

News from Bible Society

Transmission is provided free by Bible Society. On this page we update you on other parts of our mission to make the Bible heard within our culture.

James Catford

Chief Executive



Hear Dallas Willard on 20 May

Why has Dallas Willard been ranked alongside the likes of Martin Luther, John Wesley, Dietrich Bonhoeffer and CS Lewis? I think it's because he is reshaping our understanding of the Kingdom and the gospel of Jesus Christ. Few Christian leaders have a mind that can break the mould in the way that Dallas has. But, as the American writer John Ortberg says, 'his heart is better'.

Now you can come and hear Dallas speak at a special one-day conference in Swindon. What's exciting for us at Bible Society is that he will be extending his teaching on *The Divine Conspiracy* into the public square. *Transmission* readers will know that this is a field that we are most interested in reaching with the Bible.

I've had the privilege of knowing Dallas for almost 15 years and I honestly wonder where I would be today if God hadn't put him into my life. We both serve on the board of Renovaré, an initiative started by the Christian leader Richard Foster, author of *Celebration of Discipline*. He has visited us three or four times in the UK and his impact on me has, in turn, made an impact on Bible Society.

This is a rare opportunity to hear Dallas Willard and there are no plans for him to return to the UK. The event 'Knowing Christ Today: Personal religion, public reality?' takes place at our offices in Swindon on 20 May. See the advert (p. 4) in this issue of *Transmission* for details and bring your colleagues and friends. Places are sure to go fast.

Hyperactive or delivering on our mission?

The last few months have seen an unprecedented level of activity at Bible Society. Our investment in reaching the

wider culture with the Bible is paying off and there's much to celebrate as God opens numerous doors for mission and ministry. Take some examples. Our President **Bishop Tom Wright** has spoken to an influential gathering inside Parliament through our links to the public theology think-tank Theos. And *Sunday Times* columnist **Rod Liddle** chaired the launch of our new initiative, *Susa*, to get more Christian young people involved in politics.

Meanwhile, actor **David Suchet** and *Wallace and Gromit* creator **Nick Park** have helped judge our film competition *The Pitch* to get the Bible into the movies. And we've met privately with **Prince Charles** as patron of the 2011 Trust, chaired by **Frank Field MP**, which we set up to celebrate the 400th anniversary of the King James Bible next year.

Of course, most of our money still goes overseas and we've sponsored the second Africa Prayer Breakfast – to coincide with the Africa Union Summit in Addis Ababa – involving senior Africa leaders and past heads of state. And the Christian Research Association that we took ownership of a couple of years ago has won several major new clients, including some from overseas.

If you've been reading *Transmission* for some years now, you will be especially glad to know that Bible Society is punching above its weight these days. Some may say we're doing too much, but I'd much rather they say that than we're doing too little. The vision and mandate that we have is audacious and the level of output we have reached is like a mini re-launch. That's one reason why we've taken on a bold new corporate identity or brand. It's ten years since we brought in the 'star burst' logo and we want to make the Bible more central to what we are known for – hence the use of the distinctive 'B'. I hope you like it.

Finding meaning in the movies

I write this midway between the media frenzy of the BAFTAs and its bigger American cousin, the Oscars.

It's been fascinating of late to notice Christian and spiritual themes coming

even more to the fore on the big screen in blockbuster films. There's been conflict over the way we treat creation and its people – reverence or industrial rape – in *Avatar*. Meanwhile, heaven – or an individual vision of it – features prominently in *The Lovely Bones*. Finally, the Bible itself is the star of the post-apocalypse story *The Book of Eli*. God is at the movies.

So Bible Society's expansion and re-launch of our *Reel Issues* resource – sandwiched on 3 March between the BAFTAs and the Oscars – is timely. Now FREE, this online resource helps groups use opportunities to watch and chat about films with their friends – and consider biblical angles on themes.

Reel Issues has also taken a leaf out of *Avatar's* book in moving into three dimensions. At www.reelissues.org.uk it now offers three types of discussion guides for long and short chats, as well as resources aimed at young people.

Whether you are looking for a new form of outreach to youth or ways of connecting with people on the church fringe, *Reel Issues* might be just what you are looking for.

To celebrate the re-launch of *Reel Issues*, LoveFilm is offering a 30-day free trial of their DVD rental service, plus two free cinema tickets. Visit www.reelissues.org.uk to pick up your exclusive promotional code.