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Bible Translation as Missions



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Editorial Introduction



Adam Harwood, Ph.D.

Adam Harwood is Associate Professor of Theology, occupying the McFarland Chair of Theology; Director of the Baptist Center for Theology and Ministry; Editor, Journal for Baptist Theology and Ministry at New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary.

Approximately 180 million people have no Scripture in their heart language.¹ A nation with this number of people would be the eighth most populated nation in the world. It would have a population larger than that of Germany and the United Kingdom *combined*. Tragically, these 180 million people scattered throughout the earth have no access to the biblical accounts of creation, the fall, the flood, the story of Israel or its exodus, its laws, or its prophets. They have no Psalms and they have no account of the life, teachings, death, and resurrection of Jesus. With this need in mind, three research centers co-sponsored on October 20, 2014, a colloquium titled Bible Translation as Missions.² The articles in this issue of the *Journal for Baptist Theology and Ministry* represent four of the presentations. The articles are followed by reviews of books in the fields of biblical studies, philosophy, apologetics, and theology.

The first article is a transcript of the presentation by Dave Brunn, who serves as an International Translation Consultant and teaches Bible translation at the New Tribes Mission (NTM) Missionary Training Centers in the USA, Canada, and Australia. Brunn narrates some of his experience as a missionary-translator in Papua New Guinea for twenty-one years, especially facilitating the translation of the New Testament into the Lamogai language. In the next article, Bryan Harmelink, Global Consultant for Bible Translation & Collaboration with Wycliffe Global Alliance, addresses the concern for why so many languages have no Scripture by raising the concept of translation as transmission. Next, Perry Oakes, Bible Translator at Wycliffe Associates, details a new and innovative approach to equip the linguistically “least of these” global church to translate the Bible for themselves. The final article was penned by Larry B. Jones, Senior Vice President of Bible Translation at The Seed Company. In his article, Jones proposes a new partnership between the global church and Bible agencies in order to accomplish the task of beginning Bible translation projects by 2025 for every language that needs it.

¹This statistic is provided by Wycliffe Bible Translators at <https://www.wycliffe.org/about/why>, accessed July 3, 2015.

²The following NOBTS research centers co-sponsored the colloquium: the Baptist Center for Theology & Ministry, the H. Milton Haggard Center for New Testament Textual Studies, and the Global Missions Center. All seven presentations from the event can be accessed at the NOBTS Events YouTube page, available at https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCMVHu7VnTHH8gp8hcIA_kvg/feed.

May these articles develop in readers a burden for Bible translation work, and equip us to pray and serve so that all people in every place will have access to God's Word in their heart language, so they might repent of their sins and trust in Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior.

Form and Function in Bible Translation: Where Theory Meets Practice



Dave Brunn

Dave Brunn is an International Translation Consultant and teaches Bible translation at the New Tribes Missions (NTM) Missionary Training Centers in the USA, Canada, and Australia.

Editor's Note: Below is a transcript of a presentation by Dave Brunn at New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary on October 20, 2014. The transcript maintains the colloquial speech, including the use of contractions. The original presentation, with a Q & A session, can be viewed at:

<https://youtu.be/NxnIP2981iU>.

My wife and I serve with New Tribes Mission. We do Bible translation, but with New Tribes Mission our primary focus is church planting among Unreached People Groups, which means giving them the Scriptures in their language. So there is a lot of translation taking place in today's world, and some of you have probably seen these examples. They were published a number of years ago in *Bible Translator*. When Coke and Pepsi started marketing their products in China, they made some mistakes. With Coca-Cola, you can't really translate the name. Rather, you have to transliterate it, which means that they tried to find a way that was fairly easy to pronounce in Chinese. The problem initially was that it meant something. At least in one dialect it meant, "Bite the wax tadpole." So you can imagine that this was not quite the effect that they would have hoped. Pepsi didn't do a whole lot better. At that time, Pepsi had a slogan that most of you don't remember because you're too young: "Come alive with the Pepsi generation!" Pepsi's first attempt at translating that into Chinese meant, "Pepsi will raise your ancestors from the dead!" I'd imagine that did something to spike sales until people realized that it didn't really work.

So, in 1980, my wife and I went to Papua New Guinea. We moved in among the Lamogai people who lived very, very isolated—no Gospel witness, no Scripture in their language, no churches. So we started by learning their language. This was a language that had never been written down before. We broke it down into writings—I was trained in linguistics—and we taught them how to read and write in their language for the very first time. My wife, Nancy, served as a literacy teacher, and we were a team of missionaries. My main role on the team was to work with the mother-tongue speakers and produce a translation of the New Testament and Old Testament portions in the Lamogai language. Now in case you're not very familiar with New Tribes Mission and translation, we currently have over one hundred translation projects going on around the world, and that doesn't include projects like mine, which is not ongoing. We work in Africa, Latin America, Asia, and the South Pacific. When we do Bible translations,

it is always within the context of a long-term, ongoing, church-planting effort in that target language, the language that's being translated.

So with the Lamogai people, we did Bible translation, we did literacy, but we also did chronological Bible teaching. It took us nearly four months to present the gospel the first time, and this was after we had already spent a full two years learning their language, documenting their culture, and producing a very complete culture file. So we started at the beginning, in Genesis. We hit high points from the Old Testament, and we eventually got to the life of Christ. We presented on the last day of this four-month teaching the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ. It was at that point that we actually presented the gospel. A church was born. So then of course we were involved in discipleship and leadership development. As missionaries going into a place like this, we did not go to export Western forms to try to make them more like us, or to try to make their churches look like ours. I'll tell you right now, their churches, the way they function, do not look very much like ours at all. We had no right to be paternalistic and export our forms, but there is one who has every right to be paternalistic, in a positive sense of course: the eternal Father.

God's Word transcends culture. If there's a difference between what God's Word says and what a culture says, then God's Word is right. That of course applies to our own culture, as well as every culture around the world. And we did curriculum development. That means we produced Bible teaching materials through the entire New Testament, and two major portions of the Old Testament. I wasn't sure just how much it was, so I went and looked at the files on my computer. Just to give you an idea: in the New Testament alone, the teaching material amounts to over 750,000 words. I don't know how much exactly that is in pages; it's two or three thousand pages. But we have volumes and volumes basically of commentaries through the entire New Testament.

So when we first went there, we didn't know what God was going to do. We didn't know who would come to know the Lord. We didn't know who would end up being the leaders in the church. But God did eventually raise up leaders who are choice, choice servants of the Lord. What a privilege it is to serve alongside of them in serving the Lamogai church. The Lamogai people have been on their own for many years now. There are currently churches in fourteen different Lamogai villages, and the last several churches were planted by the Lamogai people, totally apart from any missionary assistance at all.

As was mentioned, I now have the privilege of serving as a translation consultant, working with translation teams on their projects, mostly in Asia and the South Pacific, although I am also currently assigned to a Seed Company project in Nigeria. Lord willing, two weeks from today I will be with a group of precious brothers in Nigeria checking some portions of Matthew and John.

Based on my years as a translator, I wrote a book about Bible translation, which is really for the church in the English-speaking world.¹ As a career translator, I come back and hear people

¹Dave Brunn, *One Bible, Many Versions: Are All Translations Created Equal?* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2013).

talking about translation. Sometimes I even hear people arguing about translation. And it's evident to me that most of the arguments are not necessary because they are not based on what a translation really is. Translation is an incredibly complex process, and often many people in North America—North American English speakers—have a very limited, over-simplified understanding of what translation actually entails. As a translator, as part of a team, the mother-tongue speakers of course were the experts in the language from day one until the end of the project. My job was to be the expert in biblical exegesis, which of course meant I surrounded myself with experts.

As a translator and translation facilitator, I was committed to making sure that God's Word was translated as faithfully and accurately as possible. I thought I had a good idea of what that meant. When I got into the process, however, I encountered some surprises. When I would approach a passage of Scripture to translate into Lamogai, I would look to see what the source text said, and then I would compare as many English versions as I could. That's where I encountered some surprises. It wasn't surprising that some versions would translate it fairly literally, and others would opt for a more dynamic equivalent. For example, "my opponent" in place of "he who rises up against me," or "from my mother's womb" translated as "from infancy"; "sons of tumult" as "riotous revelers"; "made him king" translated as "put him on the throne"; "a branch of her root" interpreted as "one of the descendants of her line"; and "is not crowned" translated "does not win the prize."

	SOURCE TEXT		LITERAL		DYNAMIC EQUIVALENT
Job 27:7	<i>...he who rises up against me</i>	NKJV	<i>...he who rises up against me</i>	NASB	<i>...my opponent</i>
Job 31:18	<i>...from my mother's womb</i>	ESV	<i>...from my mother's womb</i>	NASB	<i>...from infancy</i>
Jer 48:45	<i>...sons of tumult</i>	ESV	<i>...sons of tumult</i>	NASB	<i>...riotous revelers</i>
Ez 17:16	<i>...made him king</i>	NKJV	<i>...made him king</i>	NASB	<i>...put him on the throne</i>
Dan 11:7	<i>...a branch of her roots</i>	NKJV	<i>...a branch of her roots</i>	NASB	<i>...one of the descendants of her line</i>
2 Tim 2:5	<i>...is not crowned</i>	HCSB	<i>...is not crowned</i>	NASB	<i>...does not win the prize</i>

Now, I don't know if any of these dynamic interpretations bother any of you, but if they do you may be surprised to know that the version that chose the dynamic equivalent renderings in

these contexts is the NASB, which has often been called the most literal. I think the NASB is an excellent translation, but I find it's not nearly as literal as most people think. Of course, it's not only the NASB; every literal version frequently uses classical dynamic equivalence translation principles in many, many contexts. The ESV, for example, in Mark 9:3, rather than "no launderer on earth," they translated it "no one on earth." They let this component of meaning be carried by the verb, which I think is appropriate, but it's not their normal strategy. Or in Galatians 1:16, instead of "I did not consult with flesh and blood," "I did not consult with anyone." A perfectly appropriate rendering, but certainly not literal.

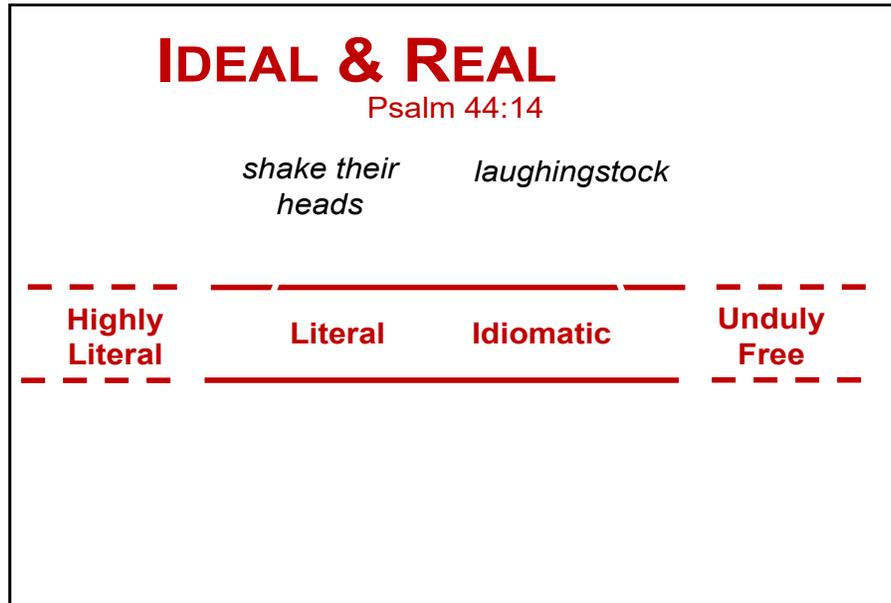
As I pressed forward, I noticed that the more literal versions go back and forth taking turns being the most and least literal among their peers. For example, with Hebrew and Greek words that we would most often translate as "flesh," sometimes the ESV goes with a very literal rendering, "flesh," whereas the NASB goes with more of an interpretive rendering, "men," "mankind," "anyone," "living creatures." But in other contexts, it's the opposite: the NASB translates it literally, and the ESV opts for more of an interpretive rendering. Again, perfectly appropriate renderings, but maybe not what you would have expected.

	Source Text	English Standard Version (ESV)	New American Standard Bible (NASB)
Psa. 65:2	flesh	flesh	men
Isa. 66:23	flesh	flesh	mankind
Jer. 12:12	flesh	flesh	anyone
Dan. 4:12	flesh	flesh	living creatures
Joel 2:28	flesh	flesh	mankind
Lev. 17:14	flesh	creature	flesh
Rom. 3:20	flesh	human being	flesh
1 Co. 1:26	flesh	worldly standards	flesh
Eph. 6:5	flesh	earthly	flesh
Jude 7	flesh	desire	flesh

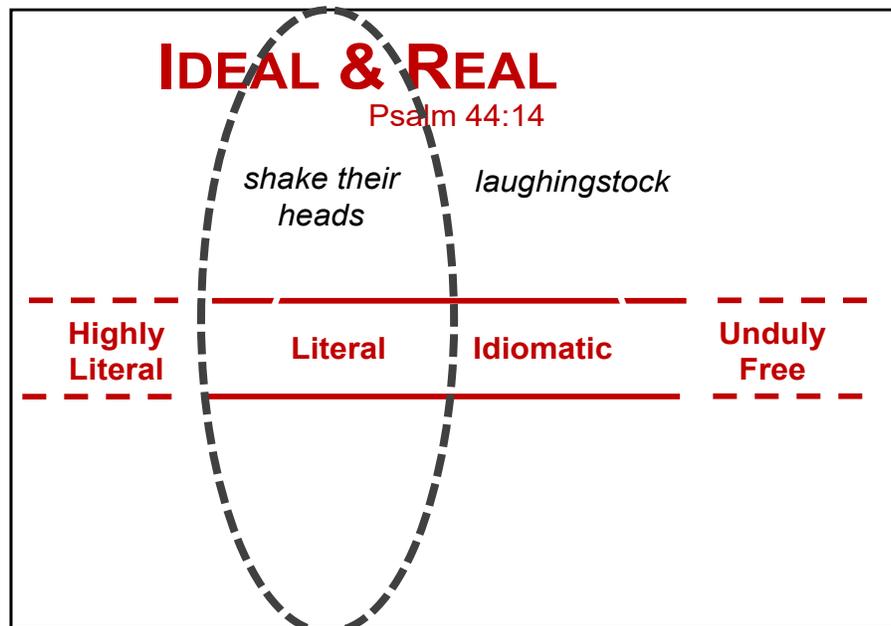
As I pressed forward, I was shocked to find that not only are the literal versions not always literal, but there's a surprising number of places where the notably non-literal versions are actually more literal than the versions that we generally think of as literal. So, for example, in Psalm 44:14, a literal rendering would be "shaking of the head." The NIV and the New Living Translation both opted for a quite literal rendering, "shake their heads." In this case, the ESV and the NASB both translated it "laughing stock." Now, if you're familiar with these four versions, and I told you these four renderings and these four versions, many of you probably

would have guessed the exact opposite. I would have, too, except that I found this example, and I found many more. A number of them are in my book.

Translation theorists often use a continuum when ranging from more literal to less literal, and they'll place each version at a point somewhere along that continuum.



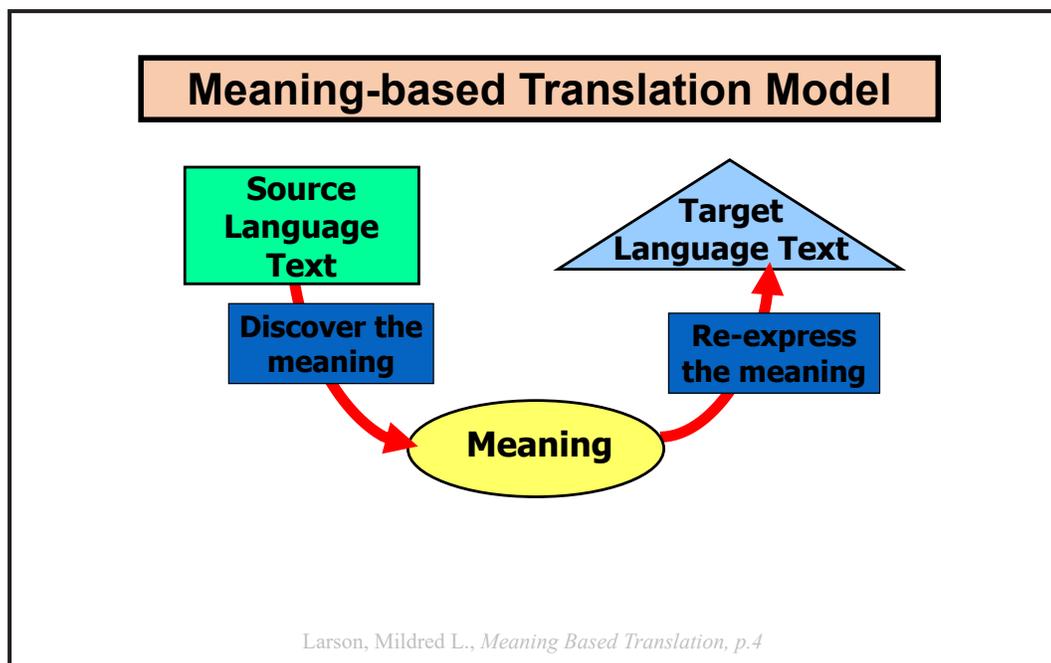
But I think it's more appropriate to define a range. But, actually, every version has two ranges. The ideal range is the stated goals of the translators. You'll read that in the preface or introduction to each Bible version. The real range is where their translational choices actually fall. So, for example, in Psalm 44:14, if a literal version was aiming to use a rendering within their ideal target range, it would be something like "shake their heads."



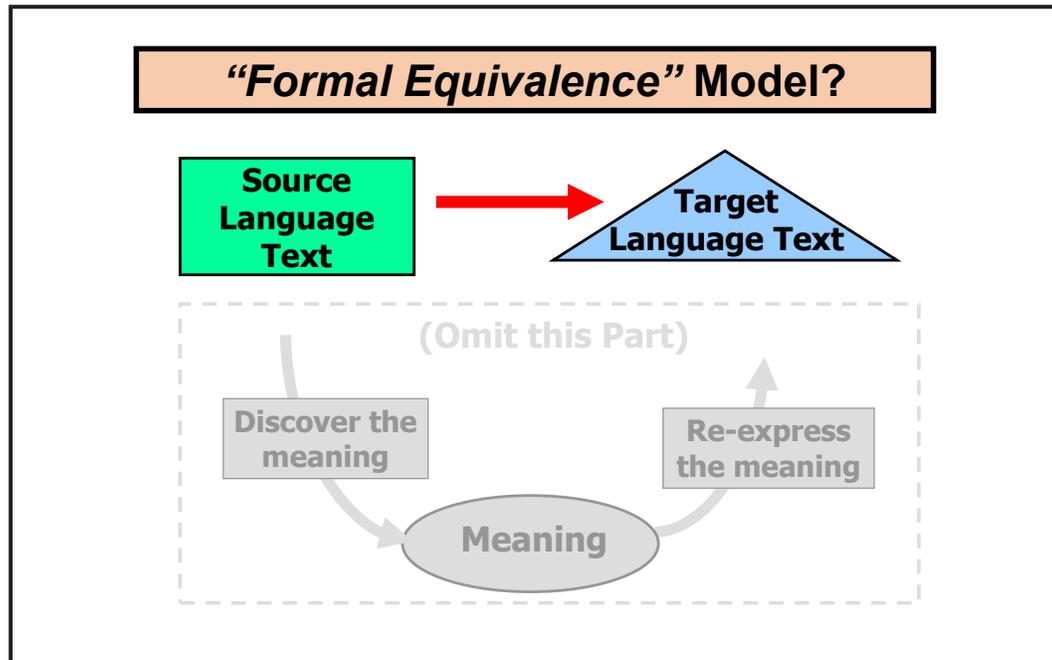
But in this particular case, the ESV and the NASB, appropriately so, I believe, chose to step far outside their target area, and they went with a rendering deep in idiomatic territory, “laughing stock.”

