



The Connection

A Ministry of the Office of Church Relations at Union University



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KJV 400: Legacy and Impact: An Interview with Dr. Ray Van Neste

2011 marks the 400th anniversary of the King James Version of the Bible. This fall, the R.C. Ryan Center for Biblical Studies at Union University will be holding a festival to celebrate this important milestone. *The Connection* recently sat down with Dr. Ray Van Neste, Director of the Ryan Center and Associate Professor at Union University, to discuss the specifics of this upcoming festival and how local church pastors, ministers, and laypeople might benefit from participating in the event.

Connection: Dr. Van Neste, perhaps the most important question that could be asked is why celebrate the 400th anniversary of the King James Version?

Dr. Van Neste: That really is the question, isn't it? This translation, while not the only translation, has had an impact unlike any other version of the English Bible. The KJV Bible has stood longer than any other translation. Therefore, it is incumbent upon us to be aware of key events regarding the publication and impact of this translation. This is also a rare moment in church history where the Church shaped culture. It appears in contemporary times, it is the other way around, where the Church chases culture.

Connection: As a follow-up question, why should a pastor or layperson who no longer uses the King James Version come to an event celebrating this translation?

Dr. Van Neste: The festival is not about which translation to use, but to recognize what God has done in the past and how every translation has been impacted by the KJV in one way or another.

Most translations are revisions of or reactions against the KJV. You will not see in this festival an apologetic for the KJV, but there will be a recognition of the immense heritage this translation has provided the church.



Connection: What benefit will the pastor, associate pastor, or church member gain from attending this conference?

Dr. Van Neste: This conference is really not a conference but a festival, which will be refreshing, encouraging, and should even be entertaining for all who attend. The main benefit for pastors and laypeople will be to see how God has moved mightily in the past and how we might see great works of God today. The story of how the English language and English translations of the Bible began with derision and then became the model of translation theory and practice is a fascinating story. It is a powerful model of the Church doing what we should be doing today—shaping history and society.

Connection: As your previous answer mentioned, this event is being emphasized as a festival. In what ways will this event be more like a festival?

Dr. Van Neste: A conference mainly involves the delivery of papers and plenary speeches. This event will also include much, much more. The festival will

include an evening of musical performances, a Shakespearean play, a film showing, and an exhibit that will include copies of the early KJV's, as well as Bibles that preceded and succeeded the KJV. There will also be some cuneiform tablets on display as well as other biblical artifacts that should be very fascinating to all participants.

Connection: Who are some of the key speakers for the festival?

Dr. Van Neste: There will be 23 papers and lectures presented at the festival by Union University's interdisciplinary faculty. There will also be four plenary sessions with three main speakers: Timothy George, Dean of Beeson Divinity School; Leland Ryken, Professor of English at Wheaton College and scholar on the Bible as literature; and John Woodgridge, Church Historian at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School. We will also have Nigel Goodwin visiting with us from England to provide some readings from the KJV in the original version of the translation.

The KJV 400: Legacy and Impact Festival will be held on September 15-17 at Union University. For information or to register, please visit: www.uu.edu/events/kjvlegacy or call the R.C. Ryan Center for Biblical Studies at: (731) 661-5579.

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“The Half Has Not Been Told”



Dr. Richard Wells, Vice President for Church Relations at Union University

As I write these words, I am returning with a group of Union students from a two-week mission trip in the Philippines. Let me tell you about these young people. For starters, they are among 190 Union students, staff, and faculty who have taken mission (GO) trips this year—ranging from inner city America to closed countries, or to developing countries, like the Philippines. Students get no academic credit for GO trips, nor can they choose where they are sent. They must raise their own funds and give up Christmas, spring, or summer break to go.

Our group left Jackson at 6:15 am on May 23rd for a 10:00 am flight to Detroit. The next flight to Nagoya, Japan departed six hours late, and then, after twelve-plus hours over the Pacific, the traveler’s nightmare began. The (now six-hour) delayed flight to Manila that should have departed at 12:30 am May 25th, turned into an all-nighter in the closed-up Nagoya airport. With no information and no help forthcoming, the situation turned ugly. Social psychologists would have described it as a potential mob scene. Long, long story short, the flight finally

left Japan at 4:15 pm, arriving in Manila a day late, 48 hours after leaving Jackson. A day intended for rest became a short night. Seven o’clock the next morning (now May 26th) we’re off, and on Friday, the 27th we left the hotel at 4:00 am for a flight to the provinces.

Why the travelogue? Only to say that not once in all that nightmarish beginning did one student complain about anything. Not once. Even as the mob scene began to unfold, even with no rest in Manila, even with heat and pollution and chaos and a go-go-go schedule, not a single complaint.

“When you come, you give credibility to the message we are preaching; it shows the people that the Gospel is not strange or weird, because you are saying the same thing we are saying.”

