

# 1001 Bibles!

## Overview

Well, I've got a great story for you today and it's got to do with some pretty high names like Reverend, not not Reverend, but President Bill Clinton. It's got to do with Mogadishu where there was a war going on. But this story takes place on an island out in the middle of the Indian Ocean. So I had an invitation from a church there. It was being led by, pastored by a fellow from Saskatchewan, Canada.

He was there as a missionary. And it was a very humble church. It had humble beginnings. And he had sent word that he would like me to come and do a very special week of outreach meetings for him. I happily agreed and made the flights, several flights in a row to get to this island.

And so upon arriving, I had some equipment with me and we piled it, tied it on to his little car, a Suzuki. I called it a hairdryer on wheels like this thing was so small and up into the mountains that we went. And then the following day we went and we had a look at this beautiful, brand new church edifice that had been sponsored by people from Canada.

And we were ready to go. We're going to have a week of meetings. And I said to James, who was the missionary, what have we got for literature? Because I'm counting on people coming to Christ through this. This is an evangelistic outreach. What have we got?

We've got some Bibles. We've got some literature. Whereupon he responds, David, you're out here in the middle of nowhere. We're on this island. We're thousands of miles from everywhere. He said, you're not going to find a Bible bookstore out here, nowhere.

I said, you have nothing to give them. He said, I have nothing. And there's nowhere to suddenly get anything like that. Well I was not impressed, but what are you going to do? You go with the flow. Interesting enough, at the very same time something very powerful and incredible was unfolding.

The United States Marines had been sent by the Pentagon, and the leader of the Pentagon, of course, Bill Clinton. They had sent a huge armada to Mogadishu. They were going to go in and they're going to settle down the natives and make things straightened out. Total, total failure.

The whole operation was a disaster. It became international news. It was pathetic. American soldiers died. The interesting thing is they had called this operation, Operation Restore Hope. But no hope had been restored.

It was a mess. I mean time has flown over this island and I'm about to do evangelistic meetings. So here we were going to start this very night. Let's just say it was a Monday night. Tonight we're going to start our meetings. And I'm in the church just praying away, getting my heart and life ready for the meeting.

And James, the missionary, emerges from his humble little office and says, we've got company on the way. I just had a call from the ambassador, the US ambassador. It was only a few moments and this very handsome fellow came walking through the door all dressed up in very special military garb. And he was there off of a big ship that had just anchored in the harbor.

He had a most interesting story. His story was that the whole operation restored was a total, total wash. And so the word came from the Pentagon and from Bill Clinton. I want so many ships now to pull out of Mogadishu and head for Singapore. This man's story was, he said, I'm a chaplain with the US Marines. And he said, I'm usually at Camp Pendleton on the west coast of California.

So he said, I got word from the higher ups that I was assigned to be a part of this big armada that's heading for Mogadishu, five ships traveling together. And he said, I was given a budget. I'm a chaplain. So he said, I prayed about it and I felt very, very constrained to order some Bibles. And we said, I determined that the Bibles would sort of like have a camouflage, look

to them. And he said, since we're going to Mogadishu and since we're looking forward to success, why not call it the Holy Bible Operation Restore Hope? So we said, here I was in my office and I'm filling out this record, this order. I want these Bibles. And he said, I determined that I would order 1000 of these Bibles with the hopes of taking

them ashore and somehow disseminating them among the locals. Well he said, I was about to seal the order in an envelope and send it off to the printer when he said, I got this check in my spirit. You may not be familiar with such terminology. It's all about how this Holy Spirit can give you a little nudge, give you an idea. And if you follow God's nudge and God's ideas, wonderful things can unfold.

So we got this little nudge, and ordered one more Bible. He said, I'm thinking, I already ordered a thousand, but the Lord said, order one more. So he said, I ordered 1000 and one Bibles And so now he boarded the ship, they sailed over to Mogadishu, total disaster, where it comes from the Pentagon, move five ships to Singapore. He said my ship that I was on board was one of the five.

He said, I never got to go ashore. He said, it was just too pathetic and hot like the gunfire, whatever he said. It was unsafe. So we said, here I am in my quarters, below the deck in my, like a cave like a fair where he was living down in the underwear, the underside of the ship. And he says, there I am with my 1000 Bibles - Operation Restore Hope, a failed plan.