Most of the books and articles that have been written about Bible translation and about the debate between literal versus idiomatic focus almost exclusively on the ideal. It’s fine to talk about ideals, but if we let the debate and the discussion stay only in the philosophical realm of ideals, it often comes down to little more than a difference of opinion. We need to look at not only the ideal, but also the real. So, when the ESV, NASB, or any version outlines their target area, their stated objectives, in their preface or introduction, they’re making important statements about their translation philosophy. But we have to realize that they are also making important statements about their translation philosophy by the renderings they choose throughout Scripture. For example, in Psalm 44:14, the NASB and ESV translators are making the statement that it is appropriate translation practice to set aside a viable, word-focused rendering and replace it with a dynamic interpretation. That is appropriate translation practice, because of course they did it. In this case, the NASB and ESV would generally aim for the literal side, the NLT is on the idiomatic side, the NIV is closer to the middle but still on the idiomatic side. But in Psalm 44:14, we see them changing places. If we ask, “Which version is more literal?” it kind of depends on which verse. Now, it’s true that more often the NASB and ESV are going to be on the literal side and these other two versions on the other side. But you cannot assume, by picking up the NASB, the ESV, or any version that calls itself literal, for any given verse that they have translated it literally. You have to look it up.

Translation theorists have sometimes used a meaning-based translation model to describe the translation process, whereby the translator starts with the source-language text, digs beneath the surface to discover the meaning, and then re-expresses that meaning in appropriate target-language or receptive-language forms.



In response to the rising popularity of dynamic equivalence translation, the term “formal equivalence” was coined. Presumably, formal equivalence translation could be illustrated by a modified version of this chart, where you skip the discovery and re-expression stage and go directly from the form of the source-language text to the form of the target-language text.



But is this really the strategy that is used by our literal versions? No, not consistently. I don’t know of any version in English or any other language that consistently uses this form-to-form model.

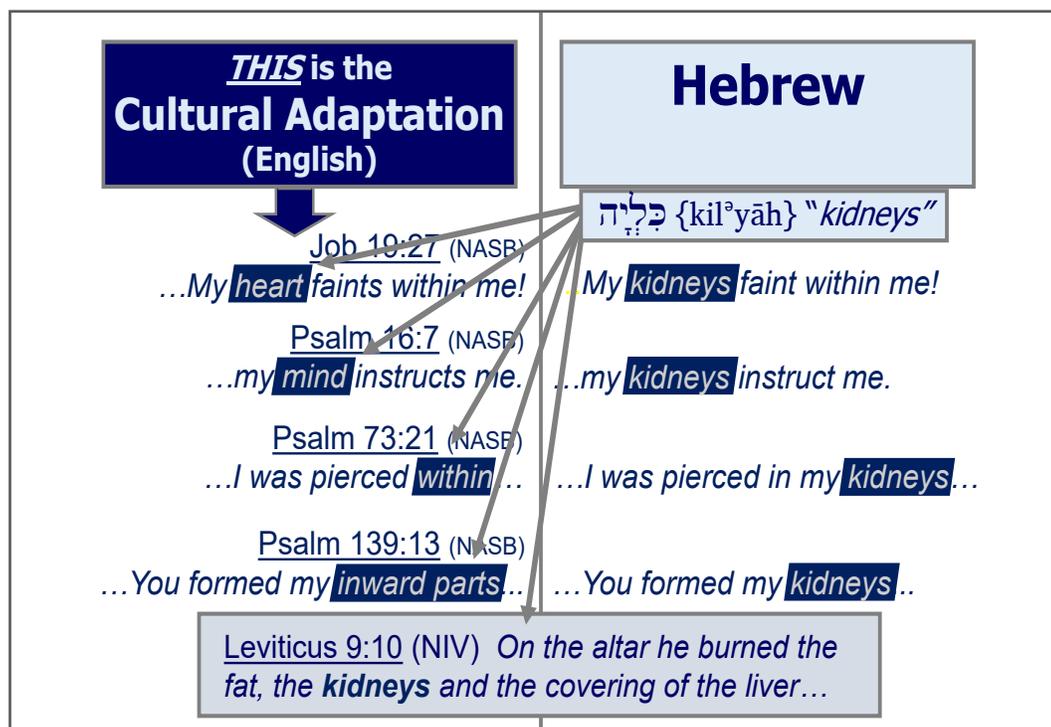
One of the best places to start in understanding the appropriate relationship between the form of the message and the meaning of the message is with idioms and figures of speech. In English, for example, we say that a person is “warm-hearted.” That means they are kind and compassionate. Well, if we wanted to use the form-to-form model to translate it into Lamogai, that is possible. We can do that: “antoine ingil.” But there’s a problem, because in Lamogai, “warm-hearted” means “angry.” So if I translate this literally, word-for-word, into Lamogai, have I been a faithful translator or an unfaithful translator?

Well, sometimes word-for-word is faithful, and it is accurate. But sometimes word-for-word will actually corrupt the inspired meaning of Scripture. A related term in English is “cold-hearted,” which means “ruthless, cruel.” Again, we can translate that literally into Lamogai: “antoine vris.” Unsurprisingly, in Lamogai, “cold-hearted” is simply the opposite of “warm-hearted.” It means that he’s not angry anymore; he’s calmed down; he’s cooled off.

A third, related term is “hard-hearted.” It means “stubborn, unteachable.” Again, we can translate that literally: “antoine namor.” This brings about a different kind of a problem. What in the world does that mean? It’s meaningless to the Lamogai people. So rather than saying, “his heart is hard”—deep beneath the surface, discover the meaning—they say, “veine kauk,”

which means “his ears are closed.” Of course, now we’ve changed to a completely different body part. Is that okay, or is that going farther than what would be allowable in good translation practice?

To shed light on this, let’s look at another example from a real language. Some languages use other body parts to describe the seat of the emotions and the seat of the intellect. For example, in Job 19:27, the NASB has “my *heart* faints within me.” If another Bible says, “my *kidneys* faint within me,” is that okay? Or, what about, “my *mind* instructs me” as “my *kidneys* instruct me” (Psa 16:7)? Or, similarly, “I was pierced *within*” versus “I was pierced in my *kidneys*” (Psa 73:21), and “You formed my *inward parts*” as “You formed my *kidneys*” (Psa 139:13). Now, I’m not going to ask you if you think this is okay. Actually, we don’t have to guess if that’s okay, because the latter renderings are the Hebrew; the former is the cultural adaptation. So, if one has any questions about this variety of renderings, one would have to ask the NASB translators (though most of them are gone.)



So, *kil'yāh* is the common Hebrew word for “kidneys,” which in the context of the offerings, where it’s talking about the physical body part, every English version translates it “kidneys” (cf. Lev 9:10). But in places where it’s used figuratively to speak of the seat of the emotions and the seat of the intellect, even our most literal versions translate it several different ways. The ESV and the NASB are both versions that I consider to be excellent, but they allow themselves quite a bit of leeway in the ways that they translated this Hebrew and Greek term. (It occurs once in the New Testament, the word for “kidneys,” used figuratively). Also, even though their objectives are very close, they didn’t translate it the same as each other. Sometimes, they both translated it “heart” (cf. Job 19:27), and sometimes they both translated it “mind” (cf. Jer 17:10; 20:12). Sometimes, the ESV translated it “heart,” while the NASB translated it “mind” (cf. Psa

7:9; 16:7; 26:2; Jer 12:2). Is there a difference between the heart and the mind in Scripture? I think there is. And, of course, there are the Hebrew and Greek words for “heart,” as well. But that could be difficult to prove just by the NASB and ESV renderings for the Hebrew and Greek words that have as their most common definition and translation “kidneys.”

	NASB	ESV	Hebrew
Job 19:27	heart	heart	<i>kidneys</i>
Psalms 7:9	minds	hearts	<i>kidneys</i>
16:7	mind	heart	<i>kidneys</i>
26:2	mind	heart	<i>kidneys</i>
73:21	within	heart	<i>kidneys</i>
139:13	inward parts	inward parts	<i>kidneys</i>
Prov. 23:16	inmost being	inmost being	<i>kidneys</i>
Jer. 11:20	feelings	heart	<i>kidneys</i>
12:2	mind	heart	<i>kidneys</i>
17:10	mind	mind	<i>kidneys</i>
20:12	mind	mind	<i>kidneys</i>
Lam. 3:13	inward parts	kidneys	<i>kidneys</i>
	NASB	ESV	Greek
Rev. 2:23	minds	mind	<i>kidneys</i>

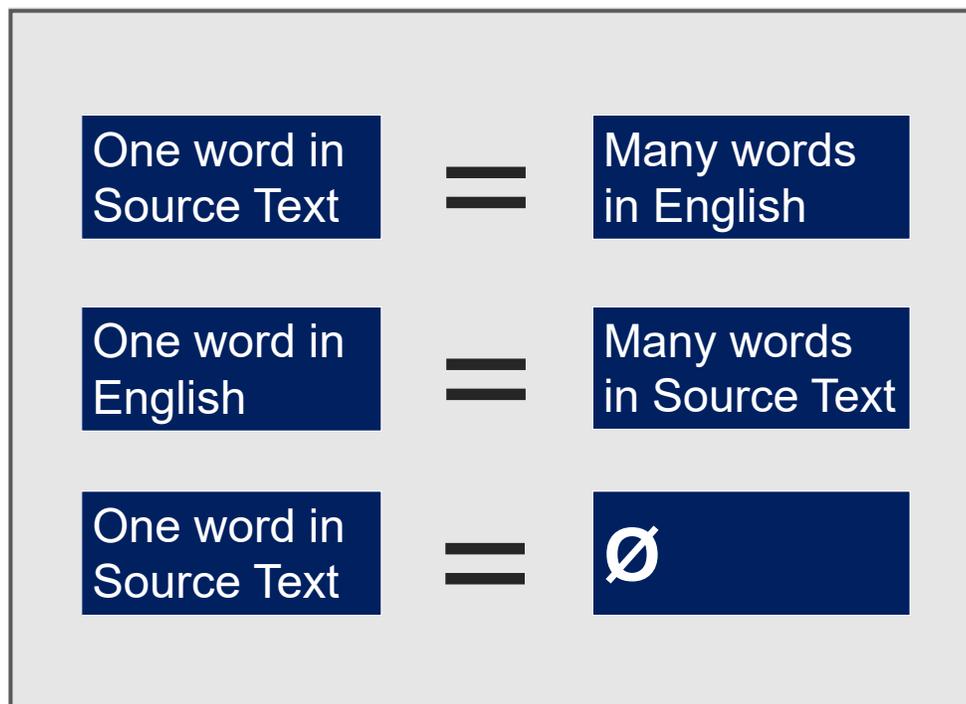
So, as a translator, as I’m pressing forward, I’m having to ask myself, “Are literal versions actually literal? And why did the literal versions set aside their goal of literalness so frequently, even in places where they really didn’t have to? And how is the average reader of a literal English version supposed to know which verses are literal and which ones aren’t?”

What about word-for-word translation? There are a lot of terms that are used to describe the various Bible versions, and one of the most unfortunate terms that I think has ever been used in talking about Bible translations is the term “word-for-word.” It really is a misleading term. Now, I’m not saying that anyone is intentionally trying to mislead anyone. But when Bible scholars talk about word-for-word translation, they know that does not mean that every word from the source text will be represented by a word in English. It also does not mean that every word in our English versions represents a word from the source text. But when the average English-speaking Bible reader who does not have direct access to the Hebrew and Greek hears the term “word-for-word,” I believe it implies to them a degree of correspondence with the original that does not exist in any English version. So, if we’re going to use the term “word-for-word,” we need to qualify it.

First of all, the Hebrew word *nāṭan*, which is most commonly defined as “to give,” is variously translated in the King James Version as “deliver up, direct, distribute, fasten, give up, grant, lay up, leave,” to name a few. Robert Young also has identified seventeen additional

idiomatic renderings for a total of eighty-four different English renditions of this particular Hebrew term.² Similarly, the Hebrew word *tôb*, which is generally defined as “good,” is translated in a variety of ways in the King James. This list of renderings includes nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs, single words, and multiple-word phrases. So, if we’re going to say we embrace a philosophy of word-for-word translation, we first have to qualify that by noting that word-for-word translation *does* mean that a single word from the source text could be translated dozens of different ways in English, and it could be changed into a noun, a verb, an adjective, an adverb, or a multiple-word phrase.

But it goes the other direction, too. Anytime you see the word “destroyed” in the King James Old Testament, it is one of at least forty Hebrew words, and you are not going to know which one it is unless you look it up, or unless you have the Hebrew Old Testament memorized. So, a single word in the source text could be translated dozens of different ways in English and changed into a noun, a verb, an adjective, an adverb, or a multiple-word phrase. This is what word-for-word translation allows. It also allows that a word in our English version could represent dozens of different words from the source text.



But it also means that a word in the source text sometimes is not translated or represented at all in some of our word-for-word versions. Again, I am not picking on the NASB, but since it calls itself the most literal, and since the NASB sometimes allows words to drop out, the rest of the versions probably do so even more frequently. For example, in Ezekiel 1:7, the translators

²Robert Young, “Preface,” *Young’s Literal Translation of the Holy Bible*, 3rd ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1898). According to Brunn, Young compiled these renderings because he felt the King James Version was too free, and that the KJV did not try nearly hard enough to be literal.

weighed their options regarding the difference between “*the soles of their feet*” or simply “their feet.” If you look at the context of this passage, you’ll see why I would say I prefer the NASB’s rendering, because the passage is talking about a calf. It’s saying that their feet were like the soles of a calf’s foot, which is what these versions say. And I’m not sure that I would describe a calf’s hoof as a foot, nor as having a sole.

Omissions in the “Most Literal Version”

Ezekiel 1:7

- Hebrew: “the soles of their feet”
 » NKJV: “the soles of their feet”
 » ESV: “the soles of their feet”
 » NASB: “ -- their feet”

Likewise, with Ezekiel 1:13, the NASB translators had to determine the difference between saying something looked “like torches” or “like *the appearance of torches*.” I guess there isn’t really a difference, so the NASB translators—I’m not saying they did something wrong here; I don’t think they did—decided that word-for-word translation allows us to let some of the words drop out. We don’t necessarily have to reflect every single word. When they did this, I’m positive they did it with full assurance in their hearts that they were not violating the profound wording in Revelation 22:18–19 against adding to or taking away from the words, the *logos*, of Scripture.

Omissions in the “Most Literal Version”

Ezekiel 1:13

- Hebrew: “like the appearance of torches”
 » NKJV: “like the appearance of torches”
 » ESV: “like the appearance of torches”
 » NASB: “ -- torches”

The ESV does something similar. What's the difference in Genesis 34:26 between Shechem's being killed "with *the edge of* the sword" and his being killed "*with* the sword"? While this represents a single word in Hebrew, the ESV translators decided that they did not necessarily have to translate and reflect every single word and still call their translation a word-for-word translation. Again, I am not putting down these versions. I hope every one of you owns a copy of the NASB and the ESV. But I hope you also own the NIV, the New Living Translation, and some of these other versions as well.

Omissions in the ESV

Genesis 34:26

- Hebrew: "Shechem...they killed with **the edge of** the sword"
 » NASB: "They killed...Shechem with **the edge of** the sword"
 » NKJV: "They killed...Shechem with **the edge of** the sword"
 » ESV: "They killed...Shechem with -- the sword"

Similarly, in Micah 2:7, the ESV translators determined that the word "spirit" was really being used figuratively. Though the Hebrew reads, "Has the *spirit* of the LORD grown short?" the ESV translators decided that this simply means that the LORD in the case was impatient. So they decided that they did not have to literally translate every word. We can let the word "spirit" drop out, because it's figurative; it's not intended to be literal. The NLT, however, does include a literal rendering of "spirit." So this is another case where the NLT in this sense is more literal than the ESV.

Omissions in the ESV

Micah 2:7

- Hebrew: "Has the **spirit** of the LORD grown short?"
 » NASB: "Is the **Spirit** of the LORD impatient?"
 » HCSB: "Is the **Spirit** of the LORD impatient?"
 » NLT: "Will the LORD's **Spirit** have patience?"
 » ESV: "Has -- the LORD grown impatient?"

Sometimes, words and phrases have been allowed to drop out for the sake of appropriateness. According to Louw and Nida, for instance, “[i]n some languages . . . a reference to a toilet may seem inappropriate for the Scriptures . . .”³ The word for “toilet” in Greek occurs two times in the New Testament, once in Matthew 15:17 and once in Mark 7:19. Do you know how many times it occurs in some of our most literal versions? Zero. They decided just to let it drop out. You know the context. Food goes into the stomach, it is eliminated, and you get the rest. You don’t have to say it. So the NASB, the NKJV, the HCSB, and the ESV decided, appropriately, I believe, that this two-word Greek phrase, *eis aphedróna*, could simply be allowed to drop out. We don’t have to literally translate every single word. Some versions, however, decided that they would go ahead and translate it. So it’s really a judgment call: either you include it or you don’t. Both are acceptable. Interestingly, in this case, one of the versions that does represent this Greek phrase is the NLT. They translated it “into the sewer.” So this is yet another case where the NLT is actually more literal than the NKJV, HCSB, NASB, or ESV.

Of course, along with allowing words to drop out, every version adds words that have no counterpart in the Greek or the Hebrew. For example, in Matthew 1:6, the NASB adds a four-word phrase “Bathsheba who had been” to the literal Greek phrase “. . . the father of Solomon by . . . the wife of Uriah” to yield the longer phrase “. . . the father of Solomon by *Bathsheba who had been* the wife of Uriah. . .” The name Bathsheba does not occur anywhere in the Greek New Testament; you will not find it once. But it does occur in Matthew 1:6 of the NASB. Along with adding the name Bathsheba, the NASB translators decided to add the three-word phrase “who had been” to make it clear that even though Bathsheba had previously been Uriah’s wife, she wasn’t still his wife at the time that David became the father of Solomon. That would mean that Solomon was conceived in an adulterous relationship. We know that the baby that was conceived in adultery died when he was just a few days old, but that was not Solomon.

In many more places, whether for clarity or naturalness, the NASB frequently does what the rest of the literal versions do even more frequently. Now there seems to be an important factor in all of this that I think maybe a lot of people don’t think about very much. Or maybe they don’t even know. And that is, when it comes to New Testament translation, English and Koine Greek are both Indo-European languages. So the degree of literalism you have in some of our English New Testaments is largely due to the fact that the translators just started translating from one Indo-European language into a distantly related language. In Papua New Guinea, we don’t talk a lot about word-for-word translation. Do you want to know why? Well, the translator of the Simbari language shared this example with me. This is the longest word they have found so far—46 letters—*mabomollurolovonekumokalokwowo’ujuko’mnó’juki*. It means “had he not delivered us.” Well, I’ll tell you, you cannot break this word down at all—all of the markers, the prefixes, the suffixes, they all have to be there in exactly that order or else you haven’t communicated meaning. Now, clearly if we spoke a language like Simbari, with characteristically much longer words than what we have, I don’t think there would be nearly as much discussion about word-for-word translation.

³Johannes P. Louw and Eugene A Nida, eds., *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament based on Semantic Domains* (New York: UBS, 1989), item 7.72.

According to the current edition of the *Ethnologue*, there are 7,106 known living languages. Of those, 445 are classified as Indo European, so that means that ninety-four percent of the languages spoken around the world today are not related to Greek in the way that English is. So if I base my entire understanding of New Testament translation on what it takes to translate from Koine Greek into its distant cousin English, I am really looking at an extremely narrow slice of the pie. Now for me, working on a translation in a radically dissimilar language in Papua New Guinea, I faced some challenges that those translating our English versions would not even imagine. I'm sure that many of you have had the opportunity to study Greek, so if you haven't and if you're a pastor, you probably have sometimes mentioned a Greek word and said, "Well, that's the word from which we get our English word"—and then you say a word that sounds a little bit like it. Can you guess how many times I said that while teaching in Lamogai? Zero!

Every translator has to deal with ambiguity. I'm sure you've all seen this one in Matthew 6:13. These verses are pretty much right down the middle. Some of them will have "deliver us from evil" or "from the evil one," or vice versa. Some of them will have a footnote at the bottom. Those of you who have studied this know that this is not a textual issue; this is a genuine ambiguity in the Greek text, and I would like to say that the translators of all of these versions weighed the options. Hopefully they prayed about it. But guess what? They didn't come to the same conclusion.

Ambiguities in NT Greek			
Matthew 6:13			
KJV	...deliver us from evil.	NKJV	...deliver us from the evil one.
NASB	...deliver us from evil.	ASV	...deliver us from the evil one.
RSV	...deliver us from evil.	NRSV	...rescue us from the evil one.
ESV	...deliver us from evil.	HCSB	...deliver us from the evil one.

