

Please send comments, questions or suggestions to
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- 1) A diary moment: JUNE 2011
- 2) The King's Speech
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1) For your diaries:

Your prayers and presence are requested.

16th-18th June

Liverpool Hope University

A unique conference bringing together all who are committed to and concerned about
Christian education in our nation

The 200th anniversary of the National Society, 200 years since the birth of Nathaniel
Woodward. We at the SCA are not having our usual School Chaplains' Conference so we can
all go to this one instead. Please put the dates in your diary and book to go!

2) The King's Speech (a film for chaplains?)

Until the film came out probably not many of us would have heard of Lionel Logue, speech
therapist to George VI. Rightly and understandably it is George, first as Duke of York and
then as King, who is in the public eye. The timing of the reign, with war looming and the right
figurehead needed for these difficult years, meant that George's role was all the more
important. The film brought out Logue's crucial significance in supporting and affirming
George. Without his expertise behind the scenes the king could not deliver what he was called
to do.

Perhaps there are similarities with Chaplaincy. Chaplains are not in the limelight and our work
is often hidden. We have a distinct, unusual and personal relationship with others, some of
whom play public roles and all of whom are important. To the individual our work can, by the
grace of God, be transforming.

It emerges during the film that Logue's skill comes from experience, not from formal training.
But he has the confidence to recognise his own expertise. Chaplains likewise perhaps can have
confidence in the insights that our experience brings to a situation. We may, perhaps
surprisingly to ourselves (and to others), grow to be experts in pastoral and spiritual situations.
Let's be thankful for the relationships and opportunities that come our way; who knows what
God may be doing with them?

3) An assembly on the King James Bible, prepared by Mr Ben Jones of Alleyn's School (the material could be used in a variety of contexts)

Imagine...

- Mr X being described by Miss Y as the 'Salt of the Earth'
- Dr A yelling at a naughty year 7 boy 'Don't put words in my mouth'
- Miss B politely discussing a year 8 girl with another member of staff 'she's a law unto herself'
- Dr Y praising his form who are going from 'strength to strength'
- Mr H is heard saying to his U12 hockey team 'it's like the blind leading the blind'

So what are we quoting?

- Pop stars quote it
- Shakespeare made 1350 references to it.
- It has sold 1 billion copies since publication
- It is a key reason why English is the language of the internet
- According to the atheist Richard Dawkins, not to know it 'is to be, in some small way, barbarian'
- And this year we celebrate 400 years of its publication.

What are we talking about? This. (Hold up copy) The King James Bible.

Look at these. (Copies spread across table) All different translations of the Bible. Different formats, languages, styles. Some for studying, some for reading out loud, some youth versions, a wide choice of Bible translations. Having such things in front of me in the 16th century would have been a dangerous business. It was for doing just this, translating a Bible so that the common man – people like you and me - could read it in English rather than Latin, that William Tyndale was tied to a stake and throttled to death. His last words were "Lord! Open the King of England's eyes."

And sure enough his prayer was answered. King James – a man who it is said had strange bulging eyes and apparently waddled like a duck - was a man determined to unite people. With this aim in mind, he once gathered the greatest men in Scotland to the centre of Edinburgh and ordered them to walk through the streets all holding hands with each other. And he got them to do it for a full day!

Well it was in this aim of uniting people that James I of England agreed to work on a new translation. A learned man, he recognised that importance of a good translation – after all here was God speaking to man – and so his rules of translation were simple: be faithful to original. And seven years later, in 1611 – 400 years ago - after the faithful toil of 47 academics from Oxford and Cambridge the King James Bible was published.

What's our reaction to it? [point to Bible] Well it looks and sounds rather old doesn't it? But interestingly it has *always* appeared old – even to the people who saw it in 1611! No-one had used 'thee' and 'thou' in everyday language for ages, and, publishing pages in a gothic font with fancy ornamental capitals at the beginning of each chapter, was already archaic! But while this decision on style back-fired to begin with, it became its great success. It quickly looked like it had always been with us.

