

Christian influencers read Bible to wake up ‘apathetic church’

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NASHVILLE, Tenn.—Bunni Pounds, a political fundraiser-turned-activist from Texas who lost a 2018 bid for U.S. Congress, was visiting the Museum of the Bible in Washington when she says God spoke to her.

At the time, Pounds told attendees at a recent National Religious Broadcasters convention in Nashville, she’d been thinking about Ezra, the biblical prophet who read the law of Moses aloud to the Israelites as they returned to Jerusalem from exile in Babylon and began rebuilding the city’s walls.

“I had an encounter with the Lord about Ezra, and it has never left me,” she said. What’s more, Pounds said, the United States needs the same kind of spiritual rebuilding as the ancient Israelites.

That idea led her to organize a week of public Bible reading in the nation’s capital.

“Wouldn’t it be awesome if our national leaders from all spheres of influence, demographics, and denominations would humble themselves in front of the American people and tell them their dependence is in the Bible?” she said. “And then call the American people back to discipleship and Bible reading.”

Leaders across America set to pray

This spring, from April 18 to 25, a group of pastors, politicians, authors, and other Christian leaders—nearly 500 in all—will read the Bible aloud

from cover to cover. Fittingly, the Museum of the Bible will host the readings from 9 in the morning till 9 at night, all of which will be livestreamed. Each reader will recite Scripture for about 10 minutes.

Pounds said it took about a year to recruit readers and assign them Bible passages. Organizers tried to match readers to passages that fit their ministry goals, she said. The project cost about \$2.5 million to pull off.

Franklin Graham, head of Samaritan's Purse, a Christian humanitarian group, will read the story of the Good Samaritan. Leaders from Prison Fellowship will read from the Book of Exodus.

Mike Huckabee, ambassador to Israel, will read from Genesis 12, which includes a passage about Israel often cited by Christian Zionists: "I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse."

Secretary of Agriculture Brook Rollins and former Secretary of State Mike Pompeo are also scheduled to read.

Senator Ted Cruz and his father, Rafael Cruz, an evangelical pastor, will read from the Book of Ezra, while leaders from Turning Point USA, whose co-founder Charlie Kirk was assassinated last year, will read the Book of Job.

"We're trying to have really cool people read parts of the Bible that people think are uncool," she said. "And we want to inspire them that every word of God is precious, and we can't just cut out these sections of Scripture and not interact with it."

Among the 475 readers, all of whom will use an [easy-read edition](#) of the King James Bible, are Govs. Greg Abbott of Texas, Jim Pillen of Nebraska, Kevin Stitt of Oklahoma, and Sarah Huckabee Sanders of Arkansas, along with former Wisconsin Gov. Scott Walker and Micah Beckwith, the current lieutenant governor of Indiana, who is also a pastor.

Three U.S. senators—Cruz, James Lankford, and Jim Banks—and 16 current and former U.S. representatives are also scheduled to take part.

Other readers include Troy Miller, president of the National Religious Broadcasters; author David Barton; pastor and author Mark Batterson; Joel Berry of the conservative Christian satire site Babylon Bee; former U.S. Ambassador Sam Brownback; Carlos Campo, the CEO of the Museum of the Bible; megachurch pastor Matt Chandler; Christian musician John Cooper of Skillet; former Trump lawyer Jenna Ellis; and the Rev. Samuel Rodriguez of the National Hispanic Christian Leadership Conference.

The event will kick off with a service at Washington’s National Community Church, where Batterson is pastor.

Encouraging others to read Bible, get involved

Pounds, who will read her favorite chapters of the Gospel of John (16 and 17, she said), hopes the event will encourage Americans to pick up the Bible. Pounds also said she hopes to wake up what she called an “apathetic church.” She believes too few Christians pay attention to the Bible outside of church services.

“We’re binge-watching Netflix and Amazon Prime and playing games all the time and not living our calling,” she said.

About 1 in 4 Americans read the Bible at least once a week, [according to a 2025 report](#) from the American Bible Society, while 41 percent read the Bible at least three or four times a year. More than half read the Bible twice a year or less, including 39 percent who say they never read the Bible.

Still, Bible sales are [booming](#), with more than 18 million copies sold last

year.

After her failed campaign for Congress, Pounds founded [Christians Engaged](#), a nonprofit that seeks to advocate for “biblical civil responsibility,” according to the group’s website.

She told the religious broadcasters in February she was tired of pastors and ministry leaders complaining that not enough Christians were voting in primaries and local elections. The organization asks followers to “pray, vote, and engage.”

The nonprofit has already mobilized a million Christian votes, according to Pounds, who hopes to reach 2 million in 2026. The group produces podcasts and video classes to encourage Christians to get involved in politics and brings young leaders to Washington for training events. “We even have a full campaign school for every Christian to run for office,” she told attendees.

The daughter of a Seventh-day Adventist pastor, Pounds said she had a spiritual awakening as a teenager while attending a concert given by the famed Christian singer [Carman](#), and that she once hoped to be a missionary. Now she sees her calling as helping others to use their faith to impact society. And that includes voting.

“We vote because it’s a powerful and tangible way to love our neighbors,” she told the NRB convention. “We vote in every election to advocate for laws and leaders that will create greater freedom and flourishing for our neighbors and society.”