Well, as a translator translating into Lamogai I had to deal with this ambiguity, but I had to deal with a lot of ambiguities that the translators translating into English never had to even think about. One area is with the Greek genitive, which is ambiguous, as it is often translated into the English when it is not communicating pure possession. For example, what is the meaning of "steadfastness of hope" in 1 Thessalonians 1:3? Well, it could mean that they were steadfast in continuing to hope for Jesus Christ, or it could mean that they were steadfast in their Christian walk because of their hope in Jesus Christ. Either it means their hope was

steadfast or their hope causes steadfastness. As I look at the more idiomatic versions, they're split about fifty-fifty on this interpretation. Interestingly, I looked up several commentaries and Bible teachers, and the vast majority of them will advocate for one of the interpretations, but fail to acknowledge the existence of the other interpretation. I'm not faulting them for choosing one interpretation. It was impossible to translate this into Lamogai without choosing one of these interpretations. And I didn't do it arbitrarily. I didn't flip a coin. I looked at the context. Yet when I see Bible teachers and commentators choosing one and not even mentioning that another one exists, that seems to call into question the value of retaining ambiguity in translation. The reason we do that is so we don't rule out other possible interpretations.

Now another area that we had to seriously consider in Lamogai is abstract nouns. Greek has many abstract nouns, and English also has many abstract nouns, so most abstract nouns from Greek can be translated quite literally in English without sacrificing meaning, or even naturalness. But there are many of these concepts that simply do not exist in the noun form in Lamogai or many other languages. We use nouns that you can see and touch, or that you can carry on a conversation with. So with all of these nouns, we have to figure out a verb phrase or some other form to translate it. The thing that we don't realize as English speakers is that we are really very odd in this sense. We think it's very normal to have a noun-centered language. What we don't realize is that most languages around the world are verb-centered. We are really odd, and it just so happens that Greek is odd in the same way, so most of us are totally unaware of it.

Take the the word "love," for example. In Lamogai, love is always a verb. But to make it even a little more complicated, the only way to actually communicate any meaning is to explicitly say who is loving whom. So with that in mind, how would you suggest translating that simple little clause in 1 Cor. 13:4, "Love is patient"? Remember that love must be a verb, and you must state who is loving whom. First, we're going to look at the context. So it could be talking about God loving people, people loving God, or people loving people. It might be talking about all three, but that's not an option in Lamogai. We'll have to choose which one is primarily the focus here. The others would have to be taught by extension and application. We look at the context. Paul says "If I speak in the tongue of angels." "*I, I, I.*" Paul is including himself in this exhortation so it seems that 1 Cor. 13 is primarily talking about people expressing love. But to whom? Again, we look at the context: "Love is patient. Love is kind. It does not envy. It does not boast. It is not proud. It is not rude." So in what context are people generally patient, kind, envious, vulnerable, proud, and rude? With other people. So 1 Cor. 13 is primarily talking about people loving people. With that in mind, the only way to translate this into Lamogai such that the translation carries any kind of meaning is something like, "The person who loves people acts patiently for people." Now, I'm open to suggestions, but I refuse to translate this verse or any other verse in a way that would come through as pure nonsense to the Lamogai speakers and Lamogai readers.

There are other places where love is a noun, but few may be more difficult to translate than 1 Cor. 13:4. What are you going to do with 1 John 4:7, "God is love"? Remember, love must be a verb, and you must state who is loving whom. A literal rendering of this in Lamogai would sound something like this: "God is his inside loving toward." Guess what? It sounds just as ridiculous in Lamogai as it does in English. The thing that I had to keep in mind is that God is sovereign. God is the One who inspired words and phrases and clauses like "God is love"

and “love is patient,” and the He is the very same God who created the Lamogai language and many other languages around the world in such a form that it is actually impossible for them to come anywhere close to reflecting this literally. So if literal translation is God’s universal standard for translation, then I’m sorry: Lamogai and many other languages are automatically disqualified from ever having a faithful or accurate translation.

So, of course we realize that the idiomatic versions include more interpretation than the literal versions. I am not willing to defend every interpretative choice of some of the versions that I mentioned, by the way. I mentioned the NIV and the NLT, but I don’t agree with everything that they’ve done in every verse, nor do I agree with everything that any version has done. As a career translator, I probably read English Bible versions a bit more critically than most people. If I threw a version out just because I didn’t like something in it, I wouldn’t have any Bibles left to read. I’ve never found a version I agree with one hundred percent. But I’ve never found one I disagree with one hundred percent. With interpretation, how much is ok? Maybe when it’s only absolutely necessary. You don’t have to look very far to realize that every version interprets in many contexts when it was not absolutely necessary. I mean, we could say that it’s okay to interpret in Matthew 6:13 in English because every version has to. We have no choice. And in Lamogai, it’s fine to choose one of these two, because you just have to. But in English, let’s not do that interpretation. Or in 1 Cor. 13:4, it’s alright to interpret it in Lamogai because you have to but, like I said, every English version interprets in many places where it was just a judgment call on the part of the translator that they didn’t really have to. It wasn’t absolutely necessary.

How Much Interpretation Is Okay?

Matthew 6:13

- “deliver us from evil”
- “deliver us from the evil one”

1 Cor. 13:4

- “love is patient”
- “the person who loves people acts patiently toward people”

Here’s an interesting example of that in 1 Sam 14:14. The Hebrew reads “half a yoke,” which, figuratively speaking, is half an acre, since apparently an acre is what a single pair of oxen could plow in one day. So many versions have “half an acre,” but in this case the KJV

translates it “an half acre of land, which a yoke of oxen might plow.” It sounds more like The Message in this case.

One more interesting example is Daniel 11:4, which literally reads “four winds of the heavens.” Many versions translated it that way, including the ESV, NIV, and The Voice. But interestingly enough, the NASB decided to translate it “the four points of the compass,” even though the compass as a navigational tool wasn’t invented until centuries after the book of Daniel was written. I’ll say that this is within allowable limits, but it’s certainly not literal, and this level of interpretation certainly was not absolutely necessary.

Conclusion

As English speakers, we are incredibly blessed to have a wide variety of English versions. Sometimes, however, rather than recognizing this as a blessing, I think it ends up becoming a curse, and we want to clobber people over the head with our favorite version and say, “Your version is no good.” Well, I think it is perfectly acceptable and appropriate for everyone to have a favorite version. You may read my book and not change what your favorite version is. That is fine with me. What I don’t think is fine is to criticize and condemn other versions that are not your favorite, because for almost everything you would criticize in other versions I can show you places where your favorite version many times does the same thing in other contexts. So I recommend that we as English speakers move beyond the argument of which version is better. I think as English-speaking Christians, we should regularly use a variety of versions. Don’t choose to use only one Bible version. Those who use only one version are limiting the potential that is available to them. The Lamogai people wouldn’t understand this argument about competing translation philosophies. They don’t fight over which version to use. They only have one. They’re stuck with the one that I helped translate. I know it’s not perfect. No translation is perfect. But they are very thankful to have God’s Word in their own language, because many language groups around the world do not have God’s Word in their language.

Translation as Transmission



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Introduction

One of the questions that motivated me to write this essay is: why are there still so many languages without any Scripture whatsoever? Doesn't God want His people to have His word? This is one of the mysteries of life, but I firmly stand on the sovereign purposes of God. I will never have an adequate answer to why one part of the body of Christ has such an abundance of translations and different versions while other parts of the body have virtually none.

As I have searched for a possible response to this question, it is encouraging to reflect on how the global Bible translation movement is part of what God has been doing since the beginning of time. The first instance of translation was divine-human communication: God communicating with Adam and Eve. But it is also important to realize that Bible translation is just one part of what God is doing. God's mission in this world is not all about Bible translation. We have been very encouraged by the writings of Philip Jenkins, Lamin Sanneh, and Andrew Walls that have underscored the importance of Scripture translation, but this is not the ultimate purpose of God. His purpose is the reconciliation of all things, the restoration of *shalom*—that everything be as it should be. Bible translation, of course, plays a part in this.

Transmission

Throughout the history of God making Himself known in this world, there is a process we often refer to as transmission. Transmission is sometimes conceived of in a rather simplistic way. Perhaps we imagine a solitary scribe copying ancient biblical texts, but the process involves much more than copying. Consider the earliest texts of the Hebrew Bible that would have been written in a very different paleo-Hebrew script. This script is not what we see in our copies of BHS or BHQ. According to Wegner:

The change from paleo-Hebrew to Square script probably took place between the fifth and third centuries BC and would probably have been hastened by the Jews who returned from the exile, for their *lingua franca*, or trade language, in Babylon was Aramaic.¹

¹Paul D. Wegner, *The Journey from Texts to Translations: The Origin and Development of the Bible* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2005), 165.

How does this happen, that one script takes over another? But this is exactly what we see: a Hebrew text written in Aramaic script. This is part of the history of transmission, and it was motivated by the Spirit of God for the interests of the people of God—namely, for them to have understandable Scriptures. This required updating, editing, and changing the form of the biblical text. As Angel Sáenz-Badillos expresses,

The preservation of classical Hebrew is inseparably connected with how the text of the Bible was transmitted down the centuries. After a long period of formation in which the various texts were expanded, modified, and, after the exile, adjusted in a variety of ways, and in which the paleo-Hebrew script gave way to Aramaic square characters, the text of each book began to stabilize.²

Some might find it unsettling to discuss modifications and adjustments to the text, but it is important to affirm that our trust and faith is not in the text, but in God Himself who has sovereignly overseen the transmission of His word through the centuries.

Transmission through Translation

What if we were to consider a kind of word play here: transmission through translation? The pages of Scripture are full of examples of translation. We often read past these examples without realizing what must have taken place. For example, Isaac sent Jacob to Paddan-Aram (Gen 28:1–5). Aramaic was spoken very early in what we tend to conceive of as the Hebrew-speaking world in which the Hebrew text was written. So, how did Jacob communicate with these Aramaic-speaking people? Was he already bilingual or did he have to learn Aramaic?

And later on, what about Joseph in Egypt? When his brothers were received by him, he spoke to them in Egyptian, through an interpreter (Genesis 42:23). It was only when Joseph was overcome by emotion and sent everyone out of the room except his brothers that he spoke to them in Hebrew, revealing his true identity (Genesis 45). But we see no traces of Egyptian in the pages of Genesis! This is an example of transmission through translation. Translation is very much a part of Scripture as it comes to us.

Consider also the book of Proverbs. The inclusion of Egyptian proverbs is another classic example of transmission through translation. As Arnold and Beyer note,

The relationship between the Egyptian proverbs and this section of the biblical book (especially 22:17–23:14) is too close to be coincidental. Some scholars have argued that the Egyptian text was translated from an older Hebrew version. But most agree that the Hebrew proverbs were modeled on an Egyptian original. Indeed, the Hebrew text tends to clarify its Egyptian counterpart in places. Any doubt about the direction of borrowing was resolved by recent findings that require a new date of composition for the Egyptian text. It is now virtually certain that the *Instruction of Amenemope* came from around 1200 BC, over two hundred years before Solomon.³

²Angel Sáenz-Badillos, *A History of the Hebrew Language* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 76.

³Bill T. Arnold and Brian E. Beyer, *Encountering the Old Testament: A Christian Survey* (Grand Rapids:

These proverbs would have originally been in some variety of Egyptian, but we do not have Egyptian in our Hebrew Bibles. Again, this is an example of transmission through translation.

And much to the delight of many seminary students, Daniel and Ezra are in both Hebrew and Aramaic, which forces us to study both of these languages. Here again we see evidence of the multilingual environment of the world out of which the Scriptures came. We could also consider the different theories about the Aramaic or Hebraic world out of which the New Testament in Greek emerged. Once again, this illustrates the principle of transmission through translation.

I will not dwell on each of these, but as we consider what we call “the Bible,” there is a multiplicity, a diversity, of textual traditions. Consider the Septuagint, or rather the Septuagintal traditions, because there is not one unitary Septuagint. There are also the Greek texts attributed to Symmachus and Theodotian, as well as Origen’s *Hexapla*. It is fascinating to consider the *Hexapla*, the six-version Old Testament text. What an extraordinary feat this was, even before MacBooks were available. If you ever have a chance to open a copy of the *Hexapla*, just try to absorb the amazing scholarship and the concern that Origen had for the biblical text.

We can also consider the Aramaic Targums. The best examples are *Targum Onkelos* of the Pentateuch and *Targum of the Prophets*. What motivated the development of the targums? The people of God and their desire to understand. Language use was changing. People were speaking Aramaic more than Hebrew in many places, which reflects a process of transmission through translation.

Consider also the conversation Jesus had with the two disciples on the road to Emmaus (Luke 24:13–35). Jesus explained how the Scriptures spoke of Him; in this way, Jesus was involved in the process of transmission. We can also consider the instructions of Paul to Timothy to teach these truths to trustworthy people who will be able to pass them on to others (2 Tim 2:2)—in other words, to be involved in the process of transmission. These are examples of transmission directly from the pages of Scripture.

Ancient Versions

One of the things we find throughout history is the incredible diversity of the contexts into which the transmission of the biblical text through translation has occurred. We often work with rather simple definitions of translation, but it is rather complex to adequately explain the phenomenon of translation.

I would like to suggest that the ancient versions, which are typically studied as textual witnesses to what we refer to as the original text, have value in and of themselves as evidence of the rich history of the transmission and translation of the sacred text. Consider the following list of translations:

Baker Academic, 2008), 319.

Syriac: mid-second century
Latin: late second century
Coptic: third century
Gothic: fourth century
Armenian: early fifth century
Georgian: mid-fifth century
Ge'ez or Ethiopic: late fifth century
Nubian: sixth century
Arabic: eighth century
Sogdian: ninth century

These ancient versions represent fascinating chapters in the history of Bible translation. It is important, however, to avoid evaluating this history by modern standards or current statistics of translation progress. Consider the following citation from Robert Wilken's *The First Thousand Years*:

Though Nicholas had supported the Western mission in the Balkans, he was nevertheless very interested in the work of Cyril and Methodius. In 867 he invited the two brothers to Rome, and on their way they stopped in Venice, where they met stiff opposition to the use of Slavonic in the liturgy. The local bishops and clergy informed the two brothers that there were only three sacred languages: Hebrew, Greek, and Latin. Cyril would have nothing of their linguistic imperiousness.⁴

From this early era of Bible translation, I suggest that the view expressed here of “only three sacred languages” played a significant role in influencing translation strategies during this time period. Given this notion of sacred languages, it is quite remarkable that so many translations were completed during this era. I will say more about this later.

Publications like Philip Jenkins's *The Lost History of Christianity* have enhanced our understanding of the global character of Christianity in previous centuries. We are not the first to see a global expansion of Christianity. According to Jenkins,

By the seventh century, the Nestorians had an elaborate network of provinces and dioceses in Persia and neighboring lands, and they were naturally looking north and east. After all, the Persian Empire then stretched deep into central Asia, into the far western territories of what is now China. Already by the sixth century, Christian missionaries were reaching into the heart of Asia, and from the very beginning they recognized the need for vernacular scriptures, inventing alphabets where necessary. Some bold spirits even translated holy books into the language of the Huns.⁵

As seen in the list of ancient versions and in this citation from Jenkins, Bible translation was an integral part of the growth and expansion of the church. As stated previously, however, translation strategies were influenced by views of sacred languages. In a similar way, Bible translation strategies in the modern era have been influenced by views of language that come from the modern discipline of descriptive linguistics, namely, that every language needs to be studied

⁴Robert Louis Wilken, *The First Thousand Years* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2012), 349.

⁵Philip Jenkins, *The Lost History of Christianity: The Thousand-Year Golden Age of the Church in the Middle East, Africa, and Asia—and How It Died* (San Francisco: Harper One, 2009), 62–63.

and described in its own right. In light of this, consider the following citation from Lamin Sanneh:

In Bible translation, hitherto taboo ethnic groups and their languages and cultures were effectively destigmatized while, at the same time, superior cultures were stripped of their right to constitute themselves into exclusive standards of access to God. In affirming weak and stigmatized languages and cultures, Bible translation bade fair to Western cultural prerequisites for membership in the human family. Bible translation breathed new life into local languages and equipped local populations for participation in the emerging new world context. This action results from Bible translation being based on the idea that all languages are equal in terms of their value and right in mediating the truth of God; but that, by the same token, they are all equally inadequate in relation to that truth. No language can claim exclusive prerogative on the truth of God, just as, conversely, no language is intrinsically unworthy to be a language of faith and devotion.⁶

Sanneh has correctly identified the fact that in the modern era languages have been considered “equal in terms of their value and right in mediating the truth of God,” but this was not always the case. Bible translation, like any human endeavor, is subject to the ebb and flow of history, and has been impacted by the rule of various empires, the era of discovery, as well as the dynamics of colonialism and post colonialism.

So, in my attempt to answer the question of why Bible translation is still unfinished, I stand firmly on the sovereign purposes of God. In some mysterious way, God is using the flow of history to accomplish His purposes.

Conclusion

In conclusion, I offer two points that emerge from this whirlwind review of the history of transmission and translation. First, consider *the sovereign rule of God in human history*. All of history (political, philosophical, cultural, etc.) is used by God to accomplish His sovereign purposes. He is the one who designs the flow of history and the interconnectedness of all human endeavors, because God is the master at bringing all things together for His purposes. Second, consider *the non-uniformity of human history*. To be human is to change. We cannot assume that we could go back, as we are today, to five hundred years before Christ. People were different then, and we cannot assume that history has been uniform.

Translation and transmission—or transmission in translation—go where the church goes. It is a clear lesson from the history of the church that transmission and translation go together in a constant desire to have Scripture, the sacred text, in an understandable form wherever the church is found. Transmission and translation follow with the flow of history. The change of empires to nation states, to the modern era of discovery, to the era of globalization—these are all things that God is using in His purposes to bring His word to His people.

⁶Lamin Sanneh, “Domesticating the Transcendent. The African Transformation of Christianity: Comparative Reflections on Ethnicity and Religious Mobilization in Africa,” in Athalya Brenner-Idan and Jan Willem van Henten, ed. *Bible Translation on the Threshold of the Twenty-First Century: Authority, Reception, Culture and Religion* (London: Sheffield Academic Press, 2002), 72.

Transmission and translation are deeply embedded in culture. There is no process of translation or transmission that is outside of or independent from human culture. This is because both transmission and translation are incarnational. The translation of the divine into human—Jesus becoming the fullness of God in human form—is an act of translation which is incarnational, so that the text *transmitted through translation* speaks to our ever-changing contexts in the global mission of the church.

If the text and its transmission and translation were not embedded in culture, then it would have no connection to us; it would be alien to us. Instead, it is part of the mystery and the wisdom of God that the whole process is incarnational. It is a privilege to be a part of what God is doing, and to participate in the global movement of Bible translation in this world that is under His sovereign rule.

Equipping the Global Church to Translate the Bible into Its Own Language



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Introduction

We are living in a new age. This is always true, and so we have to continually reexamine our strategies for how we relate to the world. But this statement seems “more true” now than it has ever been, with the recent advent of the digital age and its enormous advances in the areas of information storage and access. These advances directly affect the field with which this article is concerned, namely, Bible translation and distribution.

The Traditional Approach

Soon after the modern Bible translation movement began, a strategy was developed that entailed a linguistically-trained missionary going to a people group, spending a decade or two (or more) learning that group’s language, overseeing a translation of the New Testament into that language, then sending the manuscript off for printing and putting the resulting book under strict copyright, usually with a Bible society.

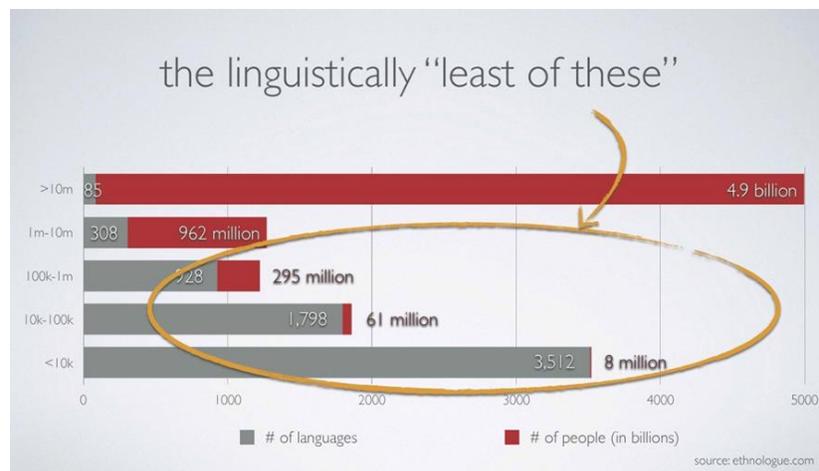


Figure 1¹

¹All of the figures in this article were created by Tim Jore. The source for this data is www.ethnologue.com, accessed November 15, 2014.

