



ENTERTAINMENT: News

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Old Bibles: Seek preservation and ye shall find

By **JIM HAUG**
 Staff Writer

DAYTONA BEACH -- Dusted-off Bibles from the attic have never been so lucrative. A Cromwell-style Bible from 1540 sold at Abebooks.com for \$19,893.

Paul Sawyer, a bookbinder in Daytona Beach, recently restored a Bible printed in 1616 for a customer who then sold it on eBay for \$6,500.

Jim Sass, owner of Abraxas Books in Daytona Beach, said his used book store averages one customer a week wanting to trade in a Bible from the 1800s. If it's in good condition, Sass might resell it for \$100 to \$250.

But the idea of selling the family Bible is still anathema to many.

"For every customer I get, (bookbinder) Paul Sawyer gets a customer wanting to restore the family Bible," Sass said.

Sawyer preserves Bibles for many local pastors, including Bobby Welch, the former pastor of First Baptist Church of Daytona Beach and former president of the Southern Baptist Association.

Because of their great sentimental value, Sawyer takes care to preserve not only binding and leather but also the personal study notes and the family genealogical records taped inside.

Good intentions have ruined many a Bible. Sass, for instance, recalled that a customer once tried to moisturize a leather Bible from the 1800s by rubbing Vaseline on the cover.

The alcohol seeped into the pages and soiled a Bible that could have been worth a few hundred dollars, Sass said.

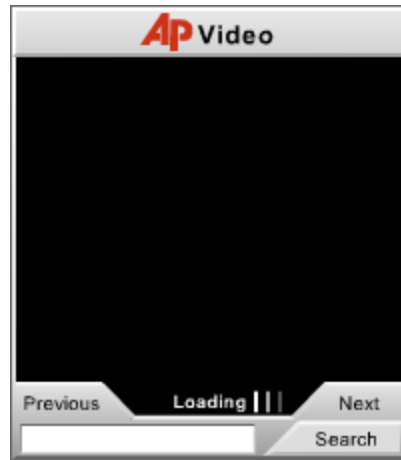
Some families don't know how to dispose of the Bible. Alfred and Dorothy Laponzina, for instance, possess a deluxe Bible well over a 100 years old. The leather cover is dried out and faded and the pages are loose, but it contains many illustrations, maps of the Holy Land and two different English translations printed side by side for easy comparison.

The Laponzinas are both 87, but their family members are not interested in inheriting their Bible. The book is too precious to discard but the Laponzinas don't want to sell it either.

"I don't feel like a Bible should be sold," Alfred Laponzina said. "It's a shame. We're getting on in years. We don't know who would want it."

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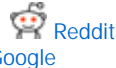
The 10 Most Expensive Religious Books Sold By Abebooks.com

- 1. The Great Bible (Cromwell's Bible):** \$19,893 -- A 1540 edition of this famous Bible.
- 2. Baskerville Bible:** \$8,350 -- A 1763 edition by John Baskerville, a key 18th century designer.
- 3. Translated Holy Bible:** \$5,000 -- A rare Bible from 1586.
- 4. Drawings for the Bible by Marc Chagall:** \$3,500 -- A scarce 1960 Bible that comprises 96 reproductions in black and white, and 24 lithographs by this celebrated 20th century painter.
- 5. Geneva Bible:** \$3,000 -- A landmark edition from 1611.
- 6. Buddhist Sutta Calle:** \$2,000 -- An unusual palm leaf book probably made by a monastery in upper Burma, it contains scripture used by Theravada Buddhists.
- 7. Holy Bible (Old & New Testaments):** \$1,992 -- An edition illustrated by Gustave Dore.
- 8. Annali Dell Islam published by Leone Caetani:** \$1,992 -- A 10-volume collection about Islam authored by Leone Caetani between 1904-1926.
- 9. Talmud by Rabbi Steinsaltz:** \$1,925 -- 21 volumes of discussions about Jewish culture.
- 10. Royal Quatro Holy Bible:** \$1,900 -- First edition from acclaimed U.S. printer Isaiah Thomas.

-- Abebooks.com

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