

questions engaged in the truth of the Bible itself not in the literary brilliance of the English language's principal text. And yet language and meaning are not entirely distinguishable. From a literary point of view, Anglicans have in recent years created for themselves the softest and most soporific of pews. We need to ask critical questions as to whether it is the older language that is dead or ours. If it is ours, we have hard-thinking and hard choices ahead of us.



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At the time of his election in 1993, Bishop Anthony Burton was the youngest bishop in the world-wide Anglican Communion, and the youngest Canadian bishop that century. More than eleven years later he is still the youngest of the Canadian bishops, though now one of the most senior of them. He currently serves as Chair of the Council of the North (representing a third of Canada's dioceses and 85% of its geography), Episcopal Visitor to the South American Missionary Society, as well as patron or officer of a variety of institutions, societies and organizations. Bishop Burton was born and raised in Ottawa. Having studied at the University of Toronto, Dalhousie University, and Oxford University, he was ordained in the Diocese of Nova Scotia where he served in two parishes on Cape Breton Island at which time he married Anna Erickson, a native of California. They then moved to Prince Albert, Saskatchewan, in 1991 where he served as Dean and Rector of the Cathedral. They have two children, Caroline and Peter.

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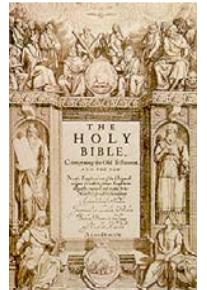
TRINITY 2005

“When Faith fell down drunk”

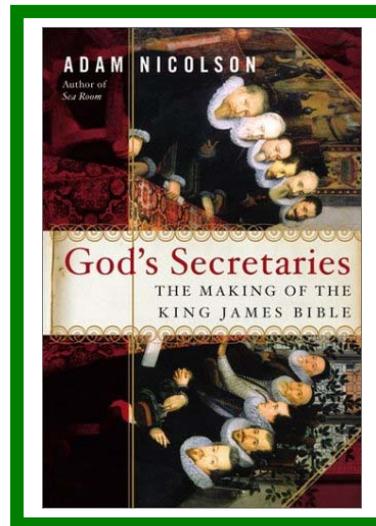
God's Secretaries: The Making of the King James Bible

Adam Nicolson
 HarperCollins, 2003, 304 pp.

Review by Anthony Burton
 Bishop of Saskatchewan



Bible translators are an irreverent lot, at least the ones I know. The cherished translations of yesteryear are to them a treasury of the absurd. The



Rev. Stanley Cuthand, who is working on a fresh translation of the Bible, points out that when the first Cree translation was made there was not yet a Cree word for 'donkey'. So on Palm Sunday Jesus rides into Jerusalem upon the back of a giant jackrabbit. Neither was there a Cree word for 'sheep' which became 'ugly dogs'. Notoriously the old Inuit translation of the Gospel of John rendered, "then were the disciples glad when they saw the Lord," as "when the disciples saw the Lord they wagged their tails."

Minority-language Bible-making is a labour of love. Not so English-language Bible publishing which is a profitable business, with new versions appearing every year or two, each reflecting the fashions of its day, and each claiming to supersede all that has come before.

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 Please send us any information that will help us to keep you or your neighbour informed, in the enclosed envelope or e-mail to
 jconnors@hfx.eastlink.ca.

Christian Friendship

The 25th Annual Atlantic Theological Conference

June 26 to 29, 2005



David's Farewell from Jonathan, Rembrandt, 1642.

This year held at Worrell Hall, Anglican Diocesan Centre,
 5732 College Street, Halifax, NS
www.stpeter.org/conf.htm

It is a middle-class industry. High and low culture conspire against it and have but one Bible - the King James Version. Here Johnny Cash and T.S. Eliot, professors of literature and pomaded televangelists are bedfellows. How are we to account for it?

The reason occurred to me as I watched my favorite televangelist -- a small, sweaty, strikingly eloquent man -- raise a big King James Bible over his head during a sermon as if to punctuate the sky with it: the King James Bible is big. It is big in its sonorous, powerful tone; big in its authoritative directness; big in its ceremonious, fugue-like complication; big paradoxically in its capacity to be small -- to infuse little things with the light of divine glory, to hint at the music of the spheres even in the particular, the domestic, the mundane. The King James Bible is as King James intended it to be: a royal book, the very voice of majesty, the revelation of God rendered in human language at once exalted and earthy. What better vehicle for a rural Mississippi stump preacher to raise his people into a vision of their heavenly home? This big book embraces all the horizons of human experience and penetrates beyond them in language commanding, didactic, accessible, glamorous and rich.

Adam Nicolson in his fine new book, *God's Secretaries: the Making of the King James Bible*, shows how the luscious, allusive prose of the King James Bible reflected the luscious, allusive culture in which it was written, a culture which had an enormous appetite for the world and the things of the world. Yet it was a culture that was drawn not only to majesty, luxury, and the seductive glamour of the theatre but also to simplicity, plainness, and daylight. The translation was the project of a government trying to unify a society pulling apart over religion. King James sought to bind the nation together in the use of one Bible. It would not be a compromise translation but rather an all-embracing synthesis of the catholic and puritan habits of mind. Simple, literal translations of the Hebrew and Greek (as the Protestant faction demanded) would be brought to life with the full allusive and musical power of the English language in its most flexible century. Here too would be enough mystery, symbol and ceremony to satisfy the highest of high churchmen. Plodding Greek passages were made to sing; homely narrative was enriched with allusions that amplified and underscored their significance.

