

From the Group Chief Executive

Few years have given the Bible as much profile outside the Church as 2011, the 400th anniversary of the King James Bible. Through the setting up of the King James Bible Trust, Bible Society has played the central role of celebrating the enduring legacy of the Bible in English. Our patron, HM The Queen, devoted most of her Christmas broadcast to the KJB at the end of 2010. TV and radio programmes put the text into the public square in ways that could hardly be imagined in any other year.

We thank God for the King James and other Bibles that connect with the culture and speak into contemporary society. Our work with Theos, the public theology think tank, has influenced debate around a number of current issues and our association with the Biblefresh project has helped the Church to have more confidence in its own text, the Bible. In the last six years the output of full Bibles from Bible Society has grown from 700,000 to 1.9 million copies, mainly for export.

These have all been activities that I have been taking an interest in during the year. But much of the credit goes to the strong team that we have at Bible Society. Stuart Rivers leads our Enterprise arm that also owns the Christian Resources Exhibition that brings us closer to the churches that we serve. And in January, Paul Woolley joined us from heading up Theos to leading our Charity arm. Our senior team has performed well. I would like to thank the staff who work with me for all their dedication and the talent that they bring so expertly to our work and mission.

This has been the last full year that Philip Poole has been our Deputy Chief Executive. He has been on the senior team of Bible Society for 22 years and in his current position for nine years. I want to pay tribute to his consistent hard work, strong commitment to the Bible cause, great loyalty to the staff and a deep spirituality. We are going to miss his wisdom on many issues and for me in particular, he is irreplaceable. The Bible Society



James Catford
Group Chief Executive

staff and Board, as well as the fellowship of United Bible Societies around the world, wish both him and his wife Ruth a long and fulfilling retirement.

This year has been another year of growth and, even in a very tough economic climate, our donation income has risen again. Many of our programmes have reached maturity and are helping the Bible become more available, accessible and credible both at home and overseas. However, we face many obstacles at home from those who do not like the Bible playing a role in national life, and abroad there are challenges, particularly in the Middle East. Please pray with us that we will be able to see this changing landscape be one of opportunity and hope as the Bible touches more and more lives.

The King James Bible celebrations continue though 2011 and there is much to be thankful for in this remarkable translation. Many have commented on how it shaped our language with expressions like 'scapegoat' and phrases such as 'fall flat on your face' and 'gave up the ghost'. The Bible has also been significant in shaping our culture and language; and social reforms like the abolition of slavery were made with the Bible as the underpinning text. However, in celebrating the beauty of its language, we should not neglect the spiritual impact of the Bible on our society and the English speaking countries around the world. So why has the KJB left such a legacy?

The writer and English professor C S Lewis said 'is it not possible that the critics whose philosophy forbids them to attach much value to the matter of scripture are tempted to attribute to rhythm, and indeed to style in general, more than is due - as Mr Pickwick and his friends were agreed that whatever had so affected them at the party, it couldn't have been the wine?' *English Literature in the Sixteenth Century* (OUP 1954)