four dioceses had the trainings in their pastoral centers.

**Impressions**

* Interest, initiative and creativity towadrs this programme are on the increase
* Sale of books and other basic VBS materials are on the increase
* DVDs on Bible comics are very much sought after - preparations are on to produce Bible comics in DVD forms together with Celestial Multi Media, Chennai
* Let all our parishes vibrate with the songs of VBS in the month of May

1. **Publications :**

The New Testament with bigger letters (fonts) was published on the 24th of January on the eve of the release of the New Tamil Missal by the Bishops of Tamil Nadu. The enthusiasm for this New Testament is already shown from the orders received at the centre.

The articles in “Nam Thozhan” and “Vivilia Virunthu” are zealously read by the Tamil audience. Together with the meritorious efforts of Nam Thozhan editor and the cooperation of TNBCLC Fathers, and the quality- articles of Nam Thozhan - with all humility, we can say that this year alone the subscription has increased by 900 new readers.

This year, a book containing a few bible games as party games was published under the guidance of the commission. This is not only for the children but for all people in the parish, especially for those in the pious associations, anpiams, catechism and youth programmes.

1. **Bible Correspondence Course (BiCC)**

The Bible Correspondence Course (BiCC) started a few years back continues with all renewed vigor and more participation. This year 50 students have been awarded the certificates at the completion of the two year correspondence course. A total number of 80 new members has joined the course this year. The course is offered both in Tamil and English. The cost of the course for two years is Rs. 500. At present we have 189 students as participants (124 for Tamil; 65 for English).

**Impression**

* More advertisement will bring in more participants
* The materials are good and excellent
* Many dioceses are willing to have the books so that they may conduct the exams in the diocesan level. A discussion and decision may be required here!

1. **Bible Month, Bible Sunday, Bible Week**

The month of September is celebrated as Bible Month and the last week of September as Bible Week and hence the last Sunday as the Bible Sunday. Some of the dioceses are eagerly waiting for the quarterly holidays that exactly coincide with the last week of the month of September, so that the whole parish together with children may celebrate the week with special events of seminar, sports and games during the day and in the evening with festive liturgical celebrations. Manuals for the creative celebrations and special liturgical guidelines are prepared by the bible commission and sent to all the parishes of the state. Last year the theme of “,isNahUk; ,iwthh;j;ijAk;” was selected and the monthly magazine of Nam Thozhan of September issue was totally dedicated for the event of bible month. Today we thank most sincerely all the bishops for their generous financial assistance for the distribution of bibles at a subsidized rate.

1. **Sale of Bible**

It may be a good paradox to know that even at the height of modernism and modern technology, the sale Bible is always on steady increase. It is an encouraging factor to know and experience.

**Copies sold during April 2017 – March 2018**

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| --- | --- | --- |
| 1. | Ordinary Bible | 38219 |
| 2. | Deluxe Bible | 6984 |
| 3. | Pocket NT | 29072 |
| 4. | NT. Big | 2842 |
| 5. | Velvet Index Bible | 3331 |
| 6. | Velvet without Index | 1890 |
| 7. | Leather Index | 2992 |
| 8. | Bible with Commentary | 110 |
|  | **Total** | **85440** |

**II. Special Initiatives**

1. **Lay Bible Ministers Meet**

Gathering of lay bible ministers of the Word of God once a year has become a welcome activity for the last two years. The objectives of the meeting are to introduce them to the vital themes of the Bible, to initiate in them a new ardent love for Bible, to appreciate and acknowledge them for their selfless service, to make them come together as a family of Bible ministers, to know each other and to share their unique experiences on Bible ministry. Last year the theme for the two day seminar was “ Biblical Understanding of Family”. The seminar was conducted in Poondi Puthumai Matha retreat centre and 190 members from Tamil Nadu participated. The seminar was inaugurated by Most. Rev. Dr. Devadass Ambrose, the Chairman of the TNBC Bible Commission with an emphasis on Bible as the centre of the Christian families. Bible experts in Tamil Nadu dealt the theme at various aspects. This year the programme is going to be conducted at the Shrine of our Lady of Velankanni on 27 and 28 in the month of October, 2018, and the theme being, “,isNahUk; tptpypa tpLjiyAk;”

**Impression**

* As this event is an occasion for them to come together, renew and energize themselves with new aspects of bible messages, there is evidently a longing for the programme.

1. **College Youth and Bible Programme**

A very new initiative has been taken to meet the college students in the Christian run colleges so as to bring them into the circle of Christ. As the youth of today are slowly slipping themselves away from the ambience and atmosphere of Church, from the grip of Family and from real Christian value system, this is a small effort to bring them into the inner circle of Church. Hence meeting the college students and instilling in them the importance and the need of the Word of God, making them understand and accept the Word of God (Bible) as the axis of their life is the aim of this project. A Velvet quality Bible at the cost of Rs. 350 will be distributed to them. They would be motivated to buy the Bible at a fairly subsidized price. So far 1900 bibles have been given to them and by the end of this year (2018), a total number of 10000 Bibles will be given and proportionately an average of 15000 students will be motivated.

**Impressions**

* Joy of meeting the college students in their colleges
* Exciting to see the youth hold the Bible in their hands with all reverence and respect
* Bible study groups in the colleges to be created
* To nurture the habit of reading the Bible among the youth college level quiz programmes will be conducted.

1. **Biblical Personalities and Bible Books**

Another initiative has been launched to explore and explain the meaning, interrelation between the biblical books and biblical personalities and vice-versa. It is in short to know the Bible through the biblical personalities and to know the personalities thorough the Bible. As for example Jesus through the Gospels and Gospels though Jesus, (Paul and Peter through Acts and Letters and vice versa, Moses through Pentateuch and vice versa, Prophet Jeremiah through Prophetical Books, and Job through Wisdom literature). Every year one part of the Bible will be taken up and explained. Some Dioceses have finished the first part of the project and many others are organizing it. All weekends are dedicated for this part of the programme.

**Impressions**

* + This is just bringing the Bible to the ordinary people
  + This is another way of ‘downloading’ the Bible and biblical personalities to the non-elite group of Bible.
  + To create an energetic love for the biblical personalities and Bible books.
  + A shift from shaking Faith to Strong and Steady Faith

1. **Summer Bible Academy**

As was planned in the last years to have a Summer Bible Academy for those who like to have classes on Bible, this year this programme was actualized. It is a three year cycle porgramme - the first year for the New Testament and the next two years for the Old Testament. People can join any time of the programme as it is a rotating system. At the end of every year and at the end of third year, certificates will be awarded to the participants. This year the programme was conducted from 21st to 26th of May at TNBCLC. A very fine quality group of 25 people (religious and laity) added beauty and credibility to his event through their lively participation. The whole of New Testament was covered this year. Those with teaching experiences in the seminary were invited as resource persons. The success of the event was expressed in their enthusiasm to come in the following years and to bring with them more people in the coming years.

1. **Bible Revision**

Revising the present Tamil Bible has been a work that was undertaken a few years back. Two meetings were conducted in St. Paul’s Seminary, Tiruchirappalli to evaluate, guide, coordinate and speed up the project. A new impulse has been given by the Tamil Nadu Bishops as they have generously appointed Rev. Fr. Raphael as the full time coordinator for this great work. The Chairman Bishop Most. Rev. Dr. Devadass Ambrose has suggested July 2019 to be the time for the completion of this project. In this regard, the cooperation of the laity towards this revision work through their meticulous and meritorious observations of the present bible script is noteworthy. The observations are to be reasonably and appropriately included.

1. **The Madras University and Bible Distance Education**

The Department of Christian Studies, in Madras University has come forward at our request to start a distance education programme on PG Diploma in Scripture Studies (PGDSS – Post Graduate Diploma in Scripture Studies). It is a one year programme meant for PG Students. The registration and exams have to be done through the University. At the end of the course certificates will be awarded by the University.

The TNBCLC will have to prepare the syllabus and the lessons for the programme. The centre will also be a place of conducting the contact seminars for the students. It is a joint venture of TNBCLC and Madras University.

**III. Contribution at the National Level**

The regional secretary with a team of 15 members from Tamil Nadu took part in the national seminar for the youth animators conducted at NBCLC on 3-5 of March.

A meeting on national consultation on “Youth, Faith and the Vocational Guidance” was conducted at NBCLC on 27-28th of October. A team of 20 people from Tamil Nadu participated in the meeting. The CCBI Commission for Bible organized both the meetings.

**Impressions**

* + Some of the experiences shared by the youth on different areas of life could deepen the shallow faith of the people today
  + Life and the yearning for life is never to be lost even at the lowest ebb of life
  + Language may not be a barrier in the event of understanding and deepening Faith

**Sincere Gratitude…**

Heavenly Father thank you most humbly for the moments of abundant and abiding Grace and the minutes of Providence…

* To all the loving and respected Bishops of Tamil Nadu for the unique concern and unwavering confidence towards the commission for the Bible and for the silent and strong encouragement shown to me and to the diocesan secretaries to carry out this great mission of the Word of God in a humble way.
* To the Chairman Bishop Most. Rev. Dr. M. Devadass Ambrose for his gentle, cordial and positive words and actions of care, support and confidence… for his openness to accept new and relevant initiatives… for his readiness to guide, clarify and to say an indicative ‘GO’
* To our beloved director and all our beloved priests and sisters at the centre of TNBCLC who create an atmosphere of love and joy, concern and consolation that make our centre a residence, a home and in short an abode of living, loving and leaning
* To all our loving staff members of TNBCLC who through their constant and continuous commitment and untiring cooperation make our mission and ministry possible
* To all the diocesan secretaries who are at war foot level ready to execute the goals, plans of the commission and for the willingness to travel with the visions of the commission
* To all the religious brothers and sisters who in spite of their own charism and commitments, for their decisive option to be a part of this commission and to participate in this mission by taking the Word to the basic communities in the villages
* To all lay ministers who in their own way but in truth and honesty spread the Word to those people who are deprived of the opportunities to enjoy and experience the beauty and the ecstasy of the Word of God.
* To all those unseen but leavened people who officially or non - officially by their commitment to Word of God fill the World with the overwhelming Presence of the Word as it was in the beginning.

**Date: 27.06.2018**

**Signature of the Secretary**

**(Fr. M. Ubald)**

General Secretary,

TNBC Commission for Bible,

TNBCLC, Tindivanam