That alone would give me reason to tell you about this adventure. But the real story is that once in the provinces, the students showed what they were all about. You can’t really prepare for a mission in this part of the world. We had a “schedule”, but from the beginning I tried to emphasize the need to be humble, and to be ready to do whatever we were called upon to do, with or without warning. And sure enough, almost every day was an adventure. The students gave testimonies, preached, led Bible studies, worked with children, did street witnessing, led worship, and more, sometimes with virtually no notice and almost always under conditions most Americans would find intolerable.

And thanks be to God, by His power working in us, many came to faith in Christ, and the work of the Gospel was strengthened. Two examples: In one

barangay (village) where our outreach “plan” did not materialize, a couple of students found a basketball court and organized an impromptu game—which immediately attracted a crowd. Afterwards, some of the students told Bible stories and sang with a large group of children, while others shared with teens and young adults. One student preached through an interpreter (for the first time!), and a local pastor gave an invitation. Nearly everyone in the group prayed to receive Christ!

The students also encouraged believers. On our first Sunday, after we spent the afternoon helping with a church plant, one church leader told our group, “When you come, you give credibility to the message we are preaching; it shows the people that the Gospel is not strange or weird, because you are saying the same thing we are saying.” Time and space prevent my telling more, but the half has not been told.

This was my third opportunity to lead a GO team, and I cannot say enough about our students’ love for Christ, their willingness to do hard things, their resourcefulness, and their passion. The world is very different than the one I knew at their age, and we have much to fear. But I take courage in knowing that God is raising up young people such as these who serve the Gospel and seek His glory in this generation.

Richard Wells
Vice President for Church Relations

2010-2011 Year in Review at Union University



Spring 2011 Graduation
May 21, 2011

It is difficult to comprehend all of the outstanding events and accomplishments that have taken place on the campus of Union University during the 2010-2011 academic year. Following is an overview of how God has blessed our institution over the past several months. During the 2010-2011 year Union University experienced:

- An influx of gifted new faculty and staff colleagues
- A record enrollment of 4,186
- New facility dedications: Hope Residence Complex and Providence Hall
- A memorable Scholarship Banquet with former First Lady Laura Bush
- An excellent start for new initiatives related to the Honors Community
- Outstanding chapel programs
- Highest rankings ever for Union in *US News & World Report*, *Colleges of Distinction*, *First Things*, President's Honor Roll for Community Service, among others
- High quality lectureships
- Great seasons for our athletic teams
- The first graduating class for the Urban Education program
- Terrific Read the Bible for Life Conference hosted by the Ryan Center for Biblical Studies.
- Design work completed on new campus building in Hendersonville, Tennessee
- Trustee approval of an \$89 million budget for the 2011-2012 year.
- Progress toward the completion of the University's "2012 Plan" as well as initial conversations for the next important strategic planning process.
- A record 1,200+ graduates
- New and significant publications by Union faculty and staff
- Noteworthy accomplishments by student organizations: Union's *Cardinal and Cream* ranked best campus newspaper in the South, national championship for Debate Team, and the TISL top delegation at this year's state meeting
- The privilege to host the annual conference for the Consortium for Global Education
- The establishment of a partnership with Singapore Baptists
- Approximately 350 students involved in study abroad opportunities, mission trips, and service-learning opportunities

2010-2011 CCMS Update

By Joshua Moore



Russell Moore
Southern Seminary

One privilege that the Office of Church Relations has each year is to oversee and develop the Church and Convention Ministry Scholarship (CCMS) program. Any Southern Baptist student who feels called to full-time vocational Christian ministry, and is affirmed by his or her local Southern Baptist congregation, is eligible to receive this yearly scholarship at Union University.

Part of the CCMS program each semester offers wonderful event opportunities in which students can interact with leaders in Baptist and wider evangelical life. These events include "Monday Morning" lectures at Luther Hall with Union faculty, "Coffee Talks" in the evening with local church leaders and missionaries-in-residence, and "After Chapel Luncheons," where students get to have lunch in a small setting with key Christian leaders to engage in discussions.

The highlights of this year's CCMS program include:

"Monday Morning" lectures with faculty including: Jerry Tidwell, Hal Poe, George Guthrie, Richard Wells, C. Ben Mitchell, and Christopher Mathews. Through these lectures, CCMS students received encouragement on practical ministry and personal devotion.

After Chapel Luncheons included interaction with leading Christian voices including: Russell Moore, Dean of the School of Theology at Southern Seminary; Chuck Lawless, former Dean of the Billy Graham School of Evangelism and Missions at Southern and now VP for Global Theological Advance at the IMB; Bryan Loritts, Pastor of Fellowship Bible Church in Memphis and a leading voice in ethnic reconciliation in the local church; Randy Davis, President of the Tennessee Baptist Convention; and James Emery White, founding pastor of Mecklenburg Community Church.