It is hard to overestimate the impact that the King James version of the Bible has had on the Western World. Talking about the English language, Melvyn Bragg states "There is no doubt in my mind that the King James Bible and not Shakespeare set this language on its path to become a universal language on a scale unprecedented before or since."

One reason for its influence was our love of travel. Its publication was at a time when Britain was busy travelling and trading with the rest of the world: The Pilgrim Fathers, set sail for America, taking the Bible with them. British sailors took the Bible on voyages around the globe to India, Africa, Australia and New Zealand.

And as Britain increased its footprint on the globe, so did the impact of this Bible.

Today English is spoken by almost 3 billion people and the KJV is one reason why English is now a world language, and the main language of the internet.

Another reason for its great influence is its wonderful style: TS Eliot, arguably the most important poet of the 20th century, spoke rather grandly of the King James version's 'auditory imagination . . . a feeling for syllable and rhythm, penetrating far below the conscious levels of thought and feeling, invigorating every word'. Praise indeed.

Tennyson considered Bible reading "an education in itself"

Charles Dickens called the New Testament "the very best book that ever was or ever will be known in the world."

Andrew Motion, Poet Laureate until 2009 says "The King James Bible is a cornerstone of our culture and our language"

It has had effect on other books by great writers such as John Milton, John Bunyan, William Wordsworth, D. H. Lawrence. Even Philip Pullman The author of His Dark Materials, (a staunch atheist) says that it is the major influence on his writing style.

Its language has influenced music. The words of the King James Bible found their way into hymns, Afro-American spirituals songs which have flowed into soul music, into the blues, even into pop music.

It is these ideas lead Niall Fergusson, Professor of History at Harvard University to state that the King James Bible has an even more important place in our heritage than Newton's laws of Gravity and Charles Darwin's Origin of the Species.

This is some book. And I urge you to read some of it.

We must remember of course the motivation of the translators. More than beautiful, rich language, more than inspiring speeches and song and language, they believed that the bible was the Word of God, which, beside Jesus is the primary method of God speaking to man. They trusted as Christians do today that the Bible speaks of the problem of man's rejection of God, the solution found through the death and resurrection of Jesus and course the hope of eternity. That is what motivated Tyndale, and why he would urge us to read it.

It would therefore be appropriate to leave the last words of this assembly to the King James Version of the Bible. This, short passage taken from Revelation, includes a claim about the Bible itself and reminds us readers of God's promise for the future:

4 And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away.

5 And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. And he said unto me, Write: for these words are true and faithful.

Possibly could be included

And this power has been recognised and continued to be recognised by our greatest men and women.

After Martin Luther King said, 'I have a dream...' he quoted directly from Isaiah who looks forward to God's promised to those who follow him, 'the rough places will be made plain and the crooked places will be made straight, and the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together'.

In his inaugural address, John F. Kennedy also quoted from Isaiah, chapter 58, verse 6: 'Let both sides unite to heed, in all corners of the earth, the command of Isaiah — to "undo bthe heavy burdens, and to let the oppressed go free." ' A quotation from Romans, chapter 12, verse 12 appears in another resounding passage: 'Now the trumpet summons us again - not as a call to bear arms, though arms we need — not as a call to battle, though embattled we are - but as a call to bear the burden of a long twilight struggle, year in and year out, "rejoicing in hope, patient in tribulation", a struggle against the common enemies of man: tyranny, poverty, disease and war itself.'

Great words aren't they?

4) Book suggestions

For students interested in Narnia C. S. Lewis' "Letters to Children" is a very accessible, positive, gentle, introduction to the style and depth of the great man...

For those not aware of the recent world-wide growth of religion "God is Back: How the Global Rise of Faith is Changing the World" by John Micklethwait and Adrian Wooldridge is a fascinating, stimulating and important

5) Events suggestions

Try a Lecture...

Alley's school has now held two "Annual Chaplaincy Lectures". The aim is to show that Christians can engage intellectually with issues. It has proved surprisingly popular, due to the calibre of the speakers and to the popularity of the public lecture format. Earlier in January, Alister McGrath brilliantly addressed over 400 people on "Why God is not dead – reflections on the new atheism." A successful lecture is a gift to the school and helps further conversations to happen. Worth pondering.