The power of the translation lay in its strangeness. It was not translated to sound contemporary, much less ordinary. Rather than creating the false impression that the Scriptures were written in the reader's own time and place, it conveys the truth: the Bible is a living text from long ago and far away, the record of the great metaphysical acts of God mysteriously inserting himself into this world. For the King James Bible the medium is the message.

Francis Bacon, who wrote in this period, noted that "there is no beauty that hath not strangeness of proportion." There is no proportion so strange as the incarnation, no doctrine so beautiful. Neither before nor since has there been a language which could so effortlessly bear its weight.

Adam Nicolson, a grandson of Vita Sackville-West, brings to life the world of the translators -- there were dozens of them working in teams -- and by the end of Nicolson's conducted tour there are few reputations left intact, especially that of Bishop Lancelot Andrews who as a parish priest stayed well away from his parish as more than a quarter of his parishioners died of the plague in 1603. Nicolson goes so far as to ask whether the translation was so good because the translators were so bad! Here we find Christian VI of Denmark and Norway, King James' brother-in-law, scandalizing even the Jacobean court with his unbuttoned debauchery. In a pageant to welcome this royal visitor, Faith, Hope and Charity appear on stage to make edifying speeches but "Faith was so drunk she couldn't get a word out; Hope couldn't stand upright and had to withdraw; only Charity, clearly the greatest of these, could say what she had to say." The translators knew all about the world, the flesh, and the devil.

Our world knows about these too which raises the question as to why the great majority of churches have put their King James Lectern Bibles in the vestry to molder.

Many people would argue that the King James language is unintelligible, but the fact remains that this Bible is most popular among the least literate of congregations. Nicolson argues that it has lost its traction in the modern church because the language of the King James Version is the language of "patriarchy, of an instructed order, of richness as a form of beauty, of authority as a form of good, "and contrasts it with the New English Bible which is "motivated by the opposite, an anxiety not to bore or intimidate. It is driven, in other words, by the desire to please and, in that way, is a form of language which has died."

Nicolson, 45, has stopped going to church, he writes, because the polarities of honesty and tradition, purity and ceremony, nakedness and the comforts of a shared and familiar life are no longer voiced there. "These great questions are not the medium of modern religion." He stops short of saying that the church has lost interest in the Christian religion but the implication is there.

He is wrong about this, as the great struggles within the Anglican Communion at the moment demonstrate, and the revival of interest in traditional religion amongst the young bears witness. But the questions he raises are important ones. It is heartening that he finds these

The Saint Michael's Youth Conference

For teens 13-19, is tentatively scheduled for August 22 – 27, at Camp Wildwood in Bouctouche NB. Founded in 1987 after a conference of the same name in Massachusetts, Saint Michael's had encouraged hundreds of youth (and dozens of staff) in the Faith during its 18 years of operation in the Maritimes.

Mornings at the conference are taken up with classes in the areas of Bible, Theology and Spirituality. First and second year conferees attend set classes, conferees in their third year and beyond choose between two additional classes in each of these areas. Afternoons and evenings are occupied with leisure activities – visiting a local beach and water park, as well as making use of the recreational facilities at Camp Wildwood.

Conferee Sarah Clattenburg of Chester Basin, NS writes of her experience at St Michael's:

"It is an enlightening experience that opened my eyes to what my religion really means to me."

"You make lots of friends that share your faith, understand you, and help you through your problems."

"It's a camp where you meet friends (including the priests). It's nothing like a stern camp that is strictly religion, it has a perfect amount of rules and fun.... and not too much of either!"



This year the NS/PEI Branch of the PBSC has made possible three bursaries for conferees in financial need from the Diocese of Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island. Please contact the Registrar, Sarah Stevenson (se.stevenson@ns.sympatico.ca) to apply.

Watch the conference website at www.smyc.ca for finalized dates and classes – expected soon!

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

NS & PEI Branch

Sunday, June 26, 2005

The Lord Nelson Hotel

Vanguard Room 2, 3rd floor

5:45 pm

following 5:00 PM Evening Prayer, All Saint Cathedral and prior to the Epstein Memorial Lecture, the formal beginning of the Atlantic theological Conference at 7:30 PM.

Address by the Rev'd David A. Harris, Interim Chairman for The Prayer Book Society of Canada

The NS/PEI Branch of the Prayer Book Society has been asked to include the following announcement in its Newsletter:

The Nova Scotia Essentials Executive is a local committee dedicated to supporting and upholding the Montreal 1994 Declaration of Anglican Essentials; in particular, the Essentials N.S. group offers these key principles for discussion and comment within the context of the wider Church:

[1] The Church adapts its message for relevance to society, geographically and historically. Church reform is necessary.

[2] Over time, traditional beliefs and a rich intellectual heritage have kept a useful balance and counterpoint to changing societal perspectives.

[3] Changes, as we adapt the Church to keep it contemporary in the world, must be developed from a biblical perspective.

[4] Compassion and collegiality are also keys to maintaining an effective Communion.

Interested? Find out more by contacting: The Rev'd Peter Armstrong
By phone 422-8122 or via e-mail at peter.armstrong@ns.sympatico.ca

The annual meeting of Nova Scotia Essentials will be Sunday, May 29, 4:15 for 4:30pm, at St. Paul's, Argyle St., Halifax. The guest speaker will be Canon Charlie Masters, National Director. A light supper is provided. The event will conclude about 7:00pm.