

By Howard Clark Kee
Professor Emeritus
Boston University

Children's publishers are seeking to remove the anti-Judaism in Bible translation and church school curriculum that has fostered worldwide anti-Semitism. The past 40 years of biblical and historical studies have changed Christian understanding of Judaism in the time of Jesus and provided new insights about the origins of Christianity which remove the responsibility of Jews as a people for the death of Jesus.

Children's Bibles are peculiarly susceptible to nefarious interpretations because they paraphrase Scripture. The fact that children cannot easily understand the New Testament in terms of its own historical context makes this matter all the more urgent. They do not make clear that Jesus himself was a Jew and that the controversies in the Gospels are between the Jew Jesus, his Jewish followers, and other Jews, such as the Pharisees and Sadducees. It is most important that children understand that references in the New Testament to "the Jews" are not to be equated with the Jews of today.

Religious publishers are taking into account the urgency of the theme *"You shall love your neighbor as you love yourself,"* given that religious conflict lies at the heart of killing throughout the world today: in the Sudan, the former Yugoslavia, the Middle East, as well as here in America at Waco, Ruby Ridge and Oklahoma City.

New studies show that the murder of Jews has been solely based on the fact they were born of a Jewish mother just like Jesus, John the Baptist and other founders of Christianity. What needs to be shown is that Jesus was put to death by the Romans, using their standard mode of execution: *crucifixion.* A small number of Jewish leaders who served the Romans in their rule of the land collaborated with them in his execution, not the Jewish people as a whole.

Reed Children's Books in England stated in recent correspondence to the Institute, "...it was never our intention to issue 'hateful statements' and I would certainly wish to avoid encouraging any religious hostility. We will therefore be altering this text and would assure you that this will be done at the earliest opportunity."

Pauline Books and Media are phasing out their *The Bible for Young People* and *The Bible for Children* and will be writing an entirely new children's Bible which will prevent any anti-Judaism from appearing in their forthcoming edition. *Gospel Light/Regal Books* stated they concur with the Institute's concerns to carefully distinguish between "Jewish" people and "religious" leaders in their *What the Bible is About for Young Explorers* **Examples from Lion Publishing's "The Children's Bible in 365 Stories."**

Page	Prior Edition	Revised Edition
299	The <u>Jewish teachers</u> were strict about keeping the Ten Commandments, including the one that says, 'Do not murder' but <u>there were murderous thoughts</u> against Jesus in their hearts.	The <u>religious teachers</u> were strict about keeping the Ten Commandments, including the one that says, 'Do not murder'. But <u>many of them had murderous thoughts</u> against Jesus in their hearts
358	Jesus was in the north of the country once more, out of the way of <u>the Jews in Judea</u> , who had tried to stone him.	Jesus was in the north of the country once more, out of the way of <u>the rulers in Judea</u> , who had tried to stone him.
359	'We must stop Jesus working such wonders,' <u>the Jewish leaders agreed.</u> 'If we don't, everyone will follow him.' From that day they began to make plans to have Jesus arrested and killed as soon as possible.	'We must stop Jesus working such wonders,' <u>the leaders agreed.</u> 'If we don't, everyone will follow him.' From that day they began to make plans to have Jesus arrested and killed as soon as possible.
364	The <u>Jewish leaders</u> were growing more and more determined to silence Jesus, once and for all.	The <u>religious leaders</u> were growing more and more determined to silence Jesus, once and for all.
381	The next Sunday the disciples were together again and Thomas was with them. The door was locked because they were still afraid of <u>the Jewish leaders</u>	The next Sunday the disciples were together again and Thomas was with them. The door was locked because they were still afraid of <u>the religious leaders</u>
386	Some of <u>the Jewish leaders</u> were listening too and, before long, some burly temple guards seized Peter and John and threw them into prison, by order of the Council	Some of <u>the leaders</u> were listening too and, before long, some burly temple guards seized Peter and John and threw them into prison, by order of the Council.

388	But soon he made enemies among the Jews who hated Jesus. They invented false charges against him and brought him before the council.	But soon he made enemies among those who hated Jesus. They invented false charges against him and brought him before the council.
391	But the Jews who would have once been his friends and allies, became Saul's bitter enemies. They made up their minds to stop his preaching and made a plot to kill him	But his own people who would have once been his friends and allies, became Saul's bitter enemies. They made up their minds to stop his preaching and made a plot to kill him.
401	God has told me that you will be arrested and the Jews will hand you over to the Romans.	God has told me that you will be arrested and handed over to the Romans.
403	But a little group of Jews took a solemn vow not to eat or drink until Paul was dead.	But a little group of Judeans took a solemn vow not to eat or drink until Paul was dead.