MORE ON KJV ONLY

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Categories: Bible Translation, Observations

I keep promising myself that I won't mention the King James Only movement again, but every now and then I come across a blog post that I can't resist mentioning. This is from Dan Wallace:

> *I do not lie when I say that a friend of mine lost his job in a church back in the late 70s when he started using the NIV in a youth group. The senior pastor had him removed on the grounds that, "If the Queen's English was good enough for Jesus then it is good enough for me". I've met Independent Baptist Missionaries in Europe who are trying to translate the Bible into Spanish, not modern Spanish, but into 17th century Spanish so that it is comparable with the KJV. Then there is Grace Baptist College in Michigan that includes in its doctrinal statement the assertion that "We believe Greek study has been and will continue to be the downfall of Protestantism".*

Read more here. *(Update: A comment from Daniel points out that the Grace Baptist College website makes no claim about the study of Greek. I won't change the original quote above, but just give a warning: caveat lector).*

I've been writing a little on the King James Version for the book I'm working on. This is part of what I have to say.

> *The simple fact is that on a world-wide scale, the King James Version is not really all that unusual. It wasnâ€™t translated until 1611 or more than three quarters of the way through the Christian era. Many, many other nationalities had translations of the Bible available to them before the KJV rolled off the presses. Martin Lutherâ€™s German translation has had just as much impact on German life and literature as the KJV has had on English. English speakers are not unusual in having a favourite translation of the Bible; many others have something very like it.*
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> *At the time, the KJV was a remarkable work of scholarship; but by todayâ€™s standards it is not really a very good translation of the Bible. Over the intervening years we have learned a great deal more about the original manuscripts and we have a far greater understanding of how translation works. It isnâ€™t just science and engineering that have developed in the last four hundred years; our academic understanding of the Bible and Biblical languages has grown by leaps and bounds. Quite simply, we can do much better translations today than they could in the early 1600s. You wouldn't trust yourself to a surgeon who only had a 1611 level of training, would you?*

Meanwhile, there are still 300,000,000 people, speaking 2,000 languages who don't have a single word of Scripture available to them. Perhaps, just perhaps we should be more concerned for them than we are about which of our many translations we should use!