Students also had the privilege of connecting with missionaries from Central Asia, the Middle East, and Canada.

Save the Date!

West Tennessee Ministers and Wives Appreciation Banquet

Thursday, September 8, 2011
Union University
Speaker: Junior Hill

Middle Tennessee Ministers Conference

Tuesday, October 18, 2011
Inglewood Baptist Church
Nashville, TN
Speaker: Dr. David Dockery



Keeping pastors linked together in Christ, the Word, and Kingdom Ministry

Looking Ahead:

- *August 4:* Senior Adult Extravaganza
Charles Billingsley in Concert
- *August 23:* Start of 2011-2012 Academic Year
- *August 26:* Fall Convocation
- *September 8:* West TN Ministers and Wives Appreciation Banquet
Speaker: Junior Hill
- *September 15-17:* KJV 400: Legacy & Impact Festival
- *September 19-23:* GO Week
- *October 3:* Scholarship Banquet
Speaker: Tony Blair
- *October 4:* West TN Ministers Conference
- *October 18:* Middle TN Minister's Conference
Speaker: David Dockery
- *October 19-21:* Faith in Practice Lecture Series
- *November 1:* West TN Ministers Conference
- *November 4:* Homecoming
- *December 10:* Fall Graduation

GO Trips: 2010-2011

By Julie Bradfield, Director of Student Mobilization



"You will be my witnesses..."
Acts 1:8

This year's Global Opportunities (GO) trips provided an avenue for Union students, faculty, and staff to participate in the fulfillment of the Great Commission. Whether they served in underprivileged areas of Memphis, researched and installed renewable energy sources in North Africa, cared for orphans in Middle America, or developed relationships with university students as a means of sharing the Gospel in Tampa, Providence, Europe, or Asia, Union students had the opportunity to GO as His witnesses.

This is what a few students had to say about their GO trip experiences this year:

"In Nashville the Lord opened our eyes to the need and the loss and the brokenness of people who looked like us, talked like us, and who lived in similar neighborhoods as us. The Lord broke us for the people of Nashville, showing us the great need to live like missionaries right where we are."

—*Nashville GO trip*

"Most of the people we talked to are trusting in a salvation that they are trying to earn themselves. By listening to them for just a few minutes you find out that they have no hope. The strange truth is that they are exactly right—they have no hope in themselves. They can never be good enough. The beautiful reality of the Gospel is that we have nothing to offer, no righteousness of our own. But it is only because of Christ that we have hope."

—*Romania GO trip*

"I wish I had gone on a GO trip sooner! I am a senior and won't have the Union GO trip opportunity anymore. I am going to encourage all my friends at Union to go on GO trips in the future."

—*Honduras GO trip*

The 2010-2011 GO Trip Teams went to the following international locations: Brazil, Central Asia, East Asia, Germany, Guatemala, Honduras, Israel, the Middle East, North Africa, Paris (France), Philippines, Romania, and the Ukraine.

The North American locations this year included the following: Boston; Illinois; Memphis (SOS program); Nashville; Providence, RI; and Tampa, FL. Union University continues to instill in students the necessity and urgency of the Great Commission.

QUOTABLES

- According to the Joshua Project, the top ten unreached people groups are the Taimani people of Afghanistan, the Tihami people of Yemen, the Azeri people of Iran, the Bairwa people of India, the Gujjars people of Pakistan, the Northern Luri people of Iran, the Mazanderani of Iran, the Southern Pashtuns of Afghanistan, the Northern Yemeni people of Yemen, and the Zaza-Dimli of Turkey. All of these people groups have been 0-.02% evangelized. (<http://www.joshuaproject.net/unreached.php>)
- The "10/40 Window" is a rectangular area of North Africa, the Middle East, and Asia approximately between 10 degrees north and 40 degrees north latitude. This region is often called the "Resistant Belt" and includes the majority of the world's Muslims, Hindus, and Buddhists. An estimated 4.48 billion people (over 60% of the world's population) residing in approximately 8,818 distinct people groups live in this "window." The countries in this region represent the least evangelized part of the world and should be a focus of our evangelism and prayers. (<http://www.joshuaproject.net/10-40-window.php>)
- Of the 16,700 people groups by country, 6,933 are still considered "unreached" This totals 2,804,700,000 individuals. 85% of these unreached individuals reside in the 10/40 Window. Of the 6,933 unreached people groups, about 3,542 or 51% are small groups under 10,000 in population and all these groups total less than 8,000,000 individuals. 1,329 unreached people groups are under 50,000 in population. That leaves 2,062 unreached groups 50,000 or more in population. A vibrant church in a large group may take the Gospel to a number of smaller satellite people groups that have ethnic similarities. (<http://www.joshuaproject.net/great-commission>)