

Bible IN America™

Newsletter

Houston Baptist University

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What Language Does God Speak?

“What Language Does God Speak?” is one of the new displays now at the **Dunham Family Bible in America Museum**. Focusing on foreign Bible translation in America, the exhibit includes both the first and the last non-English Bible translations made in America. On display is a page from **John Eliot’s Algonquian Bible of 1663**, the first Bible translated and printed in America, as well as the **Gullah New Testament**, the most recently completed Bible translation, published in 2005.

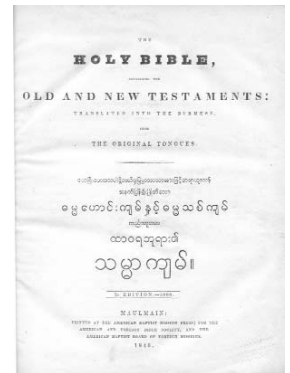
The Bible was the first known book to be translated from one language into another; the Hebrew Old Testament was translated into Greek in the third century B.C. Bible translation has always been a part of Christian missions, and as Christianity spread, the Bible was translated into other languages. By the fifth century, translations of at least parts of the Scripture had been made into Syrian, Persian, Armenian, Ethiopic, German, and Latin. By 1800 there were 66 languages with some portions of Scripture and 40 with the complete Bible. Today the complete Bible is available in over 400 languages.

At the **Bible in America Museum’s** exhibit, visitors will see Bibles brought to America by immigrants, Bibles printed in America for immigrants, foreign Bibles specifically printed for evangelism abroad, and Bibles translated and printed by American missionaries.

Yield to the Word of God

When Adoniram and Ann Judson first came to Burma there was not one Christian in the entire country. Without friends and in a foreign culture, they struggled against melancholy, disease, and opposition to their even being there. It was seven years before the Judsons saw the first Burmese convert to Christ. The Judsons persevered because of their conviction in the Bible’s truthfulness. A Buddhist once told Adoniram he could not believe in Christ because a King would not allow his son to suffer such a cruel death as the cross. Judson replied, “Therefore you are not a disciple of Christ. A true disciple inquires not whether a fact is agreeable to his own reason, but whether it is in the book. His pride has yielded to the divine testimony. Teacher, your pride is still unbroken. Break down your pride, and yield to the word of God.”

Adoniram Judson (1788-1850) and his wife Ann were the first missionaries sent from the United States to a foreign land. In 1812, the two year old American Board of Foreign Missions, the first American overseas missionary organization, sent the Judsons to India. Through Bible study, Judson decided the Baptist position on baptism by immersion was more Biblical than infant baptism. This led to his loss of support from the American Board, established by Congregationalists, and the establishment of the American Baptist Board of Foreign Missions. When they were not permitted to settle in India, the Judsons settled in nearby Burma. Adoniram and his family suffered much hardship during 38 years in Burma. Adoniram was imprisoned for a year and a half and threatened with execution. He had three wives in succession, all preceding him in death. After spending 24 years translating the whole Bible into Burmese, Adoniram published the first two editions in 1840. The recently acquired 1840 Burmese Bible, with its circular script, is the centerpiece of the **Museum’s** current display.



1840 Burmese Bible page



1806

For the new year, the **Dunham Family Bible in America Museum** has a bicentennial display of items from its collection printed in 1806. In 1806 the United States was only 30 years old; Lewis and Clark reached the Pacific after traveling through the Louisiana Purchase; construction began on the Cumberland Road, the first U.S. federal highway; and carbon paper was invented.

The leading printer of Bibles in the first part of the 19th century was Irish immigrant Matthew Carey. His family Bibles, such as the **1806 quarto Bible** on display, included many extra tables, charts, maps and discourses. (Some of these can be read at the **Museum’s** website under “Reprints from the Collection.”)

In 1806 **Noah Webster** printed his **first American dictionary**, and the **first American edition of Cruden’s famous Concordance** was issued. These, along with several personal Bibles from 1806, including children’s Bibles, are also exhibited.

Ben Franklin Turns 300!

January 17, 1706 was a cold day in Boston when Abiah Franklin gave birth to her eighth child and named him Benjamin. Little could Mrs. Franklin have imagined that 300 years later her son's birth and life would be celebrated throughout North America and beyond. The Benjamin Franklin Tercentenary has coordinated a series of events to make certain Ben's 300th birthday is appropriately remembered. In December the exhibit *Benjamin Franklin: In Search of a Better World* opened in Philadelphia. The exhibition will later travel to St. Louis, Houston (at the Museum of Natural Science, October 11-January 21, 2007), Denver and Atlanta before its finale in Paris, where Franklin was such a smashing success as American ambassador.

