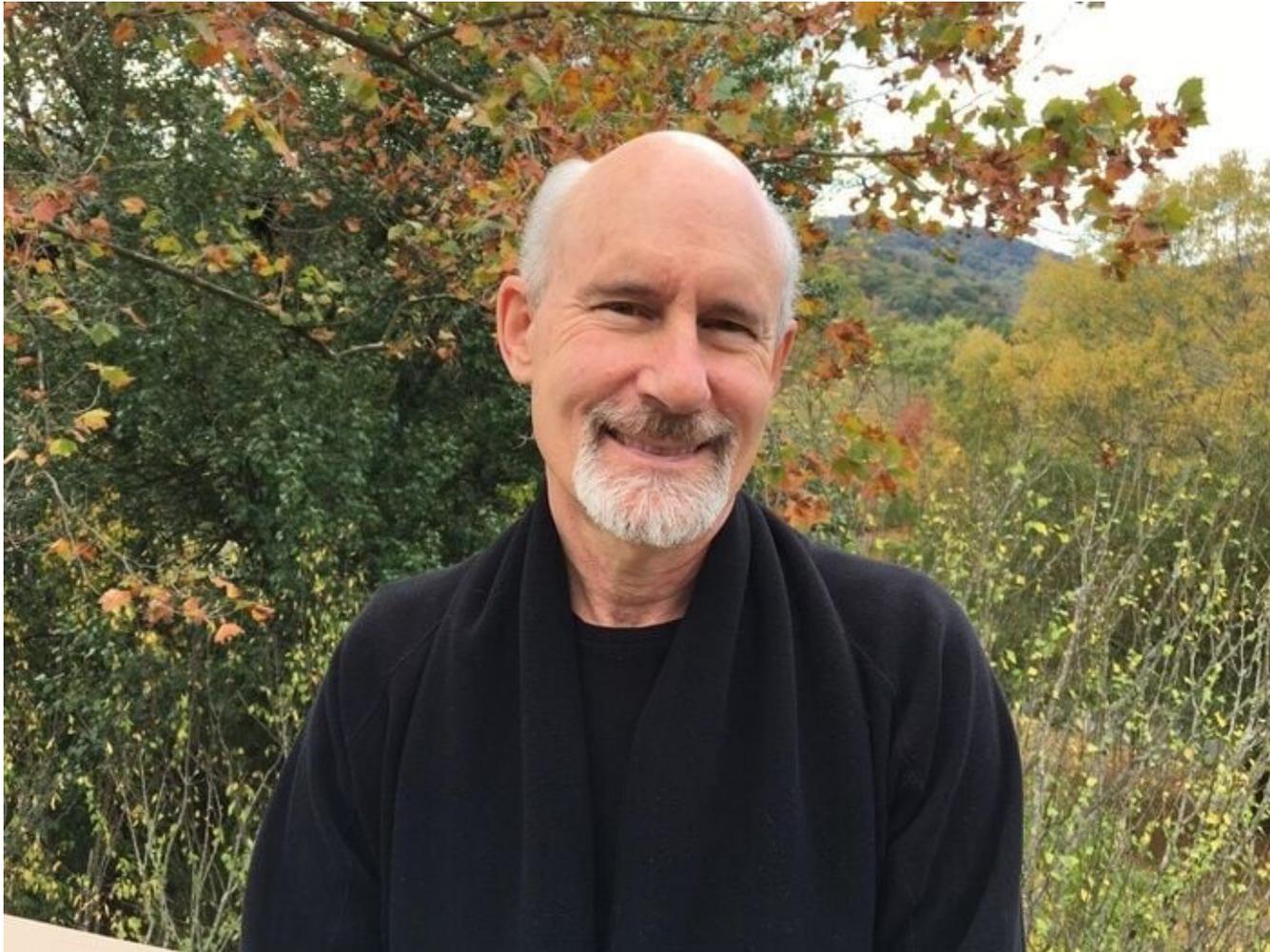




https://www.blackbeltnewsnetwork.com/religion/friendly-freethinker-how-faith-may-fail-with-booming-bible-sales/article_88273ea3-e732-471f-8dc0-98ba255c4d80.html

Friendly Freethinker: How Faith may Fail with Booming Bible Sales

By Chris Highland
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A headline on the Religion News Service (RNS) announced: "Bible sales keep growing, even as many Americans lose their religion—about 18 million Bibles have been sold this year, part of a five-year boom in Bible sales." (November 17, 2025). I was immediately interested in what's going on (though I had a fairly good idea).

