

King George VI

Audio Guide transcript of National Sound Archive recording

The cohesion and appeal of the family, applied in the wider context of the nation and Empire, was the theme for George VI's Christmas broadcast in 1951, less than two months before his death.

'At Christmas we feel that the old, simple things matter most. They do not change, however much the world outside may seem to do so. When we say that Christmas brings good cheer, we do not only think of material things: we think more of the feelings, of friendliness, companionship – we have one for the other. And I think that among all the blessings which we may count today, the chief one is that we are a friendly people. We do not all think alike, of course - we are such a large family of nations that it would be difficult. We each have our own ideas, but we have come to learn that differences of opinion are not the same as quarrels. I wonder if we realise just how precious the state of friendliness and kindness is. We are living in an age which is hard and cruel, and if there is anything that we can offer to the world today, perhaps it is the example of tolerance, and understanding, that runs like a golden thread through the great and diverse family of the British Commonwealth and Nations.'