

People don't know their (CEV) Bible

By [John Dart](#)

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I lament biblical illiteracy as much as anyone, but I think surveys sometimes load the dice against scripture when illustrating the public's unfamiliarity with the Bible. A recent example was [noted by the American Bible Society](#) as it released *The Freedom Bible* in connection with the 9/11 anniversary.

People were asked the source for this quote: "We often suffer, but we are never crushed. Even when we don't know what to do, we never give up."

The choices (and the tally for each) were Martin Luther King Jr. (699), George W. Bush (402), Captain America (328), the Bible (306) and "other" (837).

The Bible was edged out by Captain America?

Well, the ABS/Harris online survey answered by more than 2,500 adults was taken in early August, not long after a film starring the old comic-book hero hit movie theaters.

The quote, however, is from 2 Corinthians 4:8. If

"the Apostle Paul" were offered instead of "the Bible," would a few more people have guessed correctly?

Maybe not. The survey drew the verse from the *Contemporary English Version* of the Bible. The CEV sounds different from other translations.

It shares only one key word--"crushed"--with the NRSV: "We are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not driven to despair." Likewise, the NIV has only "crushed" in common with the CEV. The KJV includes none of the same key words.

The Bible (and perhaps MLK) surely would have received more responses if the survey's quote included verse 7, which begins,

"We have this treasure in clay jars"--a metaphor used by Paul as well as by some Old Testament prophets.