He says, now he said, think it over, the 1000 and one Bibles are heading for Singapore. Now if you know anything about Singapore, it's not one of these third world emerging countries like it, it's an incredible country. And things are pretty high life like things are very modern and what. And he said, I was thinking, why would the people of Singapore get excited about some misdirected Bibles that say Operation Restore Hope?

And he said, I went to prayer and he said, I asked the Lord, why? What's this all about? He said, can you believe it? He said, five ships are steaming toward Singapore and we got new orders that came from Bill Clinton change, turn around and go back toward the continent, but stop at the Seychelles. So he said, all of a sudden he said five huge ships.

He said, David, try and turn these things around. It's like an apartment building. He said, it would take a whole day to get the five turned around heading in the other direction. And so here's this flotilla now heading for the Seychelles. He said, interesting though, he said, the word came that of the five ships heading for

the harbor of the Seychelles islands, Seychelles government said, we can only allow for one. You see, it's not the kind of port where they have celebrated crew ships. It's not that kind of an island at all. It's very beautiful like a Hawaiian, but kind of like an undiscovered paradise. So we said, the word came to these five ships, to the captains. You're welcome to come and park one at the dock.

The rest have to remain out in the harbor. And by the way, we don't want your Marines coming onto the land and causing disturbance. We're not ready for that. Secondly, we don't have fresh water supplies for you people. We're just not ready to supply the kind of water that you're going to need because he said, we've been gone from America for quite a while.

Plus, he said, we needed food supplies. No food was going to be available. They weren't ready to supply us with food. And thirdly, we had a lot of garbage we wanted to get rid of. No, we don't want your garbage. He said, we're still mystified.

He said, here I am now talking to you, but he said, I don't know why we're here. But he said, I went to my ship's captain because he said, the one ship that was allowed to dock, he said, was the ship I was on board. He said, I went to the captain and said, sir, repress permission. I need to go ashore. So he got a special permission.

He said, I hired a little taxi. And I said, take me to the US embassy. When he arrived at the US embassy, I found a very lovely secretary who said, I'm sorry, you don't have an appointment and the ambassador's day is quite full. But let me just check with him. Maybe there's a little spot.

So she got off the phone for a moment. She said, you know what? You got five minutes. You're welcome to go in and see the ambassador. So we said, wow, I got to go in and see the ambassador. And he said, I told him, do you have a little mission on this island?

Do you have anything on the go where I could bless them with some Bibles? Whereupon the ambassador said, well, there's one church that I think you could be useful to. He said, it's a friend of mine now. He said he's Canadian ... James Gusjolen from Saskatchewan. And he said, I know where he is today because he said, this morning, he said, I played tennis with him. And he said, by the way, he said, he's still sulking over the fact that he lost. Ha ha. He said, here's the address. He said, and then he said, of course you got the phone call. So he said, here I am.

He said, I want to know, could you use a couple of cases of Bibles? Well, hello, my ship came in. I'm all excited. Yeah, bring them in. Well, you didn't have them with them. You had to go back to the ship now, collect the Bibles and bring them.

I didn't see all this happen, but the Bibles were all brought in and they were put in a secure room just inside the front door of the church. Well, to say the least, like it was an incredibly wonderful opening evening. The number of people who respond, come forward and ex- You found faith in Jesus was nothing short of glorious. They lined up from one side of the altar to the other.

If you've ever been in a church or they have altar calls, maybe you have this picture in your head. I mean, they were lined up clear across. Suddenly, from the little congregation, there were people who came forward to be counselors, to be encouragers. And then I witnessed something that evening.

Here the commander, this military fellow, had not only dropped off the Bibles, but he had come back. He wanted to take in the service. He's sitting in the audience. I never noticed him. But places packed to capacity.

So exciting. And many of them were visitors, of course. So in the midst of all of the excitement, the much ado of people gathering around the front and prayers of being offered, all of a sudden I heard a dialogue going between one of the local church parishioners and James the missionary. And I hear James speaking quite loudly now in saying, I'm really sorry.

But he said, I can't help you. He said, like, we're out here on an island. We don't have everything at our disposal. Whereupon he pointed with his finger over toward the military fellow. And he said, and if it wasn't for that man, he said, we wouldn't have any Bibles at all. Well, the military fellow saw himself being pointed out and he rose to his feet and came forward thinking that he was being called upon. He arrived at the front and now I hear the rest of the story. The little lady from the church said, I want you to meet my newfound friend. She just came and she gave her heart to Jesus. But she just arrived last night from Cuba. And she said, somebody spoke to her today on the street and said, come to church.