Now, eighty years later, the world has changed. Yet most Bible translation programs that I am aware of follow basically the same pattern, and most languages still do not have a Bible, let alone a New Testament.² This is not for lack of effort, but the methods that were necessary eighty years ago to transfer biblical meaning into a new language and distribute it to a people group took a great deal of time and money. The number of linguistically-trained missionaries available for the task was also limited. Because of these constraints, mission agencies had to pick and choose where to allocate their people and resources. Logically, the way to reach the greatest number of people in the least amount of time was to translate the Bible into the languages with the most speakers.

Consider Figure 1, where the languages of the world are sorted into groups according to the number of people who speak them. At the top of the chart, we see that there are eighty five languages that have greater than ten million speakers each, making up a total of almost five billion people! It would make a lot of sense to start there, and then move to the next category with almost a billion people, and keep moving down the chart. While Bible translation has been done in languages across this spectrum, the languages nearest to the top have received most of the attention and now have the most biblical resources. The languages at the bottom have received little attention relative to their numbers. Again, this is not due to a lack of effort, but there are so many of them and so many that are difficult to get to that it is hard to make much progress there. These are the small languages, with relatively few speakers, who have been told to wait until we can get to them. They are the linguistically “least of these” (Matt 25:40).

The Gateway Language Strategy

It is time to ask ourselves if there might be another way that we could reach these people. Is there a different model that we could use, given the tools that we have now? We have moved beyond the printing press: this is the digital age. We have the internet and smart phones. What can we do in this new digital era, and how can we leverage these new digital tools to reach people in ways that were not possible before?

²According to www.wycliffe.net/resources/scriptureaccessstatistics/tabid/99/Default.aspx, accessed February 19, 2014.

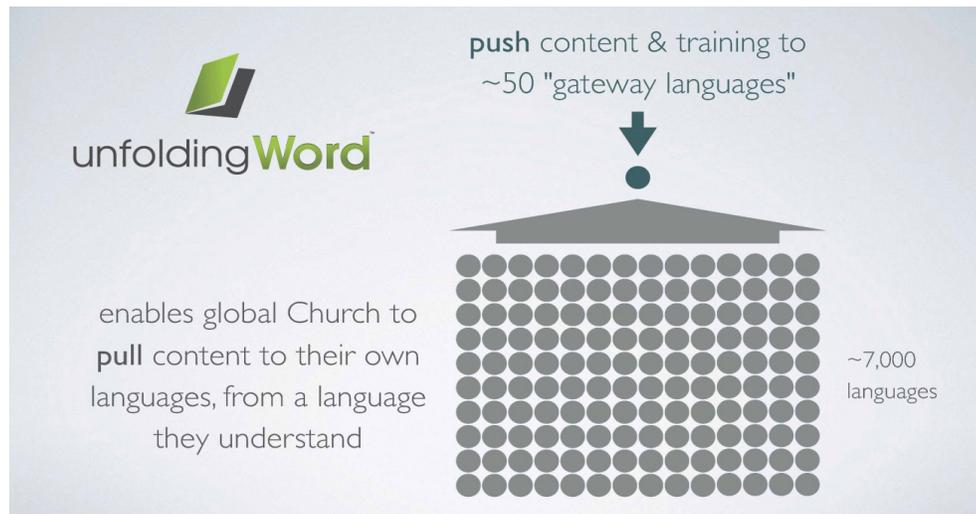


Figure 2

As an attempt to answer that question, Wycliffe Associates, Distant Shores Media, and others have formed a partnership called unfoldingWord.³ It is a brand and a website that will host a collection of resources under that name that we will provide to the Church for the purpose of Bible translation, free and unrestricted by copyright.

One of the problems with the traditional model of Bible translation is that it is a “push” model. It relies on someone “delivering” the Bible to each language group in the world. Given that it can take two or three decades to deliver the Bible to each language, and that there are about seven thousand languages in the world, this model requires a lot of time. But what if we changed the model such that we only need to “push” the biblical content and the information needed for translation to roughly fifty languages? Then, what if we made all of this content freely available for smaller languages to “pull” for themselves, so that the Church in each language group could be empowered to translate the Bible into their own language, without waiting for someone to “deliver” it to them? That would speed things up (see Figure 2). In fact, we think that this strategy could allow the Church to have adequate biblical content in every language and for every people group within ten years.

How can this be possible? Because of another fact of the modern era: there are no longer any monolingual minority language groups. All language groups, even very small ones, have at least dozens, and probably hundreds, of speakers who are also fluent in one or more languages of wider communication. Remember the eighty five languages at the top of figure 1? We believe that there are speakers of at least one of those languages in every people group in the world. These are the “gateway” languages—the languages through which it is possible to reach all of the other languages on earth. We are hopeful that the minimum number of gateway languages is closer to fifty, but if we have to “push” biblical translation content to eighty five languages, then we will do it.

³Other agencies interested in Bible translation are invited to join. Check us out at <https://unfolding-word.org>.

This is our vision: to empower the “linguistically least” to end their own Bible poverty by creating unrestricted biblical content, unrestricted translation training, and unrestricted translation tools that will be freely available in a language they understand well, and that will enable Church networks worldwide to own the process of translating the Bible for themselves.

Door43

How will this work? We will put all of our translation tools translated into the gateway languages, and the gateway language translations of biblical content, on a website called Door43 (from Col 4:3 (NRS), “pray for us as well that God will open to us a door for the word...”). Then the global church can “pull” the content into their own local languages by going to the website, finding a source language that they understand, clicking on it and then reading and translating from that. We have a list of most of the world’s languages, so then they can just find theirs, click on it, and start translating. This will open the “space” reserved for each language of the world, ready for someone to start filling in the content translated from a gateway language.⁴ Their translation will then be listed under that name. If the person’s language is not listed, we can easily create a space for it. If the need for additional gateway languages is identified, then we will make sure the full content of the website is translated into each one. For all of this we are counting on the partnership of the global church. We cannot do it without them.

translationStudio

The Door43 website works well for those who have a good internet connection. But for many people, internet connections are poor or they can connect only when they go into town. For these people, we have a way of working offline, then uploading content when they have the opportunity. We have created a translation app for tablets and smartphones called translationStudio. Using translationStudio, people can translate right on those devices. To go along with that is another app, translationKeyboard.⁵ You may be wondering how they would just start typing in their language if their script is completely different than Roman. We have made virtual keyboards available for the scripts used in the major languages of the world so hopefully the person can find a script that they understand and adapt it for their language. If they need more symbols, these can be added. We have a team working on keyboards now and also working on the Keyboard Studio app so that users can create their own keyboards, choosing the symbols that they need out of preexisting Unicode sets.

⁴The index of languages is here: <https://door43.org/home?do=index>.

⁵These apps are available for both Android and Apple environments. Search the iTunes app store or the Google Play store, under translationstudio and translationkeyboard (no spaces).



Figure 3

Figure 3 is a picture of a tablet running the translationStudio app. The screen has two main sections: the text of a Bible story or Bible verses in a gateway language on the left, and a blank area on the right that looks like a lined notebook page where a person can translate using translationKeyboard, which slides up from the bottom. A directory of available Bible stories or books slides in from the left, and a panel of verse-specific translation helps and notes slides in from the right. We believe that this makes the best possible use of a small screen, and will allow Bible translation by anyone, anywhere, on devices that are increasingly inexpensive and proliferating throughout the world. In places where the church is persecuted and endangered and does not have freedom to use the internet, they can simply download the app once or pass it around on an SD card and then translate off-line. When someone travels to where there is a more secure environment, they can upload the translation to the website where it will be available for further revision, downloading, and printing.

The Problem of Copyright Restrictions

One thing that has become more challenging in the digital age is the problem of copyright. In the traditional model, Bible translators would gather a collection of Bibles and translate from them. But on an internet-based model, this cannot be done. You cannot just put things on the Internet that are copyrighted. That has been a big roadblock. We would like to be able to put everything on the website that we use as resources for translation and say, “There you go; now you have everything you need.” But we can’t do that. It is amazing, but true, that almost every Bible translation, and almost everything written as a help to Bible translation, is copyrighted and cannot be made available on the internet to the global church without permission. Perhaps equally amazing is the reluctance of most copyright-owners to give us permission to make their work freely accessible for Bible translation. Maybe that is because this concept is so new, and it will take some time for the mindset of the print world to catch up to the possibilities of the digital age. So we will continue to ask for those who are willing to license their Bible

translation material for the use of the Church on our website, under the Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike license.⁶ This is the kind of licensing that makes sense for the internet age, and for works that were created for the express purpose of helping the Church to translate the Bible. Fortunately, this idea seems to be gaining traction, and a few different groups are starting to use it.

In the meantime, we are creating our own Bible translation helps and training materials that are open-licensed. We are in the process of creating a full suite of tools, including Open Bible Stories, Open Bible Lexicon, Open Bible Maps, Open Bible Notes, etc. We would like to put on a website all of the categories of resources that a Bible translator would like to have so that these resources can be accessed from anywhere there is an internet connection.

Open Bible Stories

What we are aiming for is the translation of the Bible in all of these language groups. While the Bible is of course the hardest thing to translate, it is also the most crucial, since the Church needs it. Furthermore, we are asking the global church to translate the Bible for themselves, even though they have not been trained to do it. So we want to begin by training them, and part of our training strategy is to encourage people not to start with translating the Bible, but to start with translating Bible stories. So we have created a set of fifty key Bible stories that span from creation to the second coming of Christ. As they are translating these stories, they are being trained in how to translate, and in how to translate the Bible.

Each story is broken down into frames, and each frame has a picture and a few sentences of text. As well as being attractive, the picture helps the translator understand the text. In the translationStudio app, on the panel that slides over from the right, are notes about those sentences that alert the translator to potential problems and that give alternate ways of expressing the same meaning. There are also links to definitions of important terms, and links to translation issues that are explained in more depth in the pages of translation training that we are calling translationAcademy. We think that by the time a translator gets through all fifty stories, having read the Notes, definitions, and translationAcademy pages, and having gone through the process of getting feedback from his or her community and making revisions, she will become proficient at translating.

By starting with the stories, the translator also feels less intimidated than if she were translating Holy Scripture itself. What often happens with new Bible translators is that they feel that they must translate very literally, word-for-word, out of fear of “changing” the Bible, and so they produce very stilted, even unreadable translations. By doing so, they have inadvertently changed the Bible into an incoherent text rather than the powerful, clear message that it is meant to be. Translation involves a necessary change of form in order to retain the message that the original form contains. As the translators translate the stories, they learn from the Notes and translationAcademy that the translation must be clear and natural as well as accurate, and they get a lot of practice finding the right forms in their languages for doing that. Then by the

⁶This means that we will attribute authorship and share the work freely, and that others who use it must do the same. For more information, go to <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/>.

time the translators get to the Bible, they are used to the process of transferring the meaning of the text into the phrases and expressions that are natural in their own language.

The stories are valuable for more than just training, however. They are very useful for evangelism and for introducing the major concepts of Scripture into a culture for the first time, and the pictures are attractive to people of all ages.⁷



Figure 4

unfoldingWord.org

Once the translation is finished and approved, whether the work was done online at the Door43 website or offline with the translationStudio app and then uploaded to the Door43 website, it will then be moved to the unfoldingWord.org website. Door43 is the “workbench” website where the translating is done, and unfoldingWord is where the stories and Bibles will be made publicly available to the global church. When the translation is done, we are also encouraging translators to record audio of the stories. The audio will then be combined with a video of the pictures. The video zooms, pans, and selectively blurs parts of the picture of each frame while the audio of that frame plays. All of this content can be viewed or streamed on the website or downloaded to any mobile device.

Figure 4 shows the video playing on a smart phone, with printed copies of the stories in the background. As languages become available, users can select the language that they want and select to download text, audio, and/or audio plus video. Once downloaded, the content can be shared from one device to another. In countries where Christians are persecuted, being able to carry biblical content on an unobtrusive electronic device is important. In other countries where books are useful, we are deploying print-on-demand systems that can cheaply and easily

⁷The pictures were created by Sweet Publishing and are licensed under the creative commons attribution-share alike 3.0 license. See <http://sweetpublishing.com>.

print as many or as few books as are desired. Currently, our system can print the Open Bible Stories book in full color, 368 pages with laminated cover, for around \$1.60 for the cost of materials. A New Testament in black and white runs about \$1.00.

The Bible

After a translation team has completed the fifty Open Bible Stories (OBS), we will invite them to begin translating the Bible. The process will be familiar, using the same tools. Either on the Door43 website or on the translationStudio app, they can select a book and chapter of the Bible from a menu, then the text of that chapter will appear in chunks of a few verses, similar in size to the text of the OBS frames. For context, the translators can read as much of the text as they like before and after the chunk that they are working on, of course. With each chunk of Bible text, there will be translation notes tied to phrases in the text, as well as the familiar links to explanations of important terms. In this way, the information needed to translate each chunk is given along with the text where it applies. The same familiar “notebook page” and keyboard are available for typing the translation.

The main difference between translating OBS and the Bible is that the Bible text will appear in two versions. The translator will see the text of the unfolding Word Literal Bible (ULB) and the unfolding Word Dynamic Bible (UDB). As you might guess, the ULB is a translation of the Bible into English that closely follows the form and style of the original languages, making adjustments to keep the text readable in English. Figures of speech and other idioms are retained as much as possible and explained in the notes. In this way, the translator is able to see how the original was put together, including the presentation of ideas and use of figurative language, and then to translate in a similar way if his or her language also contains a similar convention.

If, however, the ULB does not make sense to the translator or is in a very different form than the translator’s language would use, he or she can look at the UDB. The UDB is translated in a “dynamic” style, that is, it uses forms and logical flow that are normal in modern English. Its overarching goal is to present the meaning clearly. It uses short sentences, tries to avoid verbal or abstract nouns, and translates the figures of speech and idioms with their plain meaning. In this way, the translator can see what the meaning is behind the figurative language and can then use a figure from his or her own language that has that meaning. If some of the meaning is still unclear, the translator has recourse to the explanatory notes.

By itself, the ULB can be confusing and, by itself, the UDB can be dull and plain. But by using them together, the translator is encouraged to produce a translation that communicates the correct meaning in a form that is appropriately idiomatic. Having two model translations also discourages translators from following either one too closely, and leads them to think about the form that would be most natural in their language.

These two Bibles are currently under development. Copyright owners of English Bibles have been reluctant to license them for an environment where they can be freely copied or modified as the core of our Bible translation tools, so we have a team of Bible scholars and translators

who are creating our own translations. Another team is writing the notes that accompany the biblical text. As you can imagine, the two teams are in constant dialogue.⁸

For the ULB, we are updating the 1901 ASV. The ASV is one of very few Bibles in English that is in the Public Domain; all the rest are copyrighted, and we are not allowed to use them. It is a well-respected translation done in a literal style but sorely in need of updating because it is very archaic. On the other end of the spectrum, for the UDB, we are adapting the Translation for Translators. That was done by Ellis Deibler, a long-time translator and international translation consultant with Wycliffe Bible Translators. He has licensed it to us under the Creative Commons license. He did an enormous amount of work putting the Bible into plain, clear English designed to communicate to speakers of English as a second language. We are very grateful to not have to duplicate all of that work, and to be able to put it on a platform for the global church to use. Deibler has led the way, and we would be more than happy to incorporate other Bible translation tools as well if copyright owners would be willing to make them available under an open license.

translationAcademy

This is the part of the Door43 website where we will provide multimedia Bible translation training. We are assuming that most of the people who are using the website have not gone through a formal Bible translation program and will need some direction. This will be a series of text- and video-based lessons arranged by translation topics. While a person could go through the lessons one after the other, they are designed so that the translator can access them as they become relevant to the translation task. For example, as a person is translating, he or she may come across a metaphor and not know how to handle it. That person could click on the link in the translation note that discusses the metaphor in the text, or just click on translationAcademy in the sidebar of Door43 and then click on “Metaphor.” Either method will open a lesson about how to handle those. We want to make this training as useful as possible, which we think is to make it “just-in-time” learning. That way the person does not have to try to recall when he or she learned about a topic in a training session, but can get the training right then.

Quality Control

In an ideal world, with unlimited resources and personnel, and no political barriers, we would send a cross-cultural linguist and Bible scholar to every language group to help them translate the Bible. But that is not the world in which we live. There are thousands of language groups that we cannot reach in that way, in this generation or the next. The part of the Bible translation process where the shortage of resources is the most acute is in the area of translation consultants—the quality-control people. We just do not have enough of them. Hundreds of Bible translations sit on shelves, waiting for a translation consultant to get to them. In the meantime, they are unavailable to the church. So we are pursuing an alternate strategy: em-

⁸Most of the Bible scholars working on this project are volunteers. If you are a Bible scholar interested in contributing your time and expertise to this project, email jennifer_cunneen@wycliffeassociates.org.

powering the global church to do most of the work of translating the Bible for themselves. This includes managing the quality of the content.

As with translation, in the area of quality control we are seeking to provide training, tools, and processes. There will be guidelines on how to check Scripture in translation Academy. There are also several tools built in to the website and to the process. We have designed our system of quality control to have three levels through which the translation will need to pass in order to be used as a gateway translation source text. At Level One, the translators certify that they did their draft in accordance with the unfolding Word doctrinal statement and the translation guidelines. They also certify that they used the notes and other translation tools. The translation is then clearly marked as a Level One. If it is a translation of OBS, it can be moved from Door43 over to the unfolding Word website and made publically available, still clearly marked as Level One. If it is Scripture, it has to pass Level Two before it can be made public.

At Level Two, the translators need to certify that they have checked the translation with members of the community for clarity and naturalness. We provide a list of comprehension questions for OBS and for each chapter of the Bible that they can use for this purpose, as well as checking guidelines to follow. They also need to have three pastors or leaders of local church networks check the translation for accuracy who will also sign off on the translation. These should be leaders of different church groups or denominations—the wider the representation of the church in the language community, the better. At each stage, when a problem is surfaced, the translation needs to be revised. When Scripture passes Level Two, it can be made public on the unfolding Word website, marked as Level Two. At this point, anyone from the language community can post comments and suggestions. The translation can also be freely downloaded or printed, or turned into audio or video.

At Level Three, the translation needs to have been thoroughly reviewed and checked by representatives of three different church networks or denominations, or by one representative of a denomination and someone from a Bible translation entity, such as a professional Bible translation consultant. Those who do Level Three checking need to be other than the people who did Level Two checking. Then it will be marked as Level Three. The personnel who will do the checking will vary with the size of the language community and the size of the church in that community. In communities where there is no church or it is very small, this can be problematic. In that case the translators will need to have recourse to some external church bodies.

Even at Level Three, we do not expect the translation to be problem-free. Every Bible translation needs subsequent revision. The language and church community can continue to make suggestions. If the translation committee or church authority structure agrees with the suggestions, the translation can easily be changed multiple times, even continually, at no cost. That's the beauty of the digital age. Can you imagine going back to your publisher and saying, "Throw out that last print run of five thousand copies. We need to reprint. There was an error." The publisher would, of course, refuse, unless you came up with a lot of money. But we can change it digitally and move on with no problem.

This happened several times as we were developing OBS. People who were translating them pointed out some problems with the text. We agreed, so we changed it. It just took a few

minutes, and now it is better. It is not as big of a deal as it used to be. Versions on smartphones can be continually and automatically updated. Even if some copies have been printed, it is not a big expense to replace them. With print-on-demand, print runs can be small and ongoing. Also, every change to the text is marked with a version number, like software, so that it is immediately apparent which version of the text the reader is looking at. Of course, everything online is the latest version. Even so, every change that has been made on Door43 or uploaded from translationStudio is saved. To see what has been changed in the latest version, all one would have to do is to look at the change log on the website.

Conclusion

We think that it is time for the Western Church—to whom much has been given—to make Bible translation tools available to the rest of the Church, free of restrictions. We must not give in to the fear that drove the medieval Church to try to stamp out the Bible translators of an earlier era—that if they put the Bible into the hands of the common person, he or she would mishandle it. Let's give them the tools to handle it well. Copyright owners also need to examine their motives for holding back Bible translation resources. Is maximizing profit from the Bible and related materials really the purpose God intended for his Word? The “linguistically least of these” have been left with nothing, and they deserve better. Let's collaborate to put what we have on the internet in a coherent way to make it known to the global church and say, “Come and get it!”

