

Bible Giant Taps Pentecostal

R. Lamar Vest, former general overseer of the Cleveland, Church of God, has been singled out to lead the American Bible Society.

✖ **Feb. 3, 2009** – A prominent Pentecostal leader was recently voted to lead one of the largest Bible missions groups in the U.S.

Last month, R. Lamar Vest began a three-year term as the new president of the American Bible Society (ABS), a New York-based nonprofit that has translated, published and distributed millions of Bibles since its founding in 1816.

The ABS is known for providing 19th century hotels with Bibles and also supplying soldiers during the Civil War with pocket-sized Bibles.

“I am looking forward to leading the American Bible Society through this period of transition and change,” he said, “and particularly working together with Bible agencies, churches and ministries around the world.”

The ABS selected Vest for his past experience in Bible missions, which, according to the ABS, involves making the Bible available worldwide, in a language and format everybody can understand, so that they may eventually “experience its life-changing message.”

“Dr. Vest is the man for the job. He’s passionate about Bible missions, has the experience that it takes to lead, and was well received by all of our constituents,” Autumn Black, spokeswoman for the ABS, told *Charisma*. “He marks a new day for the American Bible Society and we’re all excited to have him forging the way.”

Vest has been a prominent leader among U.S. evangelicals and

charismatics for years, with experiences that include: former chairman of the National Association of Evangelicals; former general overseer of the Church of God; and former president of Lee University in Cleveland, Tenn.

Strong Pentecostal credentials make Vest unique among past ABS presidents.

Dennis C. Dickerson, chairman of the American Bible Society Board, said he was “thrilled” when he got word that Vest had accepted the position. “Grounded in his deep commitment to the church as well as his many years of fostering new global Bible mission, Dr. Vest will provide strong leadership for the ongoing work and ministry of the American Bible Society,” Dickerson said.

Vest, who according to the ABS said he would serve as long as needed, served as former chairman of the ABS board of trustees and is a current member of the executive committee of the United Bible Societies Global Board.

“As the [American] Bible Society approaches 200 years of Bible ministry, I find its mission more critical and appropriate than ever for today’s complex world,” Vest recently told *The Record Online*, the digital magazine of the ABS. “I’ve watched this 200-year-old organization remain true to its original mission while also seeing that the methods it uses for sharing God’s Word must constantly change.

“God’s Word is as relevant today as tomorrow’s news report,” he said.

According to Vest, of the world’s 6,809 known spoken languages, ABS has been instrumental in providing Scriptures in 2,500 of them.

“I desperately need and pray for God’s help,” he said. “And I ask friends to pray for me ... I’m totally dependent on God’s help to get people involved and faithfully execute our

mission. There are so many people who can't or don't read the Bible; there is so much work yet to be done."