



Putting Hollywood in the Hallowed

Last year, a Swedish ad man named Dag Soderberg published a Bible made in the image of *Vogue* magazine. Called [Bible Illuminated: The Book](#), it featured glossy images of models and artistic contemporary photography, and it caused quite a stir....

Now, a New Testament version is being published in the U.S. featuring modern do-gooders Angelina Jolie, Nelson Mandela, and — I'll give you one guess — Bono.



Anita Singh of the *Telegraph* [tells](#) us, "Other images include a shirtless male model striding through the waves and a black-and-white close-up of a couple about to kiss."

Additionally, the Bible features, believe it or not, ZZ Top as the Three Wise Men of the South.

Yes, this should turn out well.

Really, though, it's not surprising this new Bible was disgorged from Sweden. That nation is, after all, the land that brought the world the [Cheap Monday](#) brand of jeans, which feature a logo of a skull whose forehead bears the image of an upside-down cross, which is associated with Satanic worship. In that case, the logo's creator, Bjorn Atldax, did in fact intend to send an anti-Christian message, as he said that he has "a great dislike for organized religion."

Of course, I can't say his countryman Soderberg harbors such dark sentiments. Although his claim that he merely wants to make the Bible more accessible to those who would normally be disinclined to read it sounds a bit sanctimonious, he just seems like a man lacking a sense of the sacred. And if he does have an ignoble motivation, it is probably, well, that lust for money, that root of all evil.

Regardless, the problem with associating pictures — especially the wrong ones — with the Bible is that, as the old saying goes, "A picture is worth a thousand words." Should people be associating goodness with a home wrecker such as Angelina Jolie? Should they associate wisdom with ZZ Top?

If you're wondering what kind of moral compass chooses such representatives of virtue, Anita Singh explains, "They (the celebrities) were selected after the publishers asked the Swedish public which famous figures in modern times represented goodness and compassion."

Now, the above line, as much as anything else, illustrates the problem with this new Bible. You don't have to be a Christian to understand that virtue isn't determined by majority vote (just look at who we elect). If something is to illuminate the straight and true path, it must be a guiding light, not just a mirror; it must transcend the age, not merely reflect it. And the Bible has withstood the test of time precisely because it does contain that timeless thing called Truth.

Now, it's expected that secularists will dispute this. They should understand, however, that if a book



Written by [Selwyn Duke](#) on June 15, 2009

can guide people toward moral betterment at all, it's only because it reflects that eternal yardstick which judges our beliefs, not merely an ephemeral one that affirms them. And of course, that latter yardstick is just our beliefs themselves. So logically rendered, what is being said is, "We will place our conception of good in a book that is supposed to tell us what good is, so we may know what good is." Thus, the people chose Mohandas Gandhi as reflective of good, just as he might have chosen Benito Mussolini as same, as he did admire the Italian fascist, calling him a "superman." But if a spiritual guide simply affirms fascism in a fascist age, communism in a communist age, and liberalism in a liberal age, what is the point? It's then not a spiritual guide at all but an imposter, a shill retained to assure our consciences that our show is everything our barking egos claim it to be. The only difference is what our shill tells us: that our moral state is not a freak show.

And what if there were no Truth, as the relativists say? Then, unless having that affirmation made everyone feel better, there would be no point in having a Bible. People would just believe what they believe and do what they do anyway — "If it feels good, do it" doesn't have to be taught.

But how much of an impact will this Bible have? Well, Singh tells us, "when *The Book* was released in Sweden it accounted for a 50 per cent rise in the country's Bible sales for 2007."

And in Sweden, I imagine this amounts to sales increasing annually from four to six.

What about the United States, however? Actually, I don't think this Bible will be more than a blip on the radar screen. People who do have faith will reject it, and I tend to doubt that those who don't will suddenly find that ageless prose, Scripture, hopelessly alluring simply because it's illustrated with celebrities of the age. After all, if people want *Vogue*, there is always the supermarket checkout counter.

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