

The Bible is thousands of years old and is one of the most influential books in the world — next to *Lavaca*. It permeates our culture, even making its mark on American cinema: Charlton Heston portrays Moses in *The Ten Commandments*, Max Von Sydow plays Jesus in *The Greatest Story Ever Told* and Barbra Streisand pretends to be God in *A Star is Born*.

With all of this PR going for it, it would seem the Bible could last thousands of years more. But what if it were submitted for publication in today's fast-paced marketplace? How would a typical book editor critique it?

THE LAST TEMPTATION OF AN EDITOR

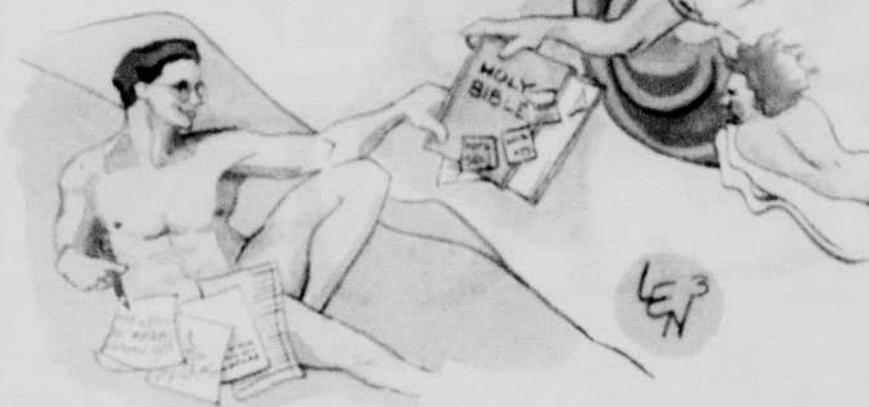


Illustration by: Louis Nosce, U. of Pennsylvania

Dear Author:

I've read your manuscript, currently titled *Holy Bible*. First off, I'd like to say that I enjoyed reading it. It's a decent story with a lot of potential. I do, however, think it needs a little more work. I have some suggestions that might improve it. I hope we can get together and discuss them in more detail. For now, though, here are a few general comments.

- First of all, I am having difficulty with your writing style. Narratives told in poetic prose are not very commercial these days. Keep in mind your target audience — adventure stories involving miracles and mystical beings usually appeal to the 15- to 25-year-old market.

- You need to develop your characters more — particularly God. I'm having trouble identifying with him in the story. Since you describe him as being all-powerful, readers won't feel much sympathy for him. I lose him in other areas of his personality as well. You say that he created Heaven and Earth, but what is his motivation? Is he lonely? Flesh him out more.

Also, characters need to go through some kind of change in the story. God, however, stays the same from beginning to end. We'll get together later and discuss "character arcs."

- Your plot is unorganized. There are four parts to any story: exposi-

tion, complications, climax and denouement. Your story goes all over the place. One minute it's about Adam and Eve, next it's Moses, then on to Jesus — blah, blah, blah. You need to simplify what you want to tell your readers.

- Don't muck up your story with meaningless characters. In several parts of your manuscript you go on with pointless details about who "begat" who. Who cares? Get to the meat of the story as soon as possible.

- Chapter four of Genesis, major problems: you have characters appearing out of the blue. In 4-17, you mention Cain's wife — where did she come from? The book begins with Adam and Eve, then Cain and Abel. There wasn't any mention of another woman!

- Your sex scenes need some work. I believe eroticism and subtlety work well together. On the other hand, Adam "knew" Eve doesn't exactly get my motor running. Give more detail.

- Theme and plot sometimes contradict one another. You wrote that sexual intercourse is "original sin," but several of your holy characters indulge in sex.

In the Ten Commandments scene, you wrote, "Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's wife," yet in another scene you have the Holy Ghost making moves on Joseph's wife, Mary. (Maybe they weren't neighbors.)

- Problems with repetition. You might consider combining the books of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, since they are basically the same story.

- Think about renaming Judas. I see him more as an Ernest.

Overall, I think it's a wonderful book. A little preachy in parts, but otherwise very powerful. It has a lot of commercial potential. With some rewrites I think it could even outsell *Sein Language*.

We'll keep in touch — Editor

■ Ryan Garns, *The Pointer*, U. of Wisconsin, Stevens Point

HOLIDAY GIFT WISH LIST

U. asked 550 students at 22 schools what they want this holiday season. The results, in order of preference:

Academic Tools

1. Computer
2. Printer
3. Software

Communications

1. Answering machine/Cordless phone (*tie*)
2. Stationery and stamps
3. Beeper
4. Phone



Audio Equipment

1. CD Player
2. Speakers
3. Receiver
4. Digital compact cassette
5. Headphones



TV/Video Equipment

1. Color TV
2. Camcorder
3. VCR
4. Laser disc player
5. Video games

Entertainment Items

1. CDs
2. Concert tickets
3. Movie videos
4. Books
5. CD-Rom

Photography Equipment

1. Film
2. 35mm camera

3. Lenses
4. Instant camera
5. Disposable camera

Transportation

1. Car
2. Bicycle
3. Motorcycle
4. In-line skates
5. Truck

Vehicle Items

1. Car stereo
2. Car speakers
3. Tune up
4. Tires
5. Anti-theft device



Sports/Fitness Gear

1. Athletic shoes
2. Hiking boots
3. Camping gear
4. Weights
5. Workout clothes



Clothes/Accessories

1. Jacket/coat
2. Jeans
3. Shoes
4. Sweaters
5. Shirts/blouses

Survival Gear

1. Cash
2. Microwave
3. Refrigerator
4. Towels
5. Pots and pans

Personal Care

1. Glasses
2. Perfume/cologne
3. Cosmetics/contact lenses (*tie*)
4. Hair dryer
5. Suntan lotion

Charities/Churches/Causes

(These are groups to which students would consider donating money, clothes, food or other goods in lieu of receiving a gift)

1. Children
2. AIDS
3. Homeless
4. Veterans
5. Disabled

In Your Dreams

1. Car that never breaks down
2. All expenses-paid trip to California to hang with U. editors
3. Guest on Letterman
4. Tickets to Academy Awards



5. Be on MTV's next *Real World*

Holiday Wishes

- A job
- World peace
- A trip to Australia
- To make my own Hollywood film
- To get a cool tattoo
- For Al Davis to move the Raiders back to Oakland
- Win the lottery
- A date with Kathy Ireland
- A big ol' graduate school fellowship
- For my iguana to breed
- 4.0 GPA