



The Burning Bush—Online article archive

Faith Mission bookshop challenged on its sale of “The Passion of the Christ”



A reader of The Burning Bush has sent us a copy of a letter she wrote to Mr Douglas, the manager of “The Faith Mission” bookshop in Belfast and also the General Director of the Faith Mission in Scotland, complaining of the sale of “The Passion of the Christ” video and the “Jesus Freak Bible.” We print part of the letter below and the reply received from John Townend of The Faith Mission.

23 October 2004.

Dear Mr Douglas

I am deeply disturbed and dismayed to learn that the Faith Mission Bookshop in 5-7 Queen Street Belfast has for sale the video of The Passion of The Christ.

I have checked with a number of Christian Bookshops across the province if they are going to stock this video and the answer has been a resounding NO. On raising my objection to this video with a member of staff at the bookshop I was informed that there was a demand for it. There is a demand for pornographic videos and books but that does not make it right. I have no doubt that there may well be a demand for this video by many ill informed Christians who are not aware of the teachings of the Word of God as recorded in Deuteronomy Chapter 2: 12 where we read these words: “And the Lord spake unto you out of the midst of the fire: ye heard the voice of the words but saw no similitude only ye heard a voice.” This film is very wicked with much brutality and is a flagrant breach of the Second Commandment. That Commandment forbids any representation of the likeness of God to be made. It is arrogant and wicked on the part of any man to seek to portray the Lord Jesus Christ. None who holds Christ precious can be comfortable with His death being made a subject for play actors. The ghoulish relish of hordes of professing Christians for the violence of this film is in stark contrast with the attitude of the followers of Christ who witnessed His crucifixion. They stood afar off.

It is also very disturbing to learn that the same bookshop have copies of The Jesus Freaks Bible. I refer to the definition of the word freak as defined in the dictionary — queer-odd-unusual-grotesque-whimsical-capricious-erratic. These adjectives speak for themselves. I am old fashioned enough to believe that the Word of God is The Holy Bible. It is interesting to note that well respected Christian Bookshops in the province would not stock either the video or this so called edition of the Bible. I find it difficult to believe that these 2 items would be representative of the Faith Mission and the standards that they seek to uphold at Holiness Conventions across the country. It would be interesting to observe the reaction of many Prayer Union members if these blasphemous articles were to be on display at the Bangor Convention at Easter 2005. If they are suitable to be on sale at the bookshop in Belfast they are also suitable for the bookstall at any meeting where the pilgrims have a



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meeting.

I find it alarming that you are prepared to accept the Holy Bible that is the infallible Word of God being wrongly and blasphemously referred to. You do not appear to have any scruples with regard to the sale of this evil title and may I remind you that many Godly men and women were prepared to lay down their lives for the defence of the Holy Bible.

It is interesting to note that in the Life Indeed dated June 1993 Rev. Tom Shaw penned an article under the heading Whatever happened To Christian Standards? No 2 and in the previous item Mr Shaw spoke of the need of repentance and holiness. In No. 2 he then continues this important theme in the realms of practical every-day Christianity.

I would be interested in your comments with regard to the important matters raised in the above correspondence. Thanking you in anticipation.

Yours sincerely,

JM.

A reply to this letter was received from John Townend. It reads:

Dear Mrs M

Firstly may I apologise for the very brief response I gave to your last letter. As I commented in my last letter I have noted your concerns and also mentioned them to Mr Douglas. However I feel that I should point out that The Faith Mission Council places confidence in Mr Douglas as the bookshop manager to discern what is and what is not appropriate stock for our shops in N. Ireland. Mr Douglas is answerable to the Faith Mission Council who are ultimately accountable to the Lord. As such I do not feel that it is appropriate or necessary for Mr Douglas to answer to others for decisions taken about goods stocked in the shops, I have not seen the film 'The Passion of the Christ' however I've heard that some, who were deeply moved by the portrayal in the film of the physical suffering of Christ, were subsequently led to a genuine faith in the Lord Jesus Christ as Saviour. Also some Christian people who went to see the film were broken as they realized afresh something of the great cost of our salvation. I cannot make any comment about the version of the Bible you refer to, as I have not yet had an opportunity to peruse it. I'm sure your motive for writing to us came from a genuine concern, however in my view further correspondence on this issue would be inappropriate and poor stewardship of time. With regards
Yours in Christ.

John Townend

General Director

The sale and promotion of such material is a far cry from the objectives of the founders of The Faith Mission in 1886. It will be interesting to see if the items referred to by Mrs M will be displayed by The Faith Mission at the Bangor Convention at Easter 2005 or will expediency prevail over principle!

The Editor.