

Faith Comment published in the Petersfield Post

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Teamwork

Hats off to the BBC for its brave scheduling of a week of programmes on the King James Bible, 400 years after its original publication. I was intrigued to hear James Naughtie's documentary describing how the translation was done. Six 'companies', no less, based in Oxford, Cambridge and Westminster, worked separately at first and then assembled to read out their latest work. The others commented and discussed points of translation and minutes were kept. The result is an undisputed masterpiece of style and erudition.



Today, by contrast, we worship the individual creative artist. Occasionally, we allow partnerships - the Coen Brothers or Merchant and Ivory in the world of films, George and Gilbert as artists - but the vast majority of books, buildings, paintings, films, musical compositions are created by individuals. With their talent comes celebrity, and with celebrity, money, often in obscene quantities.

It wasn't always thus. There are no known names responsible for a millennium of beautiful Islamic architecture and decoration; the mediaeval cathedrals were not only the work of more than one generation but of craftsmen whose names are not recorded. Time, perhaps, to reconsider our worship of the celebrity and to learn, once more, how to work in teams of equals.