Global Church/Bible Agency Partnership: A Proposal for Twenty-First Century Bible Translation



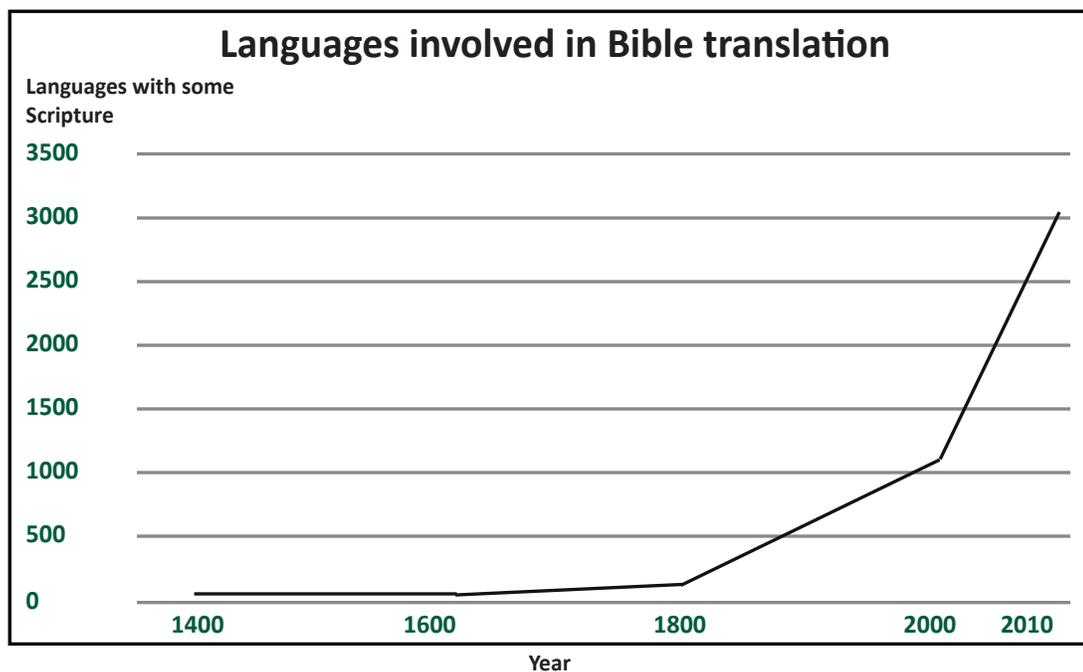
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The Seed Company in Arlington, Texas.*

Introduction

Bible Translation as part of the missionary enterprise has changed profoundly in the last fifty years. In 1999, the Wycliffe Bible Translators (WBT) adopted Vision 2025, which states, “Linking with partners worldwide, we aim to see a Bible translation project begun in every language that needs it by 2025.”

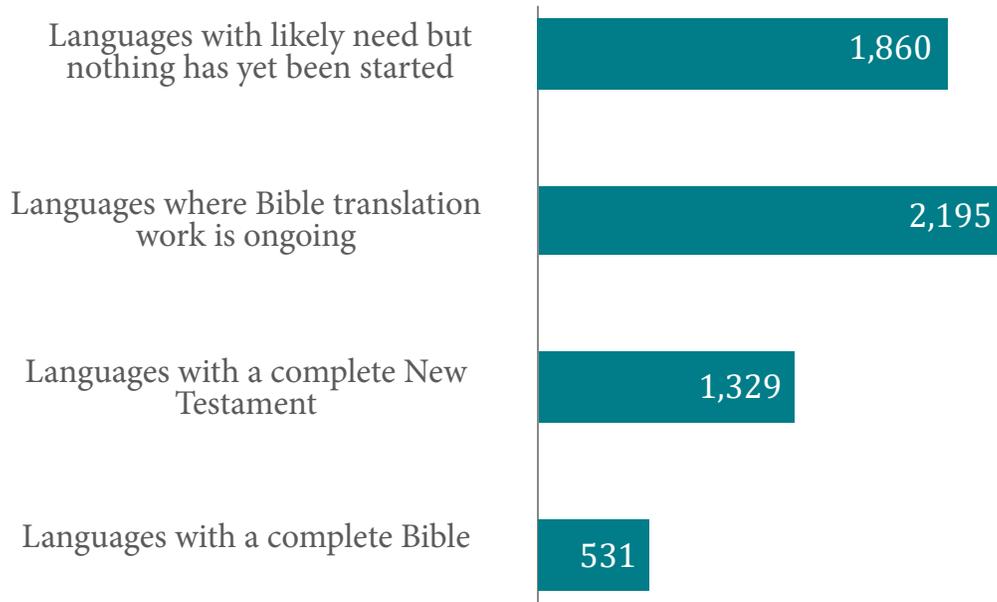
The adoption of this vision statement as the organizational aspiration of the global fellowship of Wycliffe organizations marked the beginning of a remarkable acceleration in the number of Bible translation projects, as illustrated in this graph:



<https://globalweaver.wordpress.com/tanzania-bound/>

Also, in God’s providence, an ever-widening circle of church and mission leaders are affirming the foundational place that Bible translation has in God’s global kingdom cause.¹ The illustration below provides a snapshot of the current status of Bible translation.

Status of Bible Translation 2015



<http://www.wycliffe.net/resources/scriptureaccessstatistics/tabid/99/language/en-US/Default.aspx>

Accessed on 16 March 2015.

¹In 2009, leaders of Table 71, a grouping of mission leaders concerned with reaching the remaining unreached people groups, sketched out the components of the Great Commission enterprise. Their chart shows the foundational role the Bible in the language of the heart plays in evangelism and Kingdom work. See <http://www.table71.org/>, accessed April 9, 2015.

Completing the Great Commission

	God’s Revealed Truth and Love Rom 10:4	Proclamation of Truth					Demonstration of Love
		Evangelism The Lost Mark 16:15		Discipleship The Churched Mat 28:19–20		Mercy The Needy Mat 22:39	
Currently Very Strategic	The Scriptures	Engaging the UUPGs	Evangelism Focus: Muslims, Hindus, Buddhists	Church Planting	Orality	Renewal Ministries	Holistic Ministries
	Mobilization (Isa 6:8)						
	Prayer (Luk 10:2)						
	Research and Tracking Results (Joh 4:24)						

Interpreting these figures, there are potentially about 4,055 languages where Bible translation work is going on or is likely to start in the foreseeable future. In addition, some portion of those people groups who have full New Testaments are using them vigorously and need an Old Testament. For the sake of a conservative estimate, we will assume that 645 of the people groups having a New Testament will need further Old Testament translation. That yields a round sum of potentially 4,700 Bible translation projects which will need the support of God's people in the coming years. This potential need, combined with the accelerated pace at which new Bible translation projects are starting, suggests that the demand for technical support for Bible translation projects around the world is reaching crippling proportions for the agencies tasked with providing that support.

The Role of the Bible Agencies in Bible Translation

Historically, the Bible agencies (principally WBT and the affiliates of the United Bible Societies [UBS]) have served the church in a given place by providing Scripture products in relevant languages. The establishment of the British and Foreign Bible Society in 1804 marks the beginning of the Bible movement represented today by the UBS. Bible Society ministries include the publication, distribution, and promotion of existing translations of Scripture, and also the facilitation of translations of God's Word into minority languages. The WBT, founded in 1942, and its sister organization, the Summer Institute of Linguistics International, founded in 1934, have focused on Bible translation as a missionary outreach strategy for smaller people groups who speak their own unique languages. Both the UBS and the various Wycliffe organizations around the world historically have functioned like vendors who supply a much-needed service to the church, namely, the translation and publication of Scripture. They also have represented a trusted independent body which could verify the faithfulness of a translation.

In order to fulfil their role as accreditors of the faithfulness of translations of the Bible, a cadre of translation experts, called *translation consultants*, gradually formed. Translation consultants understand biblical languages, exegesis, linguistics, and translation principles. Their primary responsibility is to train translators and check their translations.²

To check a translation, a consultant who did not speak the language of the translation would need a rigidly literal *back translation* of the translation to be checked. The back translation would be in a language of wider communication which he or she understood. The wording of the back translation would closely reflect the lexical choices made in the translation to be checked. In this way, the consultant would have an albeit imperfect window into the translation to look for anything that might have been omitted, added, or inadvertently changed due to an exegetical misunderstanding. Translation consultants use written and/or oral back translations to review translations of Scripture.

²Over time, the qualifications to be recognized as a Bible agency translation consultant were codified in an inter-agency agreement under the auspices of the Forum of Bible Agencies International. See <http://www.forum-intl.org/resources>, last modified October 2006, accessed March 17, 2015.

The growth of this cadre of professional translation consultants led to the development of an informal guild of Bible translation experts, regarded by many as the only ones qualified to speak to the faithfulness of a translation of Scripture. As the number of active Bible translation projects around the world has dramatically increased, the number of recognized Bible translation consultants has been insufficient to keep up with the demand for their services in a timely way. This has led in various places to serious backlogs of unchecked translations waiting for the attention of a certified consultant for approval. The remainder of this paper examines various solutions to address this increasingly acute shortage.

Solution Scenarios—Grow More Translation Consultants

The most obvious solution to a shortage of Bible translation consultants is to produce more of them as quickly as possible. Over the years, the UBS and their affiliates have invested steadily in the education and training of full-time Bible translation consultants. These men and women have pursued graduate studies in biblical languages, exegesis, and linguistics. The commitment of the fellowship of Bible Societies to develop translation experts among colleagues from Africa, Asia, Latin America, and the Pacific Islands has made a profound contribution to the global human resources supporting Bible translation.

Since 2003, The Seed Company (TSC, a WBT affiliate) has conducted a translation consultant internship program to strengthen the global translation consultant workforce and alleviate what was perceived to be the most significant bottleneck in getting accurately translated Scripture to the peoples of the earth. This program takes experienced Bible translators, who have successfully completed Bible translation projects for their own people, and puts them on a development path towards service as a Bible translation consultant. This path includes both formal education in linguistics, Biblical languages, and exegesis and on-the-job mentoring by an experienced Bible translation consultant. The mentoring experience includes both observation of translation checking sessions and checking translations under the close supervision of the mentoring consultant. Since 2003, 217 men and women from Africa, Asia, Latin America, and the Pacific Islands have been involved in translation consultant internships sponsored by TSC.

Both of these approaches to building up the world's professional Bible translation consultant corps have made important contributions, but they have also faced challenges. One of those challenges is *time*. Human resource development does not happen overnight. The kind of formal education path envisaged for consultants associated with the UBS is lengthy. A doctorate in biblical studies or linguistics can take five or more years and considerable perseverance to complete. Many of the consultant interns supported by TSC have improved their skills and capacity for service, but have not achieved the experience and educational acumen needed to be recognized as full translation consultants, even after five years.

The other challenge for both these approaches is *cost and financial sustainability*. Higher education, especially at the graduate level, would be prohibitively expensive to execute on a scale commensurate with the missional need for Bible translation checking. Further, once Bible translation consultants are trained to that level of expertise, there is often an expectation that they be financially compensated in line with their expertise, roughly in line with a university

professorship. The UBS has found that maintaining a large international cadre of professional Bible translation consultants on their payroll is financially unsustainable. In the experience of TSC, successful interns have frequently had difficulty finding placement in Bible translation ministries in their countries because those ministries were not in a position to compensate them at a reasonable level.

In sum, an ongoing effort to build out the corps of professional Bible translation consultants is unquestionably vital for the future of the global Bible translation cause. However, because of factors inherent to the process (such as the amount of time needed to acquire requisite knowledge and develop skills, and the financial costs to develop and maintain a growing group of professional translation consultants), I would submit that this solution is insufficient to meet the pressing need for Bible translation checking today and in the coming years.

Solution Scenarios—Local Church Ownership

Some mission agencies and churches, impatient with the lengthy process associated with Bible translation projects conducted by Bible agencies, have asserted that a translation of the Bible ultimately is owned by the end-users of the translation, the people group and church who speak that language. According to this perspective, the people wanting the translation should themselves define the process of translation and decide when the text is ready for publication and distribution.

On the surface, this proposal is attractive. It has been long understood that the more a community participates in the design and execution of a development project, the more they will own, use, and benefit from the results of the project. So, having the church in a people group take the lead responsibility for translating the Bible into their language makes sense and has merit. It holds the promise that the resulting translation will be used by its intended audience. Additionally, to the extent that a people group can hear God's message sooner rather than later, that is a cause for celebration by everyone whose priorities are for the growth of Christ's kingdom in this world. Finally, empowering people in the developing world to control their own destinies and not be dependent on foreign help is an attractive concept that resonates well in the twenty-first century.

On the other hand, this proposed solution has both limitations and dangers. Many translation teams do not have the capacity to do the careful exegesis required for faithful Bible translation. Some translators have limited education and, in particular, limited fluency in a major language of wider communication, much less Greek, Hebrew, and Aramaic. The translation(s) of the Bible into the relevant language of wider communication are sometimes archaic and/or difficult to understand. Further, supporting resources such as commentaries and Bible dictionaries are available only in a few languages, and the majority of the world's Bible translation teams do not speak or read those languages well. As a result, many translation teams cannot on their own gain the accurate understanding of the original message which is foundational to a faithful translation of the Bible.

Historically, the Bible agencies have positioned themselves as inter-denominational groups committed to providing all God's people in a people group with a Bible they could use. In

people groups where multiple denominations are present, this is an important service. In practice, those in a people group with a vision to initiate a translation of the Bible will sometimes be aligned with only one or a subset of the denominations present. Unfortunately, the resulting work might be perceived to be a denominational Bible, which would not serve the entire community of Christians in a people group.

The proposition that the end-users of the translation are the ultimate, or sole, owners of the translation process implies the local church in a people group has the final authority to decide when a translation is faithful. Realistically, that authority presupposes that people in the end-user community have sufficient education and access to exegetical resources so as to accurately understand the meaning of the text. As mentioned above, in many places, that assumption simply does not pertain. In those cases, the people group still needs some outside authority (such as a translation consultant) to assist them in affirming the faithful accuracy of their translation. Barring that, the meaning reflected in the translation is reduced to whatever the local translator understood or guessed the text to have meant. While there is a postmodern philosophical case for the legitimacy of that perspective, there are strong theological reasons for maintaining that, at least in the case of Scripture, there is an authorial intent (that is, God's intended message for humanity) which is independent of the reader's understanding and which must be reflected in a faithful translation.³

The accessibility of sophisticated digital publishing software, print-on-demand, and self-publishing technology offers the possibility that people groups could significantly shorten the time frame for having copies of Scripture in their language. Instead of waiting on a seemingly ponderous publication process through a recognized Bible agency, people groups with internet access have the capacity to typeset and print their translation themselves, in the quantity they want, when they want it. For mother-tongue literature in general, this is a remarkably empowering development for the peoples of the earth. However, for Scripture publication, it does require some caution because of the unique role that Scripture has in the life of a faith community.

Most Bible translation projects have printed and circulated limited quantities of the first books translated. These short-run printings are explicitly noted to be trial editions with community feedback welcomed. Sometimes the community or translators themselves arrange for these trial edition publications. While God in His grace uses these early translation efforts to bless souls with exposure to God's message in the language of the heart, they are generally not regarded as having the same authority as the church's Bible. At some point, the translation of an entire New Testament or Bible has reached a point of stability and polish where it can be released as an authoritative rule for the faith and practice of the church. The translation is submitted to a Bible publisher/printer who verifies the faithfulness of the translation through a review by a translation consultant. The involvement of a trusted institution as publisher validates to the church that the translation is trustworthy.

³José Ángel García Landa, "Authorial Intention in Literary Hermeneutics: On Two American Theories," *Miscelánea* 12 (Zaragoza, 1991): 61–92, available at www.academia.edu/405995/Authorial_Intention_in_Literary_Hermeneutics_On_Two_American_Theories, accessed January 14, 2015, gives an overview of the philosophical issues connected with authorial intent in literacy hermeneutics.

In contrast to other kinds of publications, translations of the Bible are presented to faith communities as God's authoritative message. As a result, they attain an enduring quality that resists frequent revision. As a church uses a Scripture translation to worship and instruct, their growing affection for its wording makes acceptance of substantially revised later editions difficult. There are many examples of churches around the world which have continued to prefer a traditional translation, even though it is archaic, poorly understood, and perhaps exegetically flawed, over newer editions which are more accurate and readable. There is good reason to revise and thoroughly test a translation before widely distributing it as God's authoritative message.

In this context, the ease of digital editing and publication makes it possible to circulate translations before they have been fully checked and tested, on the understanding that the digital text can be easily revised and improved translations reprinted later. But it also presents Bible translators with a conundrum. If the early releases are explicitly noted to be trial editions to be revised later, their acceptance as authoritative church Bibles could be limited. If they are presented as authoritative translations, the acceptability of necessary revisions could be compromised.

In sum, devolving responsibility for Bible translation to the end-users in the local church context could conceivably accelerate access to translations of Scripture in the heart language and facilitate greater use of the translation. However, its inherent challenges probably preclude its being applied as a primary solution on a scale commensurate with the remaining global need for Bible translation.

A Promising Solution Scenario: A Richer, Global Church/Bible Agency Partnership

One way to harness the resources needed to support the burgeoning global Bible translation movement is to enhance the partnership between the global church and the Bible agencies. Such a partnership could leverage the available strengths of both groups in God's kingdom cause. The Bible agencies have intellectual capital and a long history of productive involvement in Bible translation. The global church has the human and financial resources to readily address the remaining need.

Prior to the advent of the Bible agencies, the church took a leading role in the translation of Scripture. Jerome's Vulgate translation in Latin, Luther's German translation, Hus's translation in Czech, Wycliffe's and Tyndale's works in English, and many others were produced before the founding of the British and Foreign Bible Society in 1804. Even though these translations of the Bible were not informed by the rigorous, academically-honed process which marks the modern discipline of Bible translation, they nonetheless shaped the history of their languages and nations and had a profound spiritual impact on the church communities who used them. The translators of these works were recognized scholars in their time who knew Greek and Hebrew. They combined sharp, intuitive gifts in the art of translation with meticulous scholarship.

On the other hand, in the course of their ministries in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the circle of Bible agencies have developed a specialized expertise in Bible translation that is an intellectual treasure for the church today. This expertise has been honed through direct involvement in over two thousand Bible translation projects conducted all over the world. While the Bible agencies have historically served the church as a vendor-like guild of skilled professionals producing high quality translations of Scripture, there is an opportunity today to craft a new relationship, whereby the Bible agencies use their expertise to equip the church to steward its call to provide God's message for the nations in the languages they understand best.

There is strength in framing the Bible translation task as the responsibility of the *whole church*, rather than being solely the responsibility and possession of the end-users of the translation. Although there is unquestionably a leading role that the end-user church should play in the translation of the Bible into their language, the global church (particularly the wider church in the country where that language is spoken) has a legitimate stake in seeing that translations of the Bible in their country are faithful communications of God's message. Furthermore, the church has the human resources, intellectual capital, and financial wherewithal to effectively and efficiently bring the Scriptures to all the people groups needing it in their languages.

Admittedly, the involvement of the global church in a particular Bible translation effort may introduce issues of intercultural sensitivity (or lack thereof), power disparities connected with international funding, and cultural baggage related to a colonial history. These issues are serious challenges that must be overcome. However, they do not obviate the stake the global church has in the translation of the Bible in the world's languages.

Bible translation is the most academic endeavor in the Great Commission enterprise. There is a natural affinity between that portion of the church invested in biblical scholarship and those who are committed to translating God's message faithfully into the languages of the nations. A partnership between the community of Bible scholars and the Bible translation agencies could become the dynamic, growing edge of missional Bible translation in the twenty-first century.

The genesis of TSC's experimentation with this partnership began in 2009 with the Guest Bible Scholar program. This program created an avenue for a small number of select Bible scholars from North American seminaries and Christian colleges to invest some of their time in support of the Bible translation cause, around the edges of their full-time commitments as professors. Today, we have about a dozen North American scholars supporting Bible translation projects with various levels of engagement. TSC staff recently trained a number of scholars from Northern Ireland to help in reviewing back translations for exegetical accuracy. These scholars have all worked as volunteers, donating their time and skills around the edges of their full-time employment. TSC has facilitated their training and covered their expenses for limited times of service overseas.

In 2012, we began engaging Bible scholars from the countries where Bible translation work was ongoing. Dr. Ayub Ranoh, a Bible scholar in Indonesia, was our test case. Dr. Ranoh was

a retired professor at his denominational seminary who also had served a term as synod chairman. For two years, until his passing in 2014, Dr. Ranoh invested about half of his time in supporting Bible translation in his province of Indonesia. He observed translation consultants working with translation teams to check and improve their translations. He interacted with translation teams with translation consultants at his side to observe and assist. He eventually grew in competence to the point where he could reliably check a translation of any of the Synoptic Gospels without close supervision. Before his untimely demise, Dr. Ranoh was on track to be recognized as a fully-qualified translation consultant by his peers in Indonesia. Dr. Ranoh's involvement was so successful that we introduced the idea in Ghana, the Democratic Republic of Congo, India, and Hong Kong in 2014. In 2015, we have launched similar initiatives in Angola and Ethiopia.

