

1976

Bicentennial Observance (1976): Correspondence 04

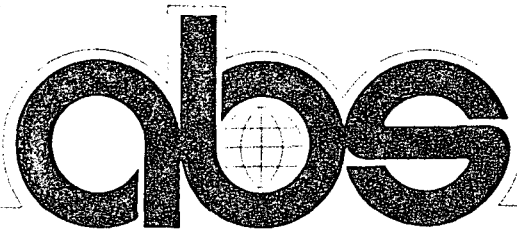
James Z. Nettinga

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AMERICAN BIBLE SOCIETY / GOD'S WORD FOR A NEW AGE

June 16, 1976

*Sen -
LUB -*

Senator Claiborne Pell
UNITED STATES SENATE
Washington, D.C. 20510

My dear Senator:

Yesterday I learned you were a joint sponser of identical bills that were introduced in the House and Senate to establish a federally funded American Constitution Bicentennial Foundation in recognition of the Bicentennial Era. The impetus behind the bill, I understand, comes from the conviction of many that the Bicentennial has turned out to be almost exclusively celebratory and historical in nature, rather than a "more substantive goal-oriented commemoration of the nation's founding," and that you, with others, expressed the hope that the proposed legislation would provide the framework for the government in the private sector to work together "in pursuing new goals for the Third Century."

I simply want to add my voice in support of such legislation; more than a decade of emphasis and study leading up to the 200th anniversary of the Constitution would be most appropriate. Anything I can do, as an Officer in the Bible Society and as an individual when I retire a year from now, would be a pleasure.

We have been getting some very good latent news stories of the presentation made to President Ford. The story of that presentation was sent to about 4000 smaller newspapers across the country, and we are amazed at how many papers have been using the story and the picture.

When I was in Washington there was one item I wanted to report to you personally; however, it was just not the time to do so. It concerns the American Bible Society's participation in the Bicentennial, under the overall umbrella theme of "Good News, America!" We conceived

*Good News,
America!*

Senator Claiborne Pell
June 16, 1976

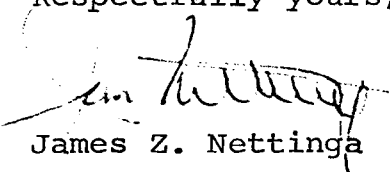
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our task to be the preparation of Scriptures that would help communities across the country reaffirm the "spiritual dimension of the Bicentennial." To do that, we published a variety of Scripture Selections, the high-point of which is the enclosed Liberty Bell Scripture Selection for use in churches and community organizations on July 4. If you feel it would be worthwhile to share these with your colleagues in the Senate, I would be happy to send some to you.

One further aspect of this legislation might be very interesting as an anniversary event in 1982 regarding the publication of the first English Bible printed in this country, with a resolution by the Congress then in Session, recommending it to the people of the United States. Robert Aitken was the printer, Bishop White, Benjamin Franklin, and Elias Boudinot were some of the backers and sponsors. The Aitken Bible has also been called the "Bible of the Revolution." If ever there was a religious event so historically connected with American History that is deserving of a commemorative stamp, this is it.

Thank you again for your continuing interest in the overall goals of the Bible Society and its cause.

Respectfully yours,



James Z. Nettinga

JZN/cm
enclosure