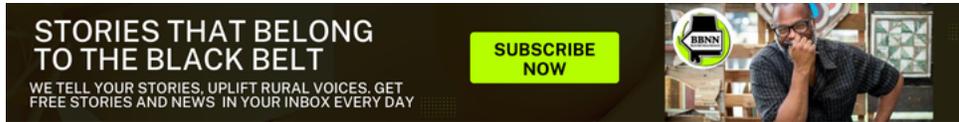
One market analyst stated: "2024 marked a 20-year high for Bible sales in the U.S., and 2025 is on track to surpass these levels." Some say this is due to uncertainty in the nation and spiritual seeking. Could it also be good marketing? The Bible business is booming. For instance, "HarperCollins publishes 22 translations of the Bible in English and Spanish, in hundreds of editions." The RNS article also highlights these popular editions: "A pink, giant-print King James Version gift Bible has been a bestseller for years. And Donald Trump earned more than \$1.3 million last year for endorsing a patriotic Bible named for country singer Lee Greenwood's song "God Bless the

USA.” And of course, the American Bible Society is still going strong after 200 years. In 2024 “God provided” ABS with nearly \$82 million dollars (sales of God’s Word topped \$5 million). The Society distributed over \$8 million worth of scripture to the armed services alone that year.

This caught my eye: “The Jesus Bible, an edition aimed at Gen Z readers, is also doing well.” I wonder if this was the same version Jesus carried around Galilee (he obviously didn’t do that; and, he never told his followers to carry the scriptures around).

The American Bible Society distributes a “State of the Bible” report each year that identifies percentages of “Bible users.” Their recent report claims: “Only 1-in-5 Americans would qualify as what the Bible Society calls “Scripture engaged,” meaning the Bible has a major role in their lives.”

The article goes on to state: “Despite the boom in Bible sales, a recent survey from Gallup ...found that less than half of Americans (49%) say religion is important to their lives, part of a continued documented decline in religiosity.”



So now we turn to the Big Bible Questions: Why are Bibles being sold at all? Can the Word of God be marketed like any other book? What does it say about a religion, any religion, that profits from the sales of their “holy book”? What would the Prophets say about that kind of profit?

Actually, let’s consider several prophetic (truth-telling) passages. The prophet Amos said: “Thus saith the LORD; I will not turn away the punishment thereof; because they sold the righteous for silver, and the poor for a pair of shoes” (Amos 2). “Hear this, you who trample the needy and do away with the poor of the land, saying, “When will the [religious holiday] be over that we may sell grain, and the Sabbath be ended that we may market wheat?”— skimping on the measure, boosting the price and cheating with dishonest scales, buying the poor with silver and the needy for a pair of sandals, selling even the sweepings with the wheat” (Amos 8). From the prophet Isaiah: “The LORD brings this charge against the elders and leaders of His people: “You have devoured the vineyard; the plunder of the poor is in your houses. Why do you crush My people and grind the faces of the poor?” (Isaiah 3). The prophet Ezekiel declares: “The people of the land have practiced extortion and committed robbery. They have oppressed the poor and needy and have exploited the foreign resident without justice” (Ezekiel 22). Then these sharp words from Jeremiah: “For among My people are wicked men ... their houses are full of deceit. Therefore they have become powerful and rich ... They have not taken up the cause of the fatherless, that they might prosper; nor have they defended the rights of the needy” (Jeremiah 5).

Clearly, biblical prophets had harsh words for religious believers who prospered while the most vulnerable suffered. What would they say about selling scripture? At great expense, millions of copies of “The Word” are given away around the world, often to people living in serious poverty. Yet, do the marketers of the message give a thought for changing the conditions which cause that poverty? How often is the Bible used and abused as a tool of oppression, keeping the poor “in their place” without addressing the powerful systems, including religious systems, that sustain poverty, while selling the promise of heavenly wealth?

As Jesus, in the prophetic tradition, warned the religious marketers of his day: “Woe to you, hypocrites! You [buy and sell religious items]. But you have disregarded the weightier matters of the law: justice, mercy, and faithfulness” (Matthew 23).

It seems the more Bibles are sold, the poorer Christianity becomes.

Chris Highland was a Protestant minister and interfaith chaplain for many years before becoming a humanist celebrant and author. He lives in Asheville, North Carolina. His website is www.chighland.com.