We have found numerous advantages to involving Bible scholars who are citizens of the countries where there is remaining need for Bible translation. Consider the following:

- They have comparable knowledge of biblical languages, culture, exegesis, and Bible content to their Western peers.
- They know the language(s) of wider communication in their country, so they can interact directly with translators without the need for an interpreter.
- They share a national culture with the translators they are serving.
- Some of them speak a minority indigenous language. This helps them better conceptualize options for translation into other minority languages in their country.
- As a result, the amount of knowledge these scholars need to learn to become a useful resource to translation teams in checking the accuracy of their translations is relatively small, in comparison to what a comparable western Bible scholar would need to learn. This leads to fruitful engagement sooner.

Benefits and Challenges

There are numerous benefits to involving Bible scholars in the support of Bible translation. The people groups waiting for God's Word in their languages will have it sooner if their translations can be checked in a timely manner. If the scholar lives in the same country where the translation work is happening, the translation team may have more frequent access to expert input. They also can develop a face-to-face relationship with the scholar, which frequently resonates with the cultural norms of the translation team.

The scholar also benefits from this kind of engagement with Bible translation. The spiritual benefit and personal reward of assisting a people group in gaining access to God's powerful word is life-changing. That life change will also enliven the scholar as an instructor in the classroom and magnify his or her spiritual impact on students. Further, struggling alongside a translation team to accurately reflect the semantic content of a Scripture text in another language can also expand the scholar's understanding of the interface of hermeneutics and exegesis in intercultural contexts.

The scholar's institution, whether a seminary, Bible college, or church, is enriched by the scholar's engagement with the Bible translation cause in their country. Many theological education institutions encourage ministry involvement for their faculty. They see that professors actively involved in the nitty-gritty of Christian ministry are more effective in training their students for real-life ministry. By working with Bible translation teams in their country, the scholars would be rubbing shoulders with marginalized, poor communities, striving to help meet their spiritual need for God's truth. Professors who bring that experience back to the classroom will serve their students better and bring a more global kingdom perspective to their teaching.

On the other hand, in the interest of transparency, it must be admitted that involving Bible scholars more directly in the global Bible translation task entails a number of as-yet unresolved challenges. First, there can be a significant social power disparity between highly educated, high-status scholars and translators from a marginalized community who may have only a high school education. This disparity can be exacerbated by historic animosities and mistrust between members of a national culture, which are often wealthier and more highly educated, and the minority people groups in that nation. A lack of awareness of the interference these disparities introduce in a translation checking environment can compromise the help that the translation team needs and deserves.

Further, a Bible scholar needs a humble, learner's spirit. He or she needs relational skills to set a translation team at ease and open up avenues for a transparent exchange of ideas. Professors who are impactful authors and excellent lecturers in graduate school contexts may at the same time struggle to bridge a wide social gap in the translation checking process. In this context, in order to ensure that translation teams are effectively served in the checking of their translations, the Bible agency partners must do some screening, training, and honest evaluation of scholars who offer their services to support Bible translation in their country. This naturally risks some disappointment and relational tension.

Many of our most successful Bible scholars have been retired or self-employed, and thus have been flexible in their schedules and available for significant portions of their time. Scholars who are active teaching professors at educational institutions, even if eager and willing, have had more limited engagement because of their primary responsibilities to their institution. In this light, the active support of the educational institution for the scholar's involvement will be key for the growth and stability of the strategy. The scholar's institution needs to be engaged for the scholar to schedule around the academic calendar, manage his or her workload, and handle compensation issues.⁴ Over the years, Bible agencies have partnered with many theological education institutions to provide academic training translators and consultants, usually in the form of individual courses and occasionally as full degree programs in Bible translation. How-

⁴Our most fruitful North American scholars have volunteered their time to support Bible translation projects. Some of them have used their vacation time to travel internationally to assist in checking translations. Some have assisted translation teams through email interaction from their home, around the edges of their full-time employment. Many scholars teaching in the developing world moonlight doing other jobs to supplement their incomes. It is possible that some compensation for scholars' participation in checking can be built into the budgets of translation projects, although we have not yet tried this at TSC.

ever, so far we have a thin track record of fruitful direct partnership with these institutions to engage members of their faculty to support Bible translation projects in their country.

Finally, the Bible translation agencies themselves will need to increasingly adapt to become equippers and mentors for church scholars participating in Bible translation. Translation consultants have focused their energies and training on directly supporting the production of excellent translations. Mentoring and reproducing their expertise in others are not strong suits for many of today's Bible translation consultants. These skills are much needed today to expand the kingdom's Bible translation workforce in line with the growing need.

Conclusion

There is a compelling and pragmatic reason for a wider circle of God's people, beyond His servants associated directly with the Bible agencies, to take active responsibility for supporting the translation of His Word into the remaining languages that need it. The number of new Bible translation projects starting each year continues to escalate, and the Bible agency resources to service these projects on their own in a timely way are simply inadequate. The intellectual resources in the wider church are fully sufficient to support this dimension of the Great Commission endeavor, provided Christian Bible scholars can be trained in the skills needed to serve translators effectively. Moreover, it is sound ecclesiology to frame the global Bible translation task as a responsibility of the church and for the Bible agencies to envisage their kingdom role as equipping the church to fulfill that responsibility. As this partnership is forged under God's guidance, the Bible agencies will be living out the goal Paul articulates for all Christian leaders in Ephesians 4:12, "to prepare God's people for works of service." May it be so.

A Visual Defense: The Case For and Against Christianity. By Robert Velarde. Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2013. 207 pages. Softcover, \$16.99.

Robert Velarde is an adjunct faculty member at Denver Seminary and the author of a number of books. His *A Visual Defense* is an innovative approach to understanding apologetic arguments. Velarde's stated goals are to develop critical thinking, make the case for Christian theism, and help readers understand opposing views. To meet those goals, he uses a distinctive tool: the argument diagram. In the last several decades, there has been increasing interest in the use of argument mapping, especially in the study of philosophy, informal logic, and critical thinking. The creation of software to enable such mapping has accelerated this trend. Velarde's application of this methodology to apologetics is a fresh and welcome contribution.

Before explaining argument diagrams, Velarde shares some of the background assumptions and limitations of his approach. These include a recognition that argument mapping looks only at the intellectual aspects of apologetic arguments, the book's focus on only three major world-views (Christian theism, atheism, and pantheism), and the author's orientation toward classical apologetics. None of these limitations seriously impede the value or effectiveness of the book.

The first section of the book covers introductory matters in four chapters. In chapter one, Velarde explains the argument diagram, which is a flowchart tracing a particular set of arguments. This visual presentation begins with a claim or assertion, followed by key arguments supporting the claim. It then presents responses and rebuttals to those arguments in a visual display. In most cases, a specific argument extends three or four levels, which is sufficient to see how a fuller debate might proceed. While the diagrams are relatively accessible without this introduction, Velarde's explanation of the limits and purpose of the diagrams is helpful. The next three chapters deal with standard apologetics prolegomena: the necessity of apologetics, the role of the intellect, and the relationship between faith and reason. Even in this introductory section, each chapter's discussion is plotted using argument diagrams. This format allows readers to familiarize themselves with how argument diagrams are used before getting to the heart of the book. Even if readers is familiar with these introductory topics, these chapters are an effective orientation to the methodology. The remaining chapters focus on the application of argument design analysis to specific apologetic topics.

In the second section of the book, eleven chapters present arguments defending the truth of the Christian faith. In each case, the presentation is oriented around an argument diagram. For example, the argument diagram for the conclusion that Christianity is true (chapter five) uses the following supporting arguments: 1) truth is objective and reality is knowable, 2) God exists and has revealed himself, 3) the Bible is reliable, 4) Christ rose from the dead, 5) Christianity best explains reality, and 6) religious experience supports Christianity. Objections to each argument and responses to those objections follow. In each chapter, Velarde provides a brief exposition of each element of the argument diagram, normally two or three paragraphs in length. In this way, he develops the basic contours of the discussion beyond what could be visually represented. Necessarily, Velarde is selective in his choice of arguments for each diagram and in his exposition of each element of a diagram. For those interested in more complete presentations of the arguments, more traditional apologetics books will need to be consulted. Neverthe

less, the overall design provides a helpful dialogical presentation that effectively summarizes the structure of real-world arguments.

In the third section, ten chapters address claims against the truth of Christianity. In several cases, the arguments in this section are simply flipped versions of positive arguments presented earlier (e.g., “The Theistic God Exists” vs. “God Does Not Exist” and “Christianity is Beneficial” vs. “Christianity is Harmful”). Unavoidably, this leads to some duplication of arguments, but approaching these issues from two different directions helps draw out aspects of the discussion that a single argument diagram could not.

The book has a brief conclusion and includes an annotated bibliography, a glossary, and subject and name indices. In addition, each chapter has discussion questions and suggested assignments. As with any selective work, one could quibble with some of the chosen topics or with elements of individual argument diagrams, as Velarde recognizes. But that would be to demand a different book. The book as it stands is a valuable contribution to practical apologetics. The brevity of the chapters and the exposition in the chapters means the book would not normally be suitable for a standalone academic textbook, though its format might make it useful in a more informal setting such as a Sunday School or church training class. For classroom use, the book is ideally suited to be used as a supplemental text. After slogging through traditional apologetics arguments in a more traditional textbook, Velarde’s presentation would provide clarity and focus, as well as help students grasp the big picture and see apologetics as a more dialogical enterprise.

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Basil of Caesarea: His Life and Impact. By Marvin Jones. Early Christian Fathers series, ed. Michael A. G. Haykin. Glasgow, Scotland: Christian Focus Publications, 2014. 175 pages. Softcover, \$11.99.

Evangelicals have rediscovered the Church Fathers in recent years, and the Early Christian Fathers series is one reflection of this renewed appreciation. In this volume, Marvin Jones, Associate Professor of Church History and Theology at Louisiana College, traces the life and ministry of Basil of Caesarea. Basil supported Athanasian orthodoxy and led the champions of Nicene orthodoxy against the second wave of the Arianism in the fourth century. Basil was one of the three influential Cappadocian fathers—Basil, bishop of Caesarea; his brother Gregory, bishop of Nyssa; and their close friend Gregory of Nazianzus, the patriarch of Constantinople.

Constantine gave his favor to the Christian church with his ascendancy to the throne of the Roman Empire in the early fourth century. He hoped that the church would help unify the empire; however, the church’s unity was endangered by controversy over the divinity of Christ. The Arians believed that Jesus was not co-eternal with the Father—that there was a time when He was not. After the Council of Nicea, the orthodox party led by Athanasius won the council’s affirmation of the Nicene Creed. However, questions remained about the interrelation of the two natures of Christ, and in the mid-fourth century, a semi-Arian party arose which questioned the full divinity of the Holy Spirit.

Jones traces how Basil's theology evolved through his life and ministry. As he wrestled with the technical language regarding Trinitarian doctrine, Basil's thought went through three phases. As a younger minister at the Council of Constantinople, he favored the *homoiousios* position (that Jesus was similar or consubstantial to the Father but was not the identical substance with the Father) against the *heteroousios* position (that Jesus was of a different substance from the Father). With the intervention of the Emperor Constantius, the *homoiousian* position was affirmed by the Homoian creed of the Council of Constantinople of 360 AD. As Basil described it, two lights could be similar but not of the same substance. However, within a few years, Basil moved to affirming the *homoousios* position (that Jesus was the same substance as the Father). As the theological discussions were extended to debate the role of the Holy Spirit, Basil utilized the word *hypostasis* to bring out the individual personhood of the three members of the Trinity while affirming their full divinity. In particular, Basil used the word *hypostatis* in a more technical sense, distinguishing it from *ousia* (essence) in arguing against the modalistic heresy of Sabellianism, the Arians, and the Anomoeans. Ultimately, the formula of one *ousia* and three *hypostasis* became the standard formula for Christian orthodoxy.

A resurgence of Arianism and semi-Arianism led to questions about the full divinity of the Holy Spirit. These views were voiced by the Pneumatomachians and the Tropikoi, led by Eustathius of Sebaste, whom Michael Haykin has described as a "subordinationist Binitarian" (119). Basil addressed these questions about pneumatology in his *On the Holy Spirit*, with a strong affirmation of the co-eternity and co-divinity of the Holy Spirit. Basil's concepts were utilized soon after his death at the Council of Constantinople of 381, which affirmed a creed which expressed a high view of the Holy Spirit's divinity that was influential in shaping the doctrine of both the eastern and western church.

Basil also impacted the monasticism of his day. The traditional form of monasticism was the anchoritic monasticism associated with St. Anthony. Anchoritic monasticism focused on hermits totally withdrawing from society into a solitary ascetic life to dedicate themselves to prayer. However, as a young minister, Basil explored many of the anchoritic monasteries and became worried that anchoritic monasticism could lead to spiritual pride, and that its separate life did not allow the monks to perform the ministry of love for others so fundamental to the Christian life. Basil thus became an early advocate of the coenobitic monasticism associated with Pachomius. In coenobitic monasticism, the monks lived as a social community and engaged persons beyond the monastery in acts of service. Basil favored and supported the coenobitic monasticism, writing the shorter *Moral Rules* and the *Larger Asceticon* as rules for the coenobitic monastic life.

Another contribution of Basil was his affirmation (to some extent) of literal hermeneutics, as opposed to the extravagant allegorical hermeneutics of his day. Basil preached a series of sermons from Genesis which were published under the title *Hexaemeron*. Basil applied a literal translation to the creation accounts, which were the basis of his sermons due to his concern that allegorical interpretations were misunderstood by the uneducated people in his congregation. He and the other Cappadocian fathers became associated with taking a more literal, plain sense reading of Scripture.

Through this work, Jones provides rich background to trace the theologians and theological issues leading up to Basil's day. The work is robustly researched and documented. Sidebars are provided to define key theological terms or movements.

Basil of Caesarea provides an excellent introduction to the thought of Basil the Great. I highly recommend it for both theologians and pastor theologians.

– Steve W. Lemke, *New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, New Orleans, LA*

The End of Apologetics: Christian Witness in a Postmodern Context. By Myron Bradley Penner. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2013. 180 pages. Softcover, \$19.99.

Myron Penner is an Anglican priest who serves in Edmonton, Alberta. In *The End of Apologetics* he presents an argument that Christian apologetics should shift away from the sort of classical apologetics that has sought to address the challenges of modernism, toward a new apologetics that addresses the concerns of postmodernism. Penner argues correctly that postmodern thinkers discount the rational arguments of classical apologetics as representing the logocentric perspective that they reject. The author proposes a kinder, more person-centered apologetic based on witness and proclamation that is more fitting for a postmodern era rather than one based on rational arguments. The postmodernist-sensitive apologetic that Penner proposes is drawn from multiple sources. He applies Søren Kierkegaard's distinction between the apostle and the genius to argue that Christian apologetics should focus on witness rather than argument. He applies Richard Rorty's use of irony to argue that Christian apologists should be ironic apocalyptic prophets. He applies Gabriel Marcel's concept of disposability to assert that Christian apologists should be more dialogical and person-centered than argumentative. In all this, Penner makes a valuable contribution. His concern is well taken for crafting apologetic approaches that are more persuasive for postmodern hearers.

With this said, *The End of Apologetics* also has significant problems. The first problem is the tone of the work in its nay-saying. To call for a new paradigm for apologetics is one thing, but Penner doesn't stop there. He accuses contemporary Christian apologists of arrogance; of being motivated primarily by money; of being more concerned about winning arguments than bearing witness to Christ; and of practicing or legitimizing oppression, "apologetic violence," mistreatment, and exploitation of persons. The basis for these claims is dubious. Anyone who is familiar with the apologists named by Penner (such as William Lane Craig, Doug Groothuis, or Steven Cowan) knows that Penner is far off the mark in these claims. Furthermore, what Penner counts as oppressive or coercive is laughable. For example, Penner believes that to call people "unbelievers" who do not believe in Christ is to commit "apologetic violence." Actually, calling someone an unbeliever who does not believe is simply descriptive. Penner's tone is so negative toward his fellow Christians that one could be excused for getting the impression that it is the expression of some sort of personal agenda or bitterness. His overkill of classical apologetics is unnecessary and undermines his own presentation, and is somewhat hypocritical since by doing so he is not practicing the kinder, more personal approach he advocates.

A second problem with Penner's proposal is that he seems to be calling for the abolition of classical apologetics rather than supplementing it with a new paradigm. The subtitle of the book's introduction, "Against Apologetics," is revealing. Penner appears to equivocate on the rationale for forcing the abolition of classical apologetics. He argues on successive pages that "modernity is, for better or worse, our situation, and we may never fully leave it behind us" (13), and yet proclaims on the next page (echoing the subtitle of the book) that postmodernism should be the "starting point" for apologetics in our postmodern setting (14). First of all, Penner glosses over the fact that apologetics did not begin with modernism, but in the early days of the church during which the premodern worldview was dominant. Early Christian fathers such as Origen, Tertullian, and Justin Martyr wrote defenses of their Christian faith against the predominant rationalistic Greek worldview, so apologetics was not originally designed to address or express modernism. However, in our contemporary setting, if many persons remain within a modernist mindset, or even some persons, why would it not be fruitful to utilize classical apologetics to minister to the needs of these persons, while also developing a new paradigm for apologetics to minister to persons with a postmodern mindset? For example, our Greer-Heard Point-Counterpoint Forum last year, featuring apologist William Lane Craig and atheistic physicist Sean Carroll, had over eight hundred in attendance and over ten thousand watching via a live webstream. If this is meeting so many people's needs and interests, why is it so evil? Similarly, I recently heard testimonies of how a number of people were blessed and their faith strengthened by the Reasons to Believe and BioLogos apologetics ministries. As long as they are helping people strengthen their faith, why is it a problem? In fact, since only a small percentage of the world's population are actually adherents of postmodernism, it seems like a strange and self-defeating method to utilize just an apologetic method that is tailored for postmodernists, and it betrays a serious Western bias in Penner's thought. Furthermore, Penner's claims appear to be self-referentially incoherent in that, while calling for the demise of modernistic rational arguments, he nonetheless makes modernistic rationalistic arguments throughout the volume. His arguments are far from the sort of person-centered apologetic method that he advocates.

Another problematic aspect of *The End of Apologetics* arises from some aspects of Penner's proposal for a new paradigm for apologetics. Although it is somewhat slippery to assert with any confidence what postmodernists actually "mean," there are points at which Penner may not fully represent some aspects of the thought of some postmodernists. For example, he utilizes Rorty's notion of ironic poets in *Contingency, Irony, and Solidarity* to argue that Christians should be ironic prophets. Penner does not mention that in the same volume, Rorty applies this principle by suggesting that one should deal with private fantasies such as reading the book *Lolita* rather than acting on those fantasies. The impracticality of this idea is made manifest by the fact that even Rorty himself would believe that giving a copy of *Lolita* to a clinically diagnosed pedophile ex-convict who lived next door and began befriending Rorty's young daughter is a good solution. The problem with irony as a technique is that it is unconvincing to many people. Kierkegaard also used irony early in his writing career, but later despaired of its effectiveness and moved toward more direct means of communication. Likewise, Penner makes much of Kierkegaard's distinction between the witnessing apostle and the rationalist genius. However, Jean-Francois Lyotard's classic definition of postmodernism in *The Postmodern Condition* is "incredulity towards metanarratives." So, while one would affirm the crucial role of prophetic proclamation in Christian witness, what reason is there to believe that postmodernists would be any more open to metanarrative-saturated prophetic witness than to rationalistic

apologetics? Would the prophetic proclamation that Penner favors not be “coercive” and do “apologetic violence” to its postmodern hearers, by Penner’s own standards?

The End of Apologetics is an interesting read and makes a valuable contribution by calling for a new paradigm in apologetics. However, it is hindered by serious and unfortunate flaws, and thus requires of its readers careful discernment.

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God Is Love: A Biblical and Systematic. By Gerald Bray. Wheaton: Crossway, 2012. 768 pages. Hardcover, \$40.00.