So she happily came. She understands English enough to know what was going on in the service and wanted to come forward and respond to the call. But she said, when I tried to give her the Bible, she said, she looked at it and looked back at me and said, no comprende. Pastor ... she doesn't understand English.

She only knows Spanish. And so here's the Marine standing there. And then James says to the Marine, listen, this is not your problem. This is not your problem. I'm sorry to involve you in all this. He said, we don't have a Spanish anything.

Whereupon the military guy says, where's the rest of those Bibles? Well, they're in a little room outside the door there. And the military guy disappears. Are you ready for this? Comes walking down the aisle and he's carrying one of these. Well, we all had these in our hands.

We had tons of them right. He came forward and as he reached our little group there, he turned it so it was easily readable and he put it up into the vision of this little Spanish lady. Whereupon the little lady's eyes lit up and she started speaking all excitedly. It's in Spanish. And so she's reaching out to take it.

I'll never forget how dramatic this was. She reaches out to take the Bible and the commander says, one moment dear, let me tell you a story. Six months ago, he said, I got orders from the president of the United States, to order Bibles and go to Mogadishu. And he said, I had them ordered as Operation Restore Hope.

But he said, trouble happened in Mogadishu. He said, every time you pick up this book and you read it, you remember this. I tried to give your Bible away in Mogadishu. And he said it was not to be. Then he said of all things, the president of the United States and his leadership decided to take the Bibles to Singapore.

He said, that wasn't what was in their minds, but that's how it was. So he said, I'm sitting in the belly of a ship with a thousand Bibles, a thousand in one. He came to Singapore and he said, I don't know what to do. Why would I take these Bibles to Singapore? He said, the next thing that happens, he says the captain announces to the entire ship.

And this is happening on five ships. All right. Here you, here you, the president of the United States has ordered us to turn around and head back, but not to go back to Mogadishu. We're going back to an island called Seychelles. Something will stay tuned, we'll tell you more.

Later on, the message came to the five ships. Only one was allowed to go to the dock. He said, I guess you know which ship was allowed to go to the dock. He said, the one carrying your Bible. He said, then he said, I went to the USM Embassy and he said, no, the ambassador's day was full.

But then he said, there was a little, a little moment. And he said, I got to go in and he said, I explained it to him that I had some Bibles and was there a little church? And he said, the ambassador said, well, yes, I know the pastor. I play tennis with him. And then there was a little bit of an exchange with the pastor even at that moment.

He said, I guess you're feeling bad about the loss of the game. I said, who knows this pastor by name. He said, I showed up this afternoon and I brought these Bibles. So he said, you remember this. He said, well, I was back at Camp Pendleton and I was ordering 1000 Bibles. He said, Jesus was thinking about you.

And he said, Jesus spoke into my heart and said, order one more. And he said, it was clear to me one more but not in English. He said, I sat there praying German. No, Italian. No. He said, I went all around the world.

Well, what's this one by? And he says, then I got this strong impression Spanish. I remember seeing that little lady's eyes light up and then they were filled with tears. He said, well, I was in the United States of America. He said, God was telling me to order a Bible just for you. He said, no, you remember this.

Five ships. Only one was allowed to dock, your boat, your Bible. Now he said, think about this. What if my ship had arrived yesterday? Maybe I still would have ended up bringing the Bibles here. He said, I would not have been present for the 1,000 plus one Bibles.

Only one was Spanish. I'm the only one that knew that it was there. Then he said, here you are at the front of this church. And he said, the pastor pointed at me. He said, I thought he needed something special. He said, turns out he did. He said, I was the only one that knew that your Bible was in that box. He said, every time you read God's Word, you really need to remember.

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Jesus was pursuing you long before you had any desire for him. God was pursuing you, he said, as he gave it to her. You remember, he said, you're very, very special. My message to you today, wherever you're listening in, you don't have to be Spanish to be one of God's favorites. You're already one of his favorites. And God is pursuing you.

I want you to pass on to some friends, maybe who don't know Jesus.

Tell them to tune in and listen to this story.

It just might be a miraculous movement in their heart.

If they hear this story of how God miraculously supplied one Spanish Bible for one little lady, think about it.

God is so good. And he's good for you and he's good to you.

You remember it.

Amen.

God bless you.

God bless you.