

The Real Reason They Made the NKJV

By David W. Daniels

When the New King James Bible was first published in the late 1970s, Dr. Kirk DiVietro was an eyewitness to a revealing statement about the true purpose behind it. They revealed it quietly at a local Christian bookstore during a conference announcing the publication of the New King James Bible by Thomas Nelson.

On a recent speaking engagement at the 41st Dean Burgon Society Conference in July, I had the opportunity to interview Dr. DiVietro about this. He has been an Independent Baptist pastor for 40+ years, and a staunch advocate of the King James Bible, as well as the Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek texts from which it comes. He has pastored in Massachusetts for many years and you can see him in Chris Pinto's "Bridge to Babylon" movie.

Dr. DiVietro recalled that a Thomas Nelson representative, a Vice President of some sort, showed a series of film strips and mini-lectures to the approximately 300 pastors and teachers present. Then he stated something like this: "We're educators here; and we would never admit this to our people or congregations. But we all know that the King James Bible is an inferior translation, coming from inferior manuscripts.

"But every time we've tried to give your people a better Bible, they've just refused to take it. So what we've done is we've taken the King James Bible, and we've revised it as little as we could, changed it here and there, to give you (and he used the phrase) 'a transitional bridge' to get your people away from the King James Bible, so that ultimately you can move them to a better, more accurate Bible."

After this admission, his people handed out promotional copies of the New King James to the group. Dr. DiVietro said it seemed everyone accepted them readily, as no big deal. Then he looked at me and confided, "At that point, I'm done with the New King James."

I thought the interview was over. But then he told me about his mother's King James Bible, which he keeps in his bedroom, "The one she used to wave in my face and say, 'This is the word of God! Don't you ever let anybody tell you it's not!'" and with watery eyes, he concluded, "That's where I stand." Dr. DiVietro's trust of the King James has never wavered.

Somebody was working on him at that meeting. He didn't realize it until later, but they seated him beside the brother of NIV-advocate John R. Kohlenberger III, to try to provoke an argument over the King James and try to move him away from his convictions, and maybe get his endorsement of the New King James. Kohlenberger's brother edited many NIV helps for Zondervan Publishing.

The statement about the NKJV being a bridge Bible is hauntingly similar to the statement by Manly P. Hall quoted in my book, *Is the World's Oldest Bible a Fake?* In 1944, that occultist complained about being unsuccessful over the last 100 years in converting the world over to a "better Bible." But the people who believed "every jot and tittle" of the KJV would have none of it.

The people who produced and promoted the New King James told the world that they were only "updating the language." Nothing could be further from the truth. In addition to changing words to match some other modern translations, they also included doubting notes to show them the Westcott and Hort-influenced Greek text, so they could become their own text critics. Think about this: if they lied to the public about the reason for the New King James, do you really believe it could be the words of God?