In *God Is Love*, Gerald Bray invites those who are not normally attracted to systematic theology and fear that it is incomprehensible to read theology. This book reflects the fruit of many years of teaching and writing. It is learned, well-reasoned, and succinctly written. Bray avoids technical terms and concepts, and does not spend protracted amounts of time on historical theology or currently “hot” theological topics. When Bray does address historical and contemporary matters, he engages them judicially as he sets forth his own theological proposal. When Bray handles matters that often divide evangelicals, like baptism, church polity, gifts of the Spirit, and the millennium, he exhibits theological charity and balance. Yet when he deals with views that are opposed to traditional Christian orthodoxy, he sharply dismisses them. The way he handles issues and argues for his own positions makes this volume readable by those who are trained in theology and by those who are simply interested in it.

Bray articulates a comprehensive Christian theology around the theme of divine love. He argues that divine love unites all of reality, and that it reveals the mind of God and the mysteries of his eternal purposes. Thus, for Bray, love shapes the nature of the theological task, for it is the subject of God’s revelation. He shows how divine love is behind creation, redemption, and the consummation, and he explains how it is on display in divine election, creation, judgment, and correction. Part One explores Scripture and theological knowledge as the “language of love,” “because it is in love that God sent his Son to save us” (101). In Part Two, Bray demonstrates how God’s love for Himself is the foundation for all of reality as he deals with the doctrine of God and the Trinity, for “what God does in time reflects who and what he is in eternity” (30), and “[t]he love that binds us to God is perfect and fully known in him” (71). Compared with other evangelical systematic theologies, he provides in this section a uniquely detailed discussion of *hypostasis*, *ousia*, and *physis*, as well as a thorough account of the Alexandrians’ and the Antiochenes’ respective contributions to development of Trinitarian theology by way of Christology. Bray shows how, at Chalcedon, these two perspectives are represented, and how they removed a roadblock prevented the church from conceiving the unity of the divine and human nature of the incarnate Son of God. He writes, “[t]he result was a Savior who was fully divine and fully human, but who remained a single person whose

ultimate identity was anchored in the fellowship of the Trinitarian God” (130). Next, in Part Three, Bary discusses creation and humanity as expressions of God’s love. Part Four defines sin as “the rejection of God’s love.” In the final two sections, God’s love is expressed to his fallen creation through His redemptive grace, and His love is wonderfully displayed in the doctrines of the church and last things. Indeed, Bray calls ecclesiology and eschatology the “consummation of God’s love.”

Bray argues that a personal relationship with God is the center of revelation. This relationship is based on the confidence that arises from knowing a loving God. Concerning this central theme, Bray maintains that recently published evangelical theologies have replaced divine love by a sentimental, anthropomorphic conception of love. Bray correctly reminds us that “[t]he love of God is not a vague, well-meaning or wishy-washy experience that we can share or not as we choose, but a life-changing message that we must proclaim out of our love for him and out of his love for the world he has made” (96). This theme must be recovered in evangelical theology, Bray argues, because divine love is fundamental to how Christians experience God. He says, “[f]ar from being distant, remote, and incomprehensible, God comes close to us, dwells in our hearts, and responds to all our pain, suffering, and sense of alienation” (150). Furthermore, Bray suggests that this conception of God has missional value as well. He says divine love is the divine attribute that the world needs and seeks.

This volume is not merely an “in house” reflection on issues in evangelical theology. Bray engages with the real issues in our modern world. He incorporates discussions on ecology, drugs, disabilities, work, leisure, sexuality, world religions and syncretism, deviant cults, atheism, and government and civic religion. These topics are not typically found in evangelical systematic theology books. Bray deals with world religions like Hinduism, Buddhism, Islam, atheism, and other cults. He argues that the main problem with Islam is its denial of the deity of Jesus Christ, and suggests that because of this denial, it is a religion void of love. When interacting with these various religions, he affirms the exclusivity of the Christian gospel.

Demonstrating the fundamental connection between ethics and theology is unusual in an evangelical systematic theology. It is commendable to include such discussions, even when one may disagree with Bray’s conclusions. He denies that remarriage is permissible after a divorce. While he is entitled to his view, in this case, one would expect more justification for the position he holds. He foregoes offering exegetical justification for why he rejects that exception clauses in Matthew’s Gospel do not allow for remarriage. Moreover, while Bray resists unwarranted speculation and appeals to mystery in many places throughout the book, when it comes to the doctrine of sin and its consequences, he argues that death and natural disaster would still have occurred, even if the fall had never taken place. Proving these two affirmations presents him with much difficulty. It seems to run contrary the biblical story, where we know nothing of death except against the backdrop of the fall.

Gerald Bray is a Research Professor of Divinity at Beeson Divinity School. He writes as an evangelical Anglican and offers in this volume a “mere Christian” perspective to Christian theology. His goal is to systematize what God has revealed to his people in His Word, a goal he pursues with a pastoral and missional aim. He seeks to establish faith and confidence both in the gospel and for proclaiming the gospel message. Space prohibits an account of all the insightful theological discussions and conclusions Bray makes in this volume. While there are places to disagree with his conclusions, he provides sound reasons and does not over argue his conclusions, thus allowing one to easily engage with learn much from Bray’s volulme. The reader will be challenged by his winsome and irenic style and his noble demonstration of how divine love is the center of all reality.

– Keith S. Whitfield, *Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, Wake Forest, NC*

Introducing Eastern Orthodox Theology. By Andrew Louth. Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2013. 172 pages. Softcover, \$20.00.

Andrew Louth is Professor Emeritus of Patristic and Byzantine studies at Durham University, England. Serving in Durham, Louth is also a priest of the Russian Orthodox Diocese of Sourozh (Moscow Patriarchate). Some of his most important works include *Maximus the Confessor*, *Christian Mystical Tradition*, and *Genesis 1–11* in the Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture series.

In his preface, Louth mentions that *Introducing Eastern Orthodox Theology* began as a series of monthly lectures he completed at the Amsterdam Centre for Eastern Orthodox Theology at the Free University of Amsterdam in 2011–12. Louth outlines his book in a similar manner to many systematic theologies, beginning with theological method. In his first chapter, “Thinking and Doing, Being and Praying,” Louth describes his introduction to Eastern Orthodox theology as “an introduction to a way of life” (3). The starting point for such a life is in standing before the mystery of God (4-5). This life begins with encountering Christ through the Scriptures, particularly through their liturgical use.

Naturally, Louth moves next to discussing the doctrine of God, specifically the Trinity. His focus on God begins with an understanding of Jesus Christ. Interestingly, he moves immediately to the Lord’s Prayer, which he considers to be the way “Jesus wanted his disciples to remember him,” suggesting a “different way of approaching the mystery of God” (17). Louth continues, noting that “what this prayer teaches and exemplifies is that we stand before God, taking from his own revelation the words and phrases with which we address him. We address him as he has revealed himself—in mystery and majesty” (19-20). He concludes his chapter by discussing the Trinity and how it is understood in Eastern Orthodox theology.

In his next chapter, which deals with creation, Louth begins with an affirmation of creation *ex nihilo*, emphasizing the dichotomy between God and His creation. This introduces a conversation on God’s essence and His energies, a “distinction between God in himself and God in his activity” (40). This leads Louth to conclude that in creation, humanity encounters

God in His energies, rather than His essence. Also important to creation is the *Logoi* of creation. Louth notes that “to say that the cosmos was created by the *Logos* of the Father is not just to say that it was created by God, but also to suggest that the meaning of the cosmos is to be found in the *Logos*” (41).

After discussing the *Logos* in creation, Louth moves to discussing the Christ of the Gospels. The chapter can be divided into a discussion on the Christ from the New Testament and the Ecumenical Church Councils. From this chapter, one can see that Louth and the Eastern Orthodox Church hold strongly to the truthfulness of the apostolic witness of Christ found in the four canonical gospels. In discussing the councils and dogma of Christ, Louth prefers *realization* rather than *development*, noting the dogma of Christ is “a growing clarity, not deeper insights” (57). He concludes this chapter with an overview of the councils’ decisions on Christology.

Chapter five of Louth’s *Introducing Eastern Orthodox Theology* focuses on sin, death, and repentance. With Christ in view, Louth writes that “we come to recognize that all is not well with ourselves” (66). Leaving room for a literal or non-literal reading of Genesis 1–2, Eastern Orthodoxy holds that “God created human beings that needed to learn to love; he created a beginning that needed to move towards fulfillment” (69). This journey to fulfillment unfortunately derailed when humanity misused their freewill. Because the greatest consequence of the fall in Eastern Orthodoxy is death, rather than sin itself, the doctrine of original sin is non-existent. For Louth, though, Adam’s sin is not his greatest contribution to theology and the Christian life. His greatest contribution is his example of repentance, a traditional teaching held by Eastern Orthodoxy for hundreds of years.

Related to the previous chapter, Louth next considers humanity, particularly the *imago Dei*, a doctrine “central not only to the Fathers’ understanding of human nature, but also to their theology as a whole” (82). While the *imago Dei* entails rationality, intelligence, and freewill, the greatest significance lies in humanity’s affinity for God. Ultimately, only in Christ, the perfect image of God, can one know what it means to be human and to attain perfection by being made right with God.

The next two chapters delve into topics most Protestants are least versed in: sacraments, icons, time, and liturgy. At the heart of Eastern Orthodoxy is the appreciation for the material as much as for the spiritual (98). While God and His ways are mysteries, the sacraments provide a way for His church to participate in the mysteries. Also, icons are not about idolatry, but rather about imitating God. Being created in the image of God causes humanity to make images “as a way of understanding and communicating” (102). They allow the church to unlock the mysteries of God. These sacraments and icons ultimately point to the incarnation and then deification, the “transformation into God” (21) (i.e., salvation).

“Time and the Liturgy,” one of the most fascinating chapters in Louth’s work, sets out to explain “participation in God’s movement in love towards us in creation and Incarnation by our response of love” (122). Participation occurs through the liturgy and the liturgical calendar; like anything, participation occurs in cycles of time. Space is also important. What happens in the worship service creates “symbolism that relates the temporal to the eternal, and sees

the material as embodying the spiritual” (132). Such participation provides a means by which Christians can enter into the mystery of God.

In typical fashion, Louth concludes his work with a chapter on eschatology. Noting the importance of both the resurrection and the Eucharist in eschatology, he writes, “[t]he centre of the Christian hope, then, is the resurrection of Christ. Christian experience of this finds its pre-eminent expression in participation in the paschal mystery of Christ’s death and resurrection through the celebration of the Holy Eucharist, the divine liturgy” (142). Louth concludes with an interesting reference to Origen and his theology of universal salvation. While not necessary holding to universalism, he does note that “there is nothing beyond the infinite love of God” and “no limit to our hope in the power of his love” (159).

Andrew Louth’s *Introducing Eastern Orthodox Theology* is an excellent introduction to the theology of the Eastern Orthodox Church. For most evangelical Protestants, including the tribe of which I am a part, the Southern Baptist Convention, Eastern Orthodoxy is shrouded in mystery. Since the time of the Reformation, much has been written, both positive and negative, about the Roman Catholic Church, but far less has been written on Eastern Orthodoxy. One will find that despite differences, there is much on which members of evangelical Protestantism and the Eastern Orthodox Church can agree. Despite these disagreements, Louth nevertheless provides a thorough yet concise understanding of those doctrines evangelical Protestants struggle both to understand and accept. Most refreshing were the emphases Louth and Eastern Orthodoxy place on the mystery of God, participation in theology, and prayer, emphases which would benefit evangelical Protestants. Ultimately, this work proves to be a readable and understandable introduction for anyone interested in Eastern Orthodox theology.

– *Dustin Turner, New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, New Orleans, LA*

Jonah: God’s Scandalous Mercy. By Kevin Youngblood. In *Hearing the Message of Scripture* series, edited by Daniel I. Block. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2014. 186 pages. Hardcover, \$29.99.

Kevin Youngblood currently serves as Associate Professor of Bible and Religion at Harding University in Searcy, Arkansas. Youngblood’s experience in pulpit ministry, combined with his research interests in the biblical languages and the Old Testament, qualify him as the newest contributor to the *Hearing the Message of Scripture* series, edited by Daniel I. Block.

Zondervan’s new commentary series, *Hearing the Message of Scripture*, seeks to “help serious students of Scripture, as well as those charged with preaching and teaching the Word of God, to hear the messages of Scripture as biblical authors intended them to be heard” (10). Authors in this series are tasked with discerning the message biblical authors intended to communicate by paying close attention to the discourse and rhetorical features of texts in their original languages. Commentators divide their treatment of each text-unit into six subsections: (1) the main idea of the passage, (2) literary context, (3) translation and exegetical outline, (4) structure and literary form, (5) explanation of the text, and (6) canonical and practical significance

(10-11). These six subsections are arranged from the top down, moving the reader from the big idea of each passage to an in depth treatment of individual clauses, phrases, and words, and back out to how the unit relates to the whole Christian canon and to the individual Christian's life.

Youngblood divides his commentary into three parts: a translation of Jonah, an introduction to the book, and a commentary proper. Youngblood's translation reflects his own exegetical decisions and is marked by a keen awareness of how the author of Jonah intentionally uses repetition to accomplish certain rhetorical strategies. For instance, Youngblood consistently renders all four instances of *twl* with the same English lexeme, "to fling," allowing the reader to make a connection between God's actions and the actions of the sailors (1:4, 5, 12, 15). When the sailors cry out (*zā'āq*) to their gods (1:5) and the captain commands Jonah to call out (*qārā*) to his god (1:6), Youngblood avoids using the English translation "to pray." Instead, he reserves this translation for the only two instances the Hebrew word *pālal* occurs in Jonah (2:2; 4:2), thus strengthening the parallel structure of chapters two and four. By carefully translating the Hebrew text into English, Youngblood produces a reading that allows English speakers to see the repetitions utilized by the Hebrew author.

In his introduction to the book of Jonah, Youngblood discusses questions related to the canonical, historical, and literary contexts of the book. Jonah's placement within the Book of the Twelve has long been debated. Despite its seemingly odd placement in the prophetic books, Youngblood notes, "Jews, Christians, and Muslims alike have always considered the character of Jonah to be a prophet and have included this book as part of the prophetic corpus" (26). As such, the book must be understood as part of Israel's prophetic tradition and interpreted accordingly. The two focal themes of Jonah accord well within the larger stream of Israel's prophetic traditions: the inter-relationship between God's justice and mercy and God's universal sovereignty and his particular covenant with Abraham (28). Having firmly rooted the book of Jonah within the prophetic tradition, Youngblood provides a brief overview of how the book relates to the whole of Christian canon.

Youngblood's discussions of the historical and literary contexts of the book are intimately related. The high degree of literary artistry (e.g., repetition, personification, parallel structure, and irony), the hyperbolic elements within the story (e.g., great city, great wind, great fear, great fish, great anger), and the narrative's supernatural elements have convinced many commentators that the story is an artfully-crafted fiction designed to teach. Youngblood, however, notes that literary artistry and historical facticity are not mutually exclusive. Though the author's primary goal was to teach his readers about God rather than to provide them with historical details, this does not mean that the narrative he tells is untrue.

Having made allowances for both the book's historicity as well as its literary character, Youngblood addresses matters related to genre, rhetorical strategy, structure, and the overall message of the book. The book of Jonah is first and foremost a prophetic narrative similar in kind to those in Samuel and Kings. The similarities among Jonah, Elijah, Elisha, Moses, and Abraham lead Youngblood to the conclusion that the book is a mild parody of a rebellious prophet who does not properly understand the relationship between God's mercy and justice, and his divine election and universal sovereignty, two themes that encompass the message of the book. The author of Jonah structures the book in order to accomplish this task.

Using Longacre and Hwang's analysis of the discourse structure of Jonah, Youngblood argues that the book has been constructed in two parallel halves: Jonah 1–2 and Jonah 3–4. Within each half of the book there are three scenes: stage setting, pre-peak episode, and peak episode. In both stage-setting episodes, Jonah receives the word of the Lord. Although he refuses to fulfill his commission in the first half of the book (1:1–1:4a), Jonah gives way to God's will in the second half (3:1–3b). In the pre-peak episodes, Jonah interacts with two different groups of Gentiles: the sailors and the Ninevites. When faced with possible destruction, both groups willingly and eagerly turn to Jonah's God for deliverance (1:4b–2:1b; 3:3c–10). Jonah, however, persists in his rebellion. The contrast between Jonah and these Gentiles cannot be missed. In the book of Jonah, there is an ironic inversion: God's own prophet will not obey while everyone around him does. In each of the peak episodes, Jonah engages with God in prayer. This takes the form of a thanksgiving psalm in chapter three, and a prayer of complaint in chapter four. In the second half of the book, unlike the first, Youngblood perceives a fourth scene. The narrative concludes with a post-peak episode, wherein God leaves Jonah and the reader with an object lesson concerning his mercy and grace.

Youngblood's commentary on the book of Jonah admirably accomplishes the tasks set forth in the series introduction. He has written with both the serious student and the pastor in mind, and he has provided his readers with a skillful and attentive reading of the discourse and rhetorical features of Jonah. There are, however, some shortcomings in the commentary.

In his introduction, Youngblood notes that the macrostructure adopted for his analysis is based on the findings of Longacre and Hwang (38n41). Though he adapts the basic structure and language used by Longacre and Hwang (stage setting, pre-peak episode, and peak episode) their divisions of the text are different. Youngblood, for example, contends that the stage setting material extends from 1:1–4a and 3:1–3b, whereas Longacre and Hwang list 1:1–3 and 3:1–3 as the material included in the stage setting scenes.¹ Youngblood does not acknowledge that a difference between the two structures exists. The matter is further compounded by the fact that he inconsistently divides the text at different places in the book. In his translation at the beginning of the commentary, he begins a new paragraph at 1:4 instead of placing 1:4a with the preceding paragraph, as his structure suggests (21). He also presents two charts with different divisions on the same page without any clarification (39).

A second, related critique concerns Youngblood's understanding of the word *whyh* ("and it was") as a discourse marker. The presence of *whyh* in Jonah 1:4b and 2:1c serves as his primary source of evidence that a structural break occurs. He does not, however, inform the reader that his divisions of the text deviate from the near scholarly consensus that 1:4a and 2:1a function as the beginning of a new unit, nor does he interact with competing discourse considerations such as the *N* + qatal construction in 1:4a which Longacre and Hwang view as creating a shift in scenario. Readers familiar with the discourse features of biblical Hebrew will be left wondering which factors served as the tipping point for one interpretation over another.

¹Robert E. Longacre and Shin Ja J. Hwang, "A Text-Linguistic Approach to the Biblical Hebrew Narrative of Jonah," in *Biblical Hebrew and Discourse Analysis*, ed. Robert D. Bergen (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1999), 342.

Finally, while the commentary is thoroughly researched, Youngblood perhaps could have interacted more with divergent interpretations, either in the body of the text or in the footnotes. Though he does interact with various options on occasion, it does not happen often. While detailed engagement with differing interpretations may have been beyond the scope of the commentary, it nevertheless leaves the reader with the impression that all are in agreement with Youngblood's reading of the rhetorical and discourse features of Jonah.

Despite these nitpicky criticisms, students and professors of biblical Hebrew will benefit from Youngblood's incorporation of the findings of the best articles and commentaries available, while pastors will find the volume to be accessible in its presentation of the discourse, literary, and rhetorical features of the Hebrew text of Jonah. Many resources written with both serious students and pastors in mind tend to either be inaccessible to the uninitiated because of their technical nature and use of jargon, or to sacrifice all vestiges of scholarship, leaving the reader with little meat. Youngblood's commentary is guilty of neither and would be a welcome addition on the shelf of anyone studying the book of Jonah.

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Obadiah: The Kingship Belongs to YHWH. By Daniel I. Block. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2013. 128 pages. Hardcover, \$19.99.

Daniel I. Block is Gunther H. Knoedler Professor of Old Testament at Wheaton College in Wheaton, Illinois. His other recent publications include *Beyond the River Chebar: Studies in Kingship and Eschatology in the Book of Ezekiel* and *By the River Chebar: Historical, Literary, and Theological Studies in the Book of Ezekiel*. Block has several other publications in the area of Old Testament studies, including work as a senior translator for the *New Living Translation*.

The goal of *Obadiah: The Kingship Belongs to YHWH* is to examine the rhetorical and theological agendas of the text. The author intends to address the theological message of the biblical text in its context of the canon. An examination of the theological message will also reveal the implications for the Christian reader (9-10).

Obadiah: The Kingship Belongs to YHWH begins with an introduction to the book of Obadiah. The introduction addresses the historical background, as well as the rhetorical structure of the text. Block distinguishes the difference between the prophet who gave the oracle and the person who recorded the oracle on a scroll. Despite this distinction, Block attributes the message to YHWH. Block holds to the date of Obadiah being in the time of exile due to the fact that the crimes of Edom are related to their treatment of the people of Judah after Jerusalem's fall (22-24). Obadiah's message is focused on the judgment of Edom but is also intended to rebuild the hope of Judah toward YHWH and his promises (35). Block's introduction addresses the time and setting surrounding the message of Obadiah, giving the readers a context around which to understand the book.

