

Author says original Bible comical story

By ROBERT BARR
Associated Press

NEW YORK — If you want a funny story, British author Anthony Burgess says to read the Bible. For a comic hero, try the apostle Paul.

Burgess read up on the Acts of the Apostles — not in the King James or Revised Standard Version, mind you, but in the original Greek — as part of the research for "Kingdom of the Wicked," his recently published novel set in New Testament times.

"So I got a new look at it," Burgess says. "It struck me as being a comic story, a very Greek story, full of odd touches of wit and vaguely sardonic in places."

Burgess weaves three tales in the novel: the labor of Paul and the depravity of the Roman court, which are both based on fact, and the story of a Jewish girl who marries a Roman soldier, which is fiction. The first Christians are portrayed sympathetically although Burgess won't have any miracles — including the Resurrection.

"Paul is one of these historical phenomena we have to believe in, at least I have to," Burgess says. "He obviously existed; you couldn't invent him."

The book is based on work which the British author did for the NBC-TV miniseries, "A.D." which aired in March. His re-reading of Acts turned out to be a delight.

"Kingdom of the Wicked" is not without some nauseating descriptions of perverted pleasures of Rome's degenerate emperors: Caligula, Claudius and Nero.

Well, those passages are true, Burgess pleads; at least the Roman historian Suetonius claimed such things happened. Besides, he says, those parts of the book are redeemed by their very depravity.

One thing Burgess does not worry about is baffling his readers by strewing the book with Greek, Latin, Hebrew and dozens of obscure English words.

"The words are there, why not use them," he asks. "I'm always meeting new words myself."

"One of my great companions is a great American work, which is Webster's dictionary, the 1926 edition. The Webster gang — they knew what they were doing. It's all there." □



George Antrobus (Patrick Barrett) explains life to his son Henry (Larry Hermes) and Miss Atlantic City (Deidre Doigg) in the Aggie Players' production of "The Skin of Our Teeth."

Photo by DEENA ELLIOTT

'Skin of Our Teeth' to be performed by Aggie Players here and at contest

The Aggie Players' production of Thornton Wilder's Pulitzer Prize winning comedy "The Skin of Our Teeth" opens its run today in Rudder Forum at 8 p.m.

"The Skin of Our Teeth" tells the satirical story of an all American family, the Antrobuses of Excelsior, New Jersey. The Antrobuses have survived fire, flood, pestilence, the seven-year locusts, the ice age, the black pox, the double feature, a dozen wars and as many depressions. They have survived them all — by the skin of their teeth.

Patrick Barrett plays George Antrobus, an average American at grips with a destiny,

sometimes sour, sometimes sweet.

Emma Reading plays mother Maggie; Larry Hermes, son Henry; and Cammy Jacob, daughter Gladys. Deidre Doigg plays the saucy maid, Sabina.

The Aggie Players also will perform this production at Texas Women's University in competition with about 1,400 other young artists as part of the American College Theatre Festival.

"The Skin of Our Teeth" will continue on Saturday and November 21-23. Tickets are \$5 for the general public and \$4 for A&M students at the Rudder Box Office. □

TOP 10

These are the hit singles of the week of Nov. 4 in Cashbox magazine's national survey:

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| 1. "Part-Time Lover," Stevie Wonder | 6. "Saving All My Love," Whitney Houston |
| 2. "Miami Vice Theme," Jan Hammer | 7. "We Built This City," Starship |
| 3. "Take On Me," A-Ha | 8. "You Belong To the City," Glenn Frey |
| 4. "Money For Nothing," Dire Straits | 9. "Oh Sheila," Ready For The World |
| 5. "Head Over Heels," Tears For Fears | 10. "Cherish," Kool and the Gang |