NAZIR-ALI ON BIBLE TRANSLATION

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Category: Theology and Purpose of Translation

Not being an Anglican, I don't want to say too much about the various goings on at GAFCON. However, I can't avoid quoting Ruth Geldhill's comment on Michael Nazir Ali's speech at the conference yesterday:

> *Secondly, he said, communication and culture. He referred to the world's greatest expert on culture and the gospel, Professor Lamin Sanneh, professor of mission and world Christianith at Yale and a Muslim convert, who is at Gafcon. He praised his work in Bible translation, and discussed how translation related to the nature of Christianity. 'The good news of Jesus Christ is intrinsically translatable from one culture to another.' Even the fact that the NT was first written in Greek and not in Aramaic or Hebrew is itself a fact of translation. 'It was not for another hundred years or so that the NT was translated back into Syriac or Aramaic.'*
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> *He continued: 'This is on contrast therefore compared with another worldwide religion like Islam. Now Islam is also universal of course.You find it in many different parts of the world. But wherever you go and whatever the local manifestations there is a certain Arabicness about the Koran, about the prayer, about the call to prayer, which cannot be translated. But the Gospel can be and has been throughout the ages...*
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> *... 'When we consider the Anglican situation, the translation of the Bible by William Tyndale into English is a landmark not only in the story of the English church but of the English nation and of the English language. It is impossible to think of a Shakespeare or a Donne without a Tyndale. And the translation the rendering into the vernacular of the liturgy of the BCP of worship in a language understood by the people is all part of this process of translation. This is wealth that we cannot easily give up. Translatability belongs to the very nature of Anglicanism. In the preface of the BCP and the Articles of Religion, every church has a responsibility to render the good news in terms of its culture. Read More*

Translatibility belongs to the very nature of Anglicanism, because it belongs to the very nature of the Gospel. The Bishop has lot to say about culture and the Gospel in this speech which is of general interest and applicable across denominational boundaries and which I commend to you. There is also a good deal about the current historic context of Anglicanism which I will leave to others to write about and discuss.