

RELIGION

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Word of God

An Eau Claire woman who restores Bibles will be featured on television Sunday

By Alyssa Waters
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Julia Stanley, the daughter of a minister, holds a special place in her heart for the Good Book. For the past six years, she's been fixing copies of the Bible in her home for people who have worn theirs ragged. She re-glues bindings, fixes pages and gives special care to covers.

This weekend she will get national recognition on television for her unique work. The American Bible Society came to Eau Claire in March to interview her about her craft. Although Stanley said she hates having her picture taken — or standing in front of any camera — she admitted it was an interesting day.

"I'd personally not have the camera in my face. ... It wasn't a fun morning, but the crew was really nice, and the producer was great," she said.

Stanley works with century-old Bibles from day to day, but she credits the modern-day Internet for connecting her with producers from the American Bible Society.

"They were looking for people who worked with Bibles in their everyday life, she said.

"(The producer) thought it was really neat because it is such a niche," Stanley said. "He thought it would fit really well into one of their shows."

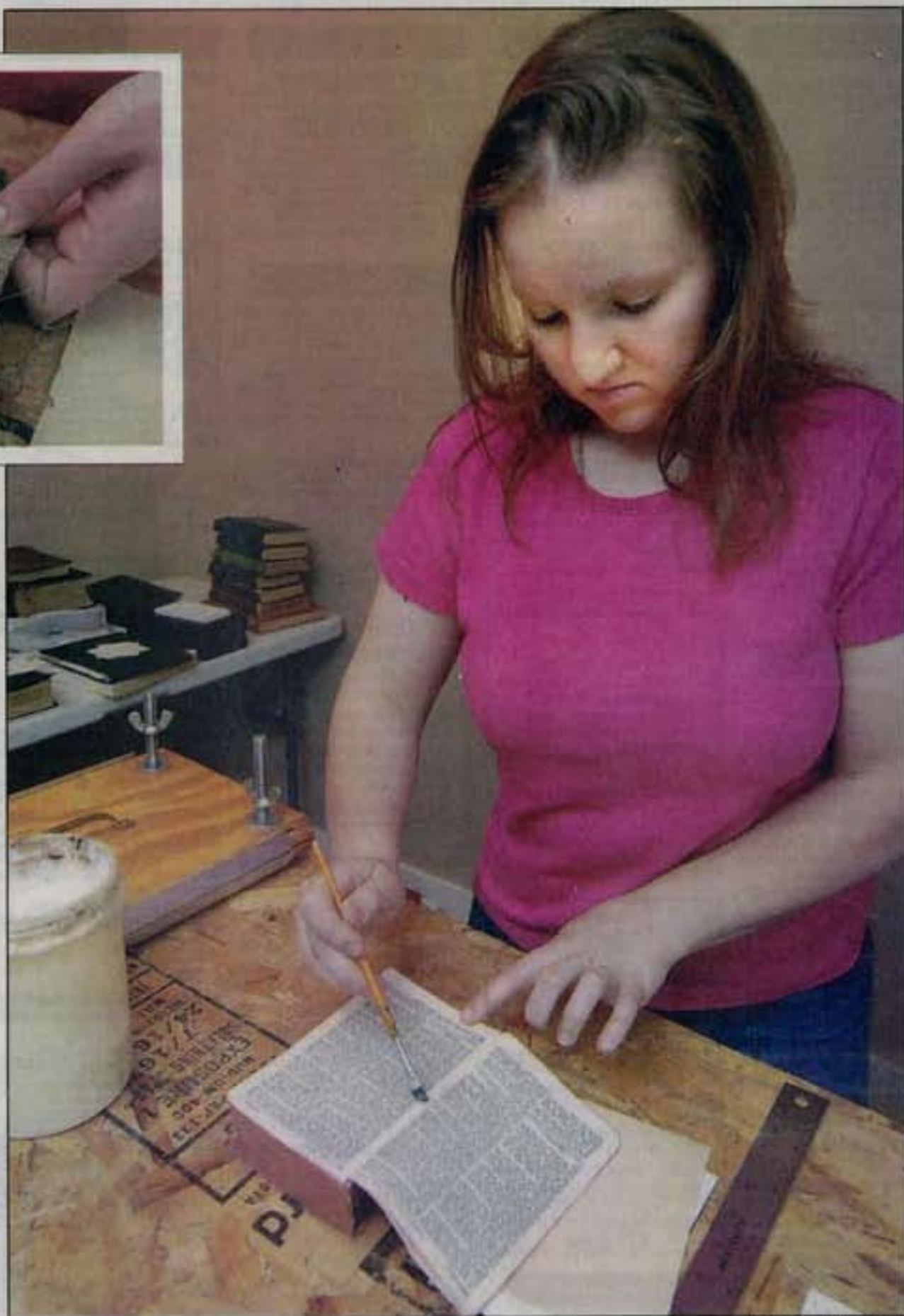
Robert Hodgson, who has worn many hats with the American Bible Society since 1991 and who now serves as dean of the society's Nida Institute for Biblical Scholarship, said he viewed the segment about Stanley and her work.

"It's a story that really resonates with us," he said. "This is such a wonderfully biblical moment for us — that there are all kinds of stories in the Bible of the care of biblical books.

"There is wonderful precedent in the Bible for what (Stanley) is doing."

A handful of biblical stories recite instances of apostles caring for and preserving their books.

In his second letter to Timothy, Paul writes, "When you come, bring the cloak which I left at Troas with



Above: Julia Stanley of Eau Claire glued pages from a Bible at her shop in Eau Claire. The Bible belongs to a 92-year-old California woman who was having the Bible bound and covered so it could be buried with her upon death. Stanley, who restores books — mostly Bibles — will be featured on a show by the American Bible Society. **Inset:** Stanley removed the binding from a Bible that was given to the owner when she was 10 years old.

Carpus, and the books, especially the parchments" (2 Timothy 4:13).

Also, like Julia, those in the Bible work in special ways to serve the Lord.

"Obviously she's continuing an ancient tradition," Hodgson said. "She's impacting more lives than she will probably ever know."

Stanley credits God for helping her to hone her skill and help others.

"It's really cool to do Bibles because they have a lot of notes in them and a lot of sentimental value," she said.

Stanley said this is her way of getting to fellowship with Christians around the world.

She's received Bibles from people in almost all 50 states and even overseas. She worked on a Latin Bible printed in 1570 from a customer in Singapore. She's worked on Bibles as large as 15 inches by 17 inches and as small as 2 inches by 3 inches.

She worked on a Bible from a 92-year-old California woman, who received it from her mother when she was 10 years old. The cover was broken and worn.

"She's getting it done because it's a family heirloom," Stanley said. "It's been her Bible since she was 10, and the cover is pretty much gone. She wants to be buried with it."

But the Bible she learned the most from came from a pastor in Minnesota.

"He had written (in the margins) how God had worked in his life — when he was saved and how God called him to different places," she said. "It was just really cool. I need to write down the blessings God has given me in my life."

Although Stanley's work, which she considers a form of art, is stressful on her hands and back, she will continue to fix copies of God's Word as long as he allows her to meet the physical requirements.

"There are a few side effects, like carpal tunnel and needing to keep my hands not broken and cut," she said. "It's good to have this (work) for the rest of my life."

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Staff photos by Dan Reiland