

David Trobisch, NT scholar, directs collections for Museum of the Bible: People

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David Trobisch, a New Testament scholar and former Heidelberg University professor, acts as a roving ambassador to academia and top-rate museums. He's employed by the Green family of Oklahoma City—the plaintiffs in the U.S. Supreme Court's Hobby Lobby case.

The family financed the Museum of the Bible, set to open in 2017 near the National Mall in Washington, D.C. It will showcase biblical artifacts from the 40,000-piece Green collection, one of the largest in private hands. The Greens hired Trobisch earlier this year as director of the collection. He does not run the museum, but in addition to enlarging, curating, and cataloging the trove, he participates in deciding which items will go into the museum, and how.

Trobisch, 56, splits his time between Germany, where his wife, son, and two grandchildren live, and a home in Springfield, Missouri. He's part of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and grew up speaking four languages in Cameroon, where his parents worked as Lutheran missionaries.

Trobisch met the Greens when he asked permission to look at their 850 ancient New Testament documents. Soon, he was advising the family on acquisitions. "My strategy was to buy fewer items but only the highest quality," he said.

He said Hobby Lobby chain president Steve Green is open to new scholarship: "We agreed that if I say something about the Bible he disagrees with and I can show him the quote, he will concede. If I cannot support it by a quote, I will concede."

Green also has curiosity. "He's a Bible freak," Trobisch said. "Like me." —Religion News Service