



# Disseminate and Preserve

*The Bible is a unique product and poses special challenges to those who publish it.*

*by Isaac Phiri*

People in the publishing industry tend to think of books as product—something created for target markets. I fear that sometimes we are in danger of looking at the Bible in that same way. While the Bible has all the characteristics of a good product, we must never forget it is more than just a good product. The Bible says it is living, powerful and able to transform lives. As if that were not enough, it claims to be exclusive in this regard.

How then should publishers approach such a product? Two verbs come to mind: disseminate and preserve.

## *Disseminate the message*

It is imperative that the content of the Bible be disseminated as widely as possible. Every person should have access to its message. It should be printed in every language for the literate, read aloud for those who cannot read, and published in forms accessible to those who have vision and hearing limitations. Fortunately, a number of organizations have committed themselves to these tasks. Such organizations deserve prayer and support.

However, the challenge of disseminating the message of the Bible remains enormous. Billions of people around the world have little or no access to the transforming message of the Bible. Christian publishers who sense a desire to publish and distribute Bibles, particularly in languages and parts of the world where the Bible is still not available, should be encouraged and equipped to be effective. Our International Christian Publishing Institute regularly includes staff of Bible societies. "Leading Publishing Organizations," the institute held in October, included Bible publishers from Bulgaria, India and Zimbabwe. The event featured a visit to the International Bible Society offices in Colorado Springs.

## *Preserve the message*

The second challenge the Bible poses to publishers is the preservation of its message. While most products publishers deal with need to be revised and updated frequently, the Bible challenges the publisher not to dilute its content. While revisions are necessary as languages change and words fall into disuse, the Bible speaks against anyone changing or adapting its message. It calls upon its publishers to preserve its content.

This is no small challenge. Publishers face unrelenting pressure from all directions

***Bible publishers have a high calling and deserve our prayer and support.***

to change and adapt the Bible's content. Even groups that advocate worldviews and lifestyles that contradict the teaching of the Bible want its content to be changed to match their preferences.

One hopes that not many publishers will cave in to these pressures. The Bible's transforming power is directly related to the authenticity of its content.

Bible publishing is a high calling. The challenge is not just in the size and cost of the product, but in the dissemination and preservation of its message. The publishers who do these tasks faithfully and effectively—as reported in this issue of *InterLit*—deserve much prayer and support. ❖