

BOOK REVIEWS

BibleWorks 7. Norfolk, VA: BibleWorks, 2006. Software Program. \$349.00.

BibleWorks has established a reputation as one of the most popular Bible software programs for serious scholars. On its website, the vision statement proposes, among other things, that the “purpose of BibleWorks, LLC is to provide pastors, teachers, students, and missionaries with the tools they need to ‘rightly divide the word of truth’ (2 Timothy 2:15).” “Our goal is to provide a complete package containing the tools most essential for the task of interpreting the Scriptures in the original Greek and Hebrew, and to do it at a price that poor pastors and students can afford” (www.bibleworks.com/about.html).

Version 7 includes new and improved features, such as corrections to lexicon hypertext links. The program has an upgraded user interface, intended to be more intuitive and user-friendly. Also, until now, only *Logos Bible Software* from Libronix Corporation used Unicode, with its Libronix Digital Library System in XML format, or “Extensible Markup Language,” which is part of a set of standards originally designed for encoding documents intended to be viewed in the worldwide web. But with version 7, *BibleWorks* can also export Greek and Hebrew text in Unicode, though the databases themselves do not handle Unicode. The advantage of Unicode is twofold: first, since the computer itself keeps track of the language used and its direction, right-to-left text (e.g., Hebrew, Aramaic) does not need to be typed in reverse, and it wraps correctly regardless of how drastically the margins may be readjusted; second, since character assignments are font independent (e.g., an aleph is an aleph regardless of whether one uses Times Roman, Arial, or Ezra SIL), one is no longer dependent on the fonts that come with a specific Bible program. Another improved feature is a text editor that is compatible with Word and WordPad. The new version also includes a number of new databases, such as editable satellite maps; morphologically analyzed Greek texts of Philo and the Apostolic Fathers; a number of new Bible translations in modern languages, such as Bulgarian, Portuguese, and Polish; and other miscellaneous books.

Many features have now become standard in the leading Bible software programs, such as the ability to search morphologically tagged Greek or Hebrew texts, to do sentence diagramming, and to conduct graphical queries. Also, virtually all programs now offer maps and language-study tools. Nevertheless, there are a number of features that *BibleWorks 7* offers as part of the standard package that other programs either do not offer or only sell separately. For example, *BibleWorks* now includes the Targums and Bible translations in thirty-two modern languages.

Although the plethora of features in any Bible program entails a steep learning curve for the novice, *BibleWorks* is impressively user-friendly. When the mouse cursor is on a Hebrew or Greek word, a pop-up window appears, giving its dictionary form and morphological analysis. Alternatively, the Analysis Window gives conveniently arranged access to lexicons, grammars, and translation notes. A click of the mouse on the appropriate icon toggles the Browse Window between looking at a verse in as many parallel versions as one wishes and scrolling through one single version. A left double click of the mouse on a word produces a list in the Search Window of all the occurrences of a form in that database. The program also provides a “getting started” window for new users, full documentation, and online help. Registered users also have access to *BibleWorks* forums, where they can interact with each other and even upload and download individually created databases, e.g., a translation of the Qur^ʿan.

Personally, I would summarize the advantage of *BibleWorks* over other Bible programs as a combination of three features: speed, the ability to allow users to create their own text databases, and the ability to concord texts. Speed is important because the benefit of computers is not in the tasks performed, but in the speed at which these are accomplished (e.g., a competent scholar could list all words in the Bible that match a given morphological pattern without the aid of computers, but it might require many months of labor). *BibleWorks* performed searches much faster than a competitor program installed in

my computer. As for the other features, both *BibleWorks* and *Accordance* (from Oak Tree Software) allow users to create concordances, but *Logos* does not. Also, whereas all Bible programs sell text databases entered by someone else, *BibleWorks* is probably the best program for those who wish to enter their own texts—a task that is not necessarily easy, but easier in *BibleWorks* than in most other programs. This feature was originally designed to help missionaries, but is also useful to scholars. Although anyone with some background knowledge can study and learn from the research that others have done, real cutting-edge research often involves doing something that others have not yet done, and the latter may require creating one's own database and concordance. Therefore, *BibleWorks* allows the most flexibility for the user to adapt it for his or her own research projects. (Another program that allows the creation and concordance of texts is *Bibloi*, formerly *Bible Windows*, by Silver Mountain Software, which has the advantage of being able to handle Unicode databases. Since it can read Libronix databases, it is a good alternative as an add-on for those who currently use *Logos*, but are unhappy about its limitations. Silver Mountain Software also offers *Workplace Pack* for use with the *Thesaurus Linguae Graecae* and *Packard Humanities Institute* CD-ROMs.)

I should also point out some areas where other programs do better. First, to my knowledge, *Accordance* is the only Bible software that works on both Macintosh and Windows platforms. Also, *Gramcord-Lite* is the only software package that includes the same morphologically analyzed Bible texts in the original languages for handheld computers that run Palm or one of the stripped-down versions of Windows. In addition, although *BibleWorks* offers some add-on modules, a number of databases are not (yet) available, such as the morphologically tagged Mishna and Hebrew Inscriptions, both available in *Accordance*, or biblical texts analyzed for syntax, available in *Logos*. Nor does it offer the extensive commentary sets and other libraries that *Logos* offers. The latter program is best suited for those wishing to quickly consult a vast array of secondary literature in digital format. But *BibleWorks* is still a good choice for those using computers with Windows and wishing to focus on cutting-edge research on the primary sources in Greek, Hebrew, and some dialects of Aramaic.

All in all, *BibleWorks 7* is an excellent program. It is well designed, and meets the company's stated goal of providing tools for biblical research for pastors, scholars, students, and missionaries. One might quibble over whether the price of version 7 meets the other company goal of being affordable to "poor pastors and students." However, it is competitively priced in comparison with other Bible software programs, and it is definitely worth what is included in the basic package. I would strongly encourage those who own an earlier version to upgrade. For those who own a different Bible software program, the decision of whether or not to switch depends on what type of research one does, i.e., whether the current program is adequate for one's needs. Anyone looking for a Bible program that handles the original languages will be more than well served by *BibleWorks*.

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Brand, Leonard, and Don S. McMahon. *The Prophet and Her Critics*. Nampa, ID: Pacific Press, 2005. 128 pp. Paper, \$11.99.

As its name suggests, this volume is another in that series of independent monographs by Seventh-day Adventist authors interested in clarifying the legacy of Ellen G. White. Disparate and memorable contributions to that series include Walter Rea's *The White Lie* (Turlock, CA: M & R Publishing, 1982); and Ronald Numbers's *Prophets of Health: A Study of Ellen G. White* (New York: Harper & Row, 1976). The present volume gives ample attention to the contributions and perspectives of these two writers, as well as to that of Jonathan Butler and his article "The World of E. G. White and the End of the World," which appeared in 1979 in *Spectrum* (10/2: 2:13). The book's major question may be put as follows: Does the data available discredit White's claims to be a specially supernaturally inspired prophetess/messenger of God?

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