Franklin wrote in his *Autobiography* that his ancestors had been Protestant since the earliest days of the Reformation in England. Under Queen Mary (1553-1559), Protestants were persecuted. Hundreds of Christians were executed for their faith, gaining the Queen her nickname of "Bloody Mary." Franklin's ancestors were at times in danger. Franklin wrote that they "had got an English Bible, and to conceal and secure it, it was fastened open with tapes under and within the cover of a joint-stool. When my great-great-grandfather read it to his family, he turned up the joint-stool upon his knees, turning over the leaves then under the tapes. One of the children stood at the door to give notice if he saw the apparitor coming, who was an officer of the spiritual court. In that case the stool was turned down again upon its feet, when the Bible remained concealed under it as before."



Such a stool is now on exhibit at the **Dunham Family Bible in America Museum**. The Tudor-style stool was built and presented by a Friend of the Museum who, humbly, did not wish to be named. Turning the stool over on their lap to read the Bible underneath, visitors can better imagine the religious persecution and lack of freedom which later led many to seek refuge in America.

Benjamin Franklin's parents gave young Ben a Christian upbringing rich in Bible reading and teaching. Franklin fondly remembered his father playing the violin and singing psalms in the evening in a "clear, pleasing voice." Though Franklin departed from this Christian upbringing and became a Deist, the

knowledge of the Scripture he learned in his youth remained with him and continued to influence him to the end of his life.



Franklin became famous for his *Poor Richard's Almanac*, whose proverbs sounded so Solomonic that many today erroneously think "God helps those who help themselves" is a Bible verse. When he became a printer, Franklin regularly printed important Christian works, including sermons and the hymns of Isaac Watts. When evangelist George Whitefield visited America, Franklin loved to hear him preach and was the official printer of Whitefield's works in America, though he never could accept Jesus Christ or the gospel Whitefield preached.

In 1776, after signing the Declaration of Independence, Franklin, Thomas Jefferson, and John Adams were appointed a committee to design a seal for the new United States. The design submitted was Franklin's, based on Israel's exodus from Egypt: "Pharaoh sitting in an open chariot, a crown on his head and a sword in his hand passing thro' the divided waters of the Red sea in pursuit of the Israelites: rays from a pillar of fire in the cloud, expressive of the divine presence, and command, reaching to Moses who stands on the shore and extending his hand over the sea, causes it to overwhelm Pharaoh. Motto: rebellion to tyrants is obedience to God." Though Franklin and Jefferson were the most liberal of the Founding Fathers, as officials in the young republic, they repeatedly used Biblical imagery in this and other of their important work. Franklin's proposal for the United States' seal was not the one finally chosen. After much debate and many committee meetings, the design we are familiar with was chosen in 1782.

At the 1787 Constitutional Convention, and at the age of 81, Franklin made his famous call for prayer at the Convention, again referencing the Bible in his speech: "God governs in the affairs of man. And if a sparrow cannot fall to the ground without his notice, is it probable that an empire can rise without His aid? We have been assured in the Sacred Writings that except the Lord build the house, they labor in vain that build it. I firmly believe this. I also believe that, without His concurring aid, we shall succeed in this political building no better than the builders of Babel." Certainly words of wisdom worthy of attention from America's politicians today.

Museum Joins GHCVB

The **Dunham Family Bible in America Museum** joined the Greater Houston Convention and Visitors Bureau. Membership in the GHCVB will bring added publicity to the **Museum**. **Museum** information will be included in the *Houston Meeting Planners Guide* sent to those planning meetings and conventions in Houston and is available on the GHCVB website. Museum brochures and information will be available at the information desks manned by the GHCVB at major conventions, as well as at GHCVB kiosks and sites around the city. The Convention Bureau store, located in City Hall, includes **Bible Museum** brochures as well as the facsimile 1836 *Hieroglyphic Bible* for sale.

Recent Acquisitions

- *Christ: The Gospel of Matthew Beautifully Designed for the Internet Age*. Art Direction and Design: Ruth Rimm. Illustrations: Alejandra Vernon. First volume in the Designer Bible series. New York: The Global Renaissance Society, LLC, 2005. www.dotchrist.net. Donated by publisher.
- *New Illustrated and Practical Polyglot Family Bible*, National Publishing Company, 187_. Donated by Gary and Grace Panetti.
- *Holy Bible*, quarto Bible published for the Methodist Episcopal Church, 1848. Donated by Mrs. H.L. Warren.
- *A Geography of the Bible: Compiled for the American Sunday School*, 1830. Donated by Kitty McKinnel in memory of Mr. & Mrs. Elwood Stitzel.
- *Die Bibel oder die ganze Heilige Schrift des Alten und Neuen Testaments*, 1881. Donated by Freda Viola Lynch and Cleo Myrtle Mercer.
- *La Sainte Bible*, American Bible Society, 1826.
- *La Biblia Sagrada*, Sociedad Americana de la Biblia, 1830.
- *The Holy Bible: Translated into the Burmese*. Maulmain, Burma, 1840. The above three translations donated by Drs. Gordon and Diana Severance.
- William E. Paul, Chief Editor of *Bible Editions and Versions*, Journal of the International Society of Bible Collectors, donated
 - A limited edition Bronze Coin for 1983, "The Year of the Bible"
 - Limited edition Belt Buckle for the "1983 Year of the Bible"
 - Commemorative Bronze Coin on the 25th Anniversary Discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls
 - *The Micro Bible*, a microfilm reduction of entire King James Version of the Bible that can be read with a 100x microscope.
- *New Testament Kit*, American Bible Society, 1928.