The first verse of Obadiah sets the stage for the book. Obadiah attributes the contents of the oracle to YHWH. The source of the message highlights the importance of the contents to follow (50). The oracle is directed at Edom and their relationship with Israel which traces back to the patriarchs (51-52). Obadiah 2–10 covers the judgment of Edom. Block notes that Obadiah draws from the other prophetic oracles against Edom, especially Jeremiah (55). Obadiah's focus on the punishment reveals that Edom is the target of the fury of God, yet the reason for God's fury, violence, and murder against his brother is not revealed until verse ten. Block notes that the passage refers to Esau as the personal brother of Jacob to highlight the treacherous nature of the offense (69-70). The following verses give greater explanation of the crimes with a modified lawsuit. Esau is guilty of gloating over Jerusalem's destruction and participating in its demise (77).

The text then transitions to the broader focus of the Day of YHWH when all nations will see judgment. The Day of YHWH is a common Old Testament phrase for the future time when YHWH will act in history against His enemies and bless the righteous (82). Obadiah uses Edom to represent the nation's wicked actions and the fury they will face (86-88). In contrast to Edom and the nations, Jacob will be restored. Not only will Israel be restored, but she will be given all the land promised. The conclusion and climax of Obadiah are found in the establishment of the rule of YHWH. When YHWH takes the throne, Israel will be freed from all earthly rulers, and their safety and hope will be in Him. Block notes that while Obadiah is not clear on the whether YHWH will rule from Zion or heaven, he is clear about the fact that YHWH will assume the awaited reign (103).

The final chapter of Block's work addresses the theological and canonical implications of the book of Obadiah. Obadiah addresses Edom's role in the history of Israel. Edom serves as a representative for the nations and for humanity. The evil actions of Edom in mistreating his own family shows that Edom did not align with God's covenant and thus deserved punishment (107-8). The core of the theological message of Obadiah is the reign of YHWH, which is seen in the humbling of the arrogant and the raising of the low (111). Block notes that Obadiah does not highlight David as a feature in the future reign of YHWH in the same manner as other prophetic messages. Instead, Obadiah focuses on the fact that YHWH is ruling over all the cosmos and not just the nation of Israel. Block sees the kingship theme carrying forward to the ultimate reign of Christ. The dominion of YHWH is fulfilled in Christ, who is God as member of the Trinity (116). This is a very strong application for the Christian studying the text of Obadiah.

This commentary has great appeal to both the minister and the scholar studying Obadiah. The practical aspect of theological principles and the structure of the literature will help readers apply the text. Because Block does not deal extensively in the Hebrew text, readers with a limited background in Hebrew will be able to use the book. Such practical application is a major strength of Block's work.

– *Ben Hutchison, New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, New Orleans, LA*

Politics—According to the Bible: A Comprehensive Resource for Understanding Modern Political Issues in Light of Scripture. By Wayne Grudem. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2010. 619 pages. Hardcover, \$39.99.

Wayne Grudem is a well-known American theologian and author of the bestselling *Systematic Theology* which has attained global recognition.¹ Grudem, simply and yet profoundly, defines systematic theology as “any study that answers the question, ‘What does the whole Bible teach us today?’ about any given topic.” *Politics—According to the Bible* is Grudem’s laborious study to answer the question, what does the whole Bible teach about politics? This book is essentially a “systematic theology” that studies human governments and related subjects. In order to give an adequate review of this massive monograph, one must pay closer attention to Grudem’s purpose, plan, principles, and practices.

The author boldly states his purpose: “I wrote this book because I was convinced that God intended the Bible to give guidance to every area of life—including how governments should function!” (13). With a strong view on the ultimate authority of Scripture in every aspect of life, Grudem intends to search what the whole Bible says (or God says) concerning human governments. Grudem’s determination to step into numerous hotly-debated and divisive political issues, such as abortion, capital punishment, homosexuality, and divorce, certainly provokes criticism. The author, nonetheless, is not naïve about potential criticisms. In his introduction, Grudem readily invites conversations, for, in his view, “we grow in our understanding by discussing and reasoning with one another (in a civil manner!).” To say the least, Grudem should be commended for his courage as a theologian to touch on what is arguably the most misconceived, misused, and misjudged dimension in human history: politics. Regardless of whether or not one agrees with Grudem’s political theology, he has successfully set a high biblical standard on how to do systematic theology in the real world to impact the world with the biblical worldview.

At the outset, the author is conscientious of the plan of his book. The first three chapters tackle five harmful worldviews that estrange Christians and governments (chapter one) so as to argue for a biblically balanced position (chapter two); that is, Christians are to make significant influences on governments through, for instance, pastors’ responsible preaching on political issues and Christians’ proactive participations from voting to supporting war (74-75). Chapter three should be considered the heart of the book, for it clearly articulates and argues for the most fundamental and biblical principles—the roles and relationships of governments and churches and/or citizens. These principles include: governments should serve the people and safeguard human liberty; citizens are to obey the governments, though discreetly; churches and governments must maintain distinct authorities in spiritual and civil matters. Such basic principles, furthermore, are set in a twofold theological framework (chapter four) where God is the

¹Grudem’s *Systematic Theology* has already been translated into eleven languages, and seven more translations are underway. This numerical information simply implies that his theology is reaching or has reached international recognition and reception. “Wayne Grudem,” available online at <http://www.waynegrudem.com/how-can-i-find-your-book-systematic-theology-in-other-languages>, updated May 1, 2014, accessed Nov. 4, 2014.

sole creator of all things and the sovereign giver of moral standards, and where humans, though in a sinful state, are responsible to manage God's creation graciously and gratefully.

While Grudem's arguments throughout the book are clearly formulated around the above-mentioned primary principles—the principles the Bible teaches clearly, directly, and decisively (e.g., civil governments are to punish evil, protect lives, and promote goodness), he also employs secondary principles—the theological guidelines derived from the broader biblical teachings (e.g., the principle of human equality in God's image supports some form of democracy), and tertiary resources—scientific, statistical, environmental, economic, or other relevant facts, reports, results, and pertinent documents to address certain political matters that receive no direct or clear biblical instructions (18-19). As expected, Grudem's tertiary arguments will invite scores of disagreements and agreements, criticisms, and consents to his conclusions. Nevertheless, one must notice that when Grudem evaluates the "Special Groups" of the political issues (chapter fifteen) to which the Bible does not speak directly, the author intentionally invokes the primary and secondary principles in his arguments (513-14). For instance, when he touches on the matter of "affirmative action" (i.e., "government policies that give preferential treatment to members of certain minorities in education, in employment, and in awarding of government contracts to businesses" (521)), Grudem argues that this policy falls short of the biblical principle of human equality in the image of God (522). Undeniably, the Bible does not give specific directives to every specific matter or policy in life. Therefore, moving from theological principles to practices is a crucial task for all Christians, theologians and non-theologians alike, if they want to live according to the biblical standards. To be fair, Grudem has demonstrated his ability in translating theological principles into timely practices in politics.

Politics is a properly comprehensive resource for giving godly guidelines to Christians who have minimal knowledge of politics. It is a solid "systematic theology" to help Christians know what to believe and how to live in political contexts. This book may as well generate controversies and criticisms. But, more significantly, it will promote greater Christian influence on governments.

– Peter L. Tie, Melbourne School of Theology, Australia

Practicing Christian Doctrine: An Introduction to Thinking and Living Theologically. By Beth Felker Jones. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2014. 256 pages. Softcover, \$22.99.

Beth Felker Jones is Associate Professor of Theology at Wheaton College in Wheaton, Illinois. Her most recent book, *Practicing Christian Doctrine: An Introduction to Thinking and Living Theologically*, provides an overview of many of the key tenets of Christian orthodoxy. Jones's intention goes beyond the simple reformulation of traditional doctrines. As she argues, "[t]he discipline of theology is not first about gaining information or building a system of knowledge. It is about discipleship: we learn to speak and think well about God so that we can be more faithful followers of Jesus" (13). With that in mind, this book seeks to outline a theology that is both evangelical and ecumenical. It is evangelical in the sense that it is grounded in the Bible, emphasizes the need for personal conversion, is concerned with preaching the gospel and doing good works, and it keeps Christ's death on the cross at its center. It is ecumenical in that Jones

proclaims a theology that emphasizes the shared doctrinal ground among a broad range of Christians (4-9).

This book consists of ten chapters, in addition to the introduction and benediction. *Practicing Christian Doctrine* is constructed as a brief systematic theology, beginning with prolegomena and moving to particular doctrines. The first chapter outlines the theological method for the volume. Jones, a Methodist, begins with the Wesleyan Quadrilateral but clearly emphasizes the primacy of Scripture. The second chapter explains the nature of both general and special revelation including the origin of the canon, and the authority and accuracy of Scripture. The third chapter outlines the doctrine of the Trinity. Jones' approach is to provide a basic, positive definition of the Trinity, and then to discuss the major Trinitarian heresies. These she deftly explains, making clear their departure from the witness of Scripture and orthodox Christian doctrine.

Chapter four explains the doctrines of creation and providence, emphasizing God's creation *ex nihilo* and His continued sustaining work in the created order. Jones offers examples of common errors that should be avoided, like Gnosticism and hierarchical dualism, and explains how the doctrines of creation and providence should influence the way Christians live in God's good world. Next, Jones considers theological anthropology. In this fifth chapter, she explains the place of humans in the created order, discusses the *imago Dei*, explains sin and its origins, and concludes by discussing the redemption of humans as new creations in Christ. She helpfully notes that Christlikeness is the ultimate goal for all humanity, since He represents humanity unstained by sin.

Chapter six presents an overview of Christology with a positive sketch of the doctrine, followed by brief descriptions of several Christological heresies, and concluding with summaries of several important creedal statements. Jones then moves to soteriology in the seventh chapter, explaining justification, sanctification, and final redemption. She provides an even-handed outline of the Arminian and Calvinist understandings of divine grace and human freedom; in this sometimes contentious debate, Jones emphasizes the agreement between the views rather than their points of contention. The chapter concludes with Jones's explanation of the basic models for understanding the atonement.

In the eighth chapter, Jones outlines pneumatology. Here she emphasizes the reality of the Holy Spirit, pointing toward a biblical understanding of the Spirit's work in sanctification. Jones pushes back against the feminization of the Holy Spirit that is sometimes present in feminist theologies and maintains a cautious attitude toward charismatic understandings of spiritual gifts. Chapter nine deals with ecclesiology; due to the intended ecumenical audience of this work, the ecclesiology Jones outlines emphasizes the nature of the church over questions of polity. Thus, she explains the images of the church as body and bride of Christ, the traditional marks of the church, and the existence of both a visible and invisible church body. In the final chapter, Jones deals with eschatology. She emphasizes the hope of the resurrection as Christians live in the tension of being already redeemed but not yet fully restored. She briefly notes the various positions on the millennium, but highlights the centrality of the resurrection and final consummation of the new creation in all systems. The book concludes with a reverent prayer to the triune God.

The most significant strength of this volume is Jones's emphasis on the global nature of Christianity. In support of this, she frequently cites non-Western theologians. Jones's effort to raise awareness of valuable contributions to theology that are being made by majority-world thinkers is commendable. Also, a high percentage of the contemporary authors cited are female, which highlights an otherwise underrepresented population of theologians. Jones does well to broaden the conversation, though some of the theologians she cites tend toward liberation theology; they are solidly orthodox in the citations provided, but may have less palatable perspectives on other doctrines. A second strength of this volume is the succinct manner in which Jones explains various heresies. The simple explanations of historical departures from orthodoxy make this volume a helpful reference tool.

Jones is so successful in highlighting the shared space between theological perspectives that to the uninitiated, it might be unclear why there is debate among Christians over soteriology or the inerrancy of Scripture. This is a weakness, since disagreements are not always mere quibbling among irritable academics, but are often over substantive theological truths. That said, Jones's pacific approach will tend to do more good than harm if it encourages readers to approach different perspectives seeking to find common ground. A second weakness is that some of Jones' practical sections lack concrete applications. She argues well that theology must be put in practice, but the lack of specifics may hinder such theological implementation.

Practicing Christian Doctrine is a thoroughly orthodox introduction to theology. As with any attempt to be even-handed and theologically inclusive, this book will disappoint those seeking polemical arguments. Jones has done well to lay out balanced approaches to several hotly-debated doctrines. As such, this book would be best suited for teaching in broadly evangelical settings, where basic instruction in Christian doctrine is the goal.

— Andrew J. Spencer, Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, Wake Forest, NC

Revelation: The Past and the Future of John's Apocalypse. By Gerald L. Stevens. Eugene, OR: Pickwick, 2014. 664 pages. Softcover, \$62.00.

Finding the typical millennial options and historical approaches wanting, Gerald Stevens, Professor of New Testament and Greek at New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, offers his unique understanding of Revelation. Stevens call his view passion-millennialism, which means the true church of Christ will follow Christ in His passion. Just as Christ suffered and died, so the church—remaining faithful and loyal—must also suffer and die (190-93). The “master image” for understanding Jesus in the Apocalypse, then, is the slaughtered lamb (501).

Stevens divides his profusely illustrated volume into three main parts. The first part offers a historical survey, starting with the church fathers and continuing to contemporary Dispensationalism and Adventism. The second section provides the interpretive principles, which serve as the foundation to understanding Revelation. Then, the third part provides a commentary-like overview of Revelation through Stevens's interpretive lens.

Some may categorize Stevens's perspective as a form of preterism (the message of Revelation is for and about the churches of Asia Minor and their conflict with Rome, 256). Stevens, however, distances himself from preterism because John does not issue prophecies that are fulfilled in Rome (151, 153, 158) and because the material is more forthtelling than foretelling (401). He also acknowledges that a limited amount of material transcends the events of John's day (a futurist and universal component). For example, he finds the references to Gog and Magog refer to the far future, when the world will collectively destroy the church and the church will follow Christ in its own passion (510, 516). The last two chapters relate the glorious future when God will dwell with His faithful followers.

Stevens focuses on the confessional war in which the churches of Asia Minor were entangled: they could either conform to their pagan society and its pagan worship (especially that of the emperor) or face persecution—and even execution, like Antipas. John (the prophet, not the apostle) wrote to encourage them to remain faithful to their confession and to worship God alone as their true sovereign. In this way, they would overcome the evil empire. Their perseverance in confession would win the war against the beast, the false prophet, and Babylon, and the battle of Armageddon (340, 460–62, 459, 573). Confession, however, would sometimes lead to death; those martyrs would rule with Christ until His return in the millennium (505–6; this begins to resemble some form of amillennialism).

Satanic opposition will grow until the church has been destroyed by the onslaught of a world united in its opposition to Christ and His church (represented by Gog and Magog). Only when the Church has lived out the pattern of Christ's death will He return (521). For Stevens, the idea of a rapture destroys this Christocentric passion pattern (192, 253, 445, 459).

Stevens finds that too many interpretations of Revelation present a schizophrenic Jesus (110–13). The Gospels serve as his guide to the character of Jesus, whom they present as the suffering Son of Man who came to give His life for the world, and not as a warrior messiah who came to destroy Rome and the wicked. If He was not a warrior messiah at His first coming, He will not be one at the second (111). This concern also controls his understanding of Armageddon. If God decisively destroyed evil in a final battle, then this battle, and not the cross, would be God's way of "ultimately dealing with evil in this world" (110). Stevens also dismisses any of the judgments in Revelation as being punitive—they all are redemptive in nature (414). The battles in Revelation in which Jesus defeats His enemies (e.g., Armageddon and Jesus' return with the sword in His mouth) are figurative descriptions of Christ's loyal people defeating God's enemies by maintaining loyalty to the gospel—"a war of words, a war of confession." The sword proceeding from the mouth of Christ is the gospel confession of the saints (403, 473).

Stevens reminds his readers on multiple occasions that the war between the emperor and his empire and Christ and His people is a "war of words," not of earthly weapons (he calls this "the key theme"; 156, 434). While Stevens is correct in his attempt to discredit the many sensationalistic versions of Dispensationalism and Adventism which relish the destruction of the wicked in apocalyptic warfare, he goes too far in reducing the imagery of the defeat of Satan and his minions (the Beast, False Prophet, and Harlot Babylon) to the faithful witness of God's people and to the fact that evil is always self-destructive (476). God and the Lamb take a more active role in vindicating His people and punishing the wicked in this life.

While many of God's judgments have a redemptive component, they cannot be reduced to this. Just as Stevens does not want to disassociate the Jesus of Revelation from the Jesus of the Gospels, Jesus cannot be disassociated from Yahweh. Many times, God has acted punitively in other parts of the Bible: the flood, Sodom and Gomorrah, the deaths of Ananias and Sapphira, and of Herod Agrippa I. In Revelation, John pictures the plagues as a response to the souls of the saints under the altar—God is their avenger. This punitive act on the enemies of God and His people in no way detracts from the decisiveness of the cross.

Stevens often contrasts his view with the excesses of sensationalism. For example, Jesus saves either by dying or by “blasting your enemies with his power rays” (138). Many interpreters will find this type of presentation, which is offered throughout the book, to be a false dichotomy that fails to address their views.

A major drawback for many readers will be the tone: sometimes too informal, sometimes overly confrontational with “you” versus “we” (173, 186, 193). Stevens expresses strong opinions when addressing opposing views (especially dispensational premillennialism). He even suggests that his critique will have caused many futurists to quit reading (119n). Awkwardness of certain expressions, redundancy, and repeated clusters of sentences riddle the work, as well (compare 173, 186, 193).

For those wanting to research Stevens' claims, the paucity of notes may prove frustrating. In some places, Stevens references ancient Greco-Roman, Jewish, and other ancient traditions and beliefs but does not provide information on what primary sources (or even secondary sources) he consulted. For example, he writes, “Jewish reinterpretation already had rewritten the twelve signs of the Zodiac as the twelve tribes of Israel and the Python myth as the Lord slaying the sea dragon Leviathan” (424). To assess his claim and its relevancy for understanding Revelation, the reader needs to know more: what was said, when it was said, and whether this information would have been accessible to John and his audience.

Readers will appreciate the ample black and white photos and diagrams scattered throughout the book. These illustrations and his discussion of emperor worship really sharpen the picture of propaganda and persecution the Christians in Asia Minor were facing.

In spite of its shortcomings, Stevens' *Revelation: the Past and the Future of John's Apocalypse* will benefit the reader by highlighting aspects of Revelation that are often ignored or noted and then soon forgotten. The crucified Christ that is the slaughtered lamb; it is He who conquers sin through death, and His church, like Him, must suffer to achieve victory.

— Samuel R. Pelletier, *Truett-McConnell College, Cleveland, GA*

The Theology of the Book of Isaiah. By John Goldingay. Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2014. 158 pages. Softcover, \$18.00.

The Theology of the Book of Isaiah is the product of John Goldingay, a prolific author in the area of Old Testament studies and David Allan Hubbard Professor of Old Testament at Fuller

Theological Seminary. Goldingay's extensive publications range from technical commentaries to works written explicitly for a lay audience. Recently, he released the third volume of his *Old Testament Theology* and multiple volumes in his ongoing series, *The Old Testament for Everyone*.

The aim of *The Theology of the Book of Isaiah* is twofold. It first seeks to set forth the theology found in the book of Isaiah and then to present the theology derived from the book of Isaiah (11). To achieve both goals, the book is divided into two distinct sections, the first examining the theologies in Isaiah and the second examining the theology that emerges from Isaiah.

Goldingay's introduction makes clear that the work adheres to a multiple-author approach to Isaiah. Although Goldingay forsakes terms such as "Second Isaiah" or "Trito-Isaiah," it is evident that he is building on the tradition that stems from Bernhard Duhm's threefold division of the book of Isaiah. Though he stands firmly in the critical tradition, Goldingay avoids its tendency to focus primarily on the surgical division of Isaiah. Instead, he presents Isaiah as a series of five prophetic collages that have been intentionally compiled into one work. The five collages are divided as follows: Isa 1–12, Isa 13–27, Isa 28–39, Isa 40–55, and Isa 56–66. Section One of *The Theology of the Book of Isaiah* presents the theology found within each individual collage.

The discussion of the theology of each collage begins with a note on how the collage is organized. In these discussions, readers are guided through the difficult task of reading the non-linear material of Isaiah. The discussion of the arrangement of Isaiah's message enables readers to grasp how its arrangement is integrally tied to its message. For example