

NEWS FROM BIBLE SOCIETY

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THROWING THE BOOK AT POVERTY AND INJUSTICE

An Englishman in New York. Back on 'Super Tuesday' at the start of February, I found myself in Manhattan amidst all the hullabaloo created by the Presidential primaries. As a student of American politics who's been known to watch the results right through the night, I was in clover. Obama or Clinton (both words that my spell check doesn't recognise) are now household names and for whoever wins the White House, Democrat or Republican, history will be in the making.

Rightly in my opinion, Bible Society doesn't take a position on party politics. Under charity law we can't be partisan in campaigning for anyone and a long-cherished clause in our Royal Charter limits what we can take a stand on publicly.

But that doesn't stop us from saying that people *should* have a view on the social and political issues of our day. We don't take a position ourselves, but you should. And we want to see Christians, and Christian thinking, in all the main political parties. We're working for this through our office at Westminster and in the Welsh Assembly and through our support for the National Prayer Breakfast.

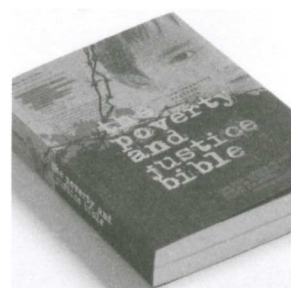
Some might think it controversial, but Bible Society has just published a special *Poverty and Justice Bible* to highlight these pressing issues of our day. It's a simple idea in that we've taken a conventional Bible translation (the Contemporary English Version) and marked up in orange highlighter pen the passages and verses that speak most clearly about poverty, riches, justice and oppression.

We feel confident to do this because we're convinced that politicians of all shades care about these issues and that the Bible speaks on the things that really matter to people today. Rick Warren, Bono and Jim Wallis have all said that there are between 2,000 and 3,000 verses in the Bible that talk about the poor. 'That's a lot of airtime' says Bono. 'So how could I have missed them?' asks Warren. With *The Poverty and Justice Bible* he won't have to. And nor will you or your church, youth group, or friends and family if you get your hands on a copy.

When I said earlier that Bible Society does not take a position on social and political issues, but you must, I should have said 'but you DO'. That's what Bible Society has been grappling with recently. If you say nothing or do nothing for the poor and those who suffer from injustice then you are taking a position: one of tolerance and tacit approval of what others are experiencing around the world and in our own country.

That's why we've produced *The Poverty and Justice Bible* because to not take a position on these issues IS a position. And it's one that doesn't sit too well with the teaching of the very book we are engaging with. At Bible Society we're not going to make a habit of picking off world issues and producing a whole Bible devoted to them. But with poverty and justice everyone of every political colour wants to do something about it. On that we're all agreed.

To order a copy of *The Poverty and Justice Bible* call 0800 6525369 or visit the website at www.biblesources.org.uk



NOSTALGIA ISN'T WHAT IT USED TO BE

At the start of the year Bible Society sponsored the launch of the 2011 Trust, which has been set up to celebrate the Bible in English at the 400th anniversary of the King James Version of the Bible in 1611. We're providing some of the trustees for the project, a small seed grant to get it started and a half-time administrator. Others involved are the Dean of Westminster Abbey, the head of the British Museum and Lord Salisbury. The chair is Frank Field MP and the patron is HRH the Prince of Wales.

At the launch in Poet's Corner in Westminster Abbey, the speakers included the Dean, the Bishop of London and Lord Melvyn Bragg. They all spoke about the enduring legacy of the King James Bible and its contribution to our civilisation, language and the arts. A large number of activities are being planned for 2011 and we invite you to send us your own ideas and suggestions. Most of all we want as many individuals, schools, groups and churches to organise their own events. What could you do in your own village, town, city or church?

The 2011 Trust is an arts and education trust and we look forward to celebrating the Bible's impact on the English-speaking world, in this and other nations. In looking back with thanks we also look forward with hope.

For more details visit the website at www.2011trust.org or contact us at Bible Society: contactus@biblesociety.org.uk
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