The Greatest Missionary

When Cameron Townsend was a missionary in Guatemala, a Guatemalan Indian asked him, "Why doesn't your God speak my language?" Convinced that every man, woman, and child should be able to read God's Word in their own language, in 1942 Cameron Townsend founded Wycliffe Bible Translators. Townsend believed that "The greatest missionary is the Bible in the mother tongue. It needs no furlough and is never considered a foreigner."

Spring Planning

Spring is an excellent time to visit the **Dunham Family Bible in America Museum**. Special tours are available for Bible study classes, school groups, confirmation classes, and Senior groups. Tours can be arranged for the time most convenient for you. Encourage your friends and family to come explore this hidden treasure in Metropolitan Houston. To schedule a tour or for more information contact Dr. Diana Severance at 281-649-3287 or dseverance@hbu.edu.

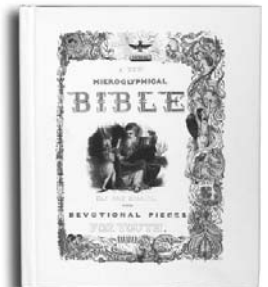
New Items on the Bible Museum Website

If you haven't visited the Bible in America Museum website recently, pay us a visit at www.hbu.edu/bia. HBU webmaster Alan Presley and his student assistant Charles Wells have made a number of additions to the "Reprints from the Collection" and have completed placing the Museum's catalog on the web. Volunteers Caryn Powell '80 and Chris Hulls have been a great help in typing some of the study material from the collection's Bibles to add to the "Reprints." The "Reprints" include Bible study aids as well as articles on the nature and importance of the Scripture and principles for studying the Bible.

A Perfect Gift for Easter, Baptisms and Confirmation

The Bible in America Museum's facsimile of the 1837 *Hieroglyphic Bible* from its collection is an excellent gift for children at Easter, Baptism or Confirmation. The little book is called a *Hieroglyphic Bible* for its 400 illustrations, made by noted American engraver Joseph Adams. It includes Bible verses on one page and devotional poems for children on the facing page. Many of the poems are from *Divine Songs and Hymns for Infant Minds* by the famous English hymn writer Isaac Watts. The facsimile is available at the HBU bookstore and at the **Bible in America Museum** for \$16.18 (\$14.95 plus \$1.23 tax). Mail orders are also accepted; add \$1.50 for shipping and handling. Please make checks payable to Houston Baptist University; credit cards are accepted.

Bibles are also available for placement in church and local bookstores. Contact Dr. Diana Severance at 281-649-3287 or dseverance@hbu.edu for more information.





Houston Baptist University
7502 Fondren Road
Houston, TX 77074-3298

281-649-3287

Fax: 281-649-3474

E-mail: dseverance@hbu.edu

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“THERE ARE MORE SURE MARKS OF
AUTHENTICITY IN THE BIBLE THAN IN ANY
PROFANE HISTORY.”

— SIR ISAAC NEWTON

Please notify us of any changes or corrections in your address. We also welcome hearing from our readers and Museum visitors.
If you would like to receive the *Dunham Family Bible in America Museum* Newsletter by e-mail and
save the University postage, send your e-mail address to dseverance@hbu.edu.

The Naming of Ivory Soap



William Proctor and James Gamble both immigrated to America from the British Isles in the early 1800's and ended up in Cincinnati. When they married sisters, their father-in-law suggested they go into business together, so they bought a candle and tallow

works. The two families worked together for three generations, the Gambles running the production side of the company and the Proctors running the store or the office.

During the Civil War P&G began making soap for the army. The soap was yellow, as was all soap made from household cooking fats, but after the war P&G began experiments to see if they could make a white soap. Castille soap, made from olive oil, was white, but it was very expensive. By 1878, son James Gamble had developed a white soap, and “P&G White Soap” made its marketing debut. The following year Harley Proctor was sitting in the Church of Our Savior in Cincinnati one Sunday morning. The reading was from Psalm 45. When Proctor heard the words of verse 8, “All thy garments smell of myrrh and aloes and cassia out of ivory palaces whereby they have made me glad,” the word “ivory” kept resonating through his mind. That was it – Ivory Soap! The following week, the name of the soap was changed. Ivory was registered as a trademark on July 18, 1879.

Visit the Dunham Family Bible in America Museum

Museum Hours, September-May:

- Tuesdays, 10 a.m. – 4 p.m.
- Thursdays, 11 a.m. – 4 p.m.
- 2nd Saturday of the month, noon – 5 p.m.
- Tours at other times are available by appointment.
- A curriculum packet is available for teachers, designed for grades 7 and up.

For appointments or more information,
contact

Dr. Diana Severance at 281-649-3287 or
dseverance@hbu.edu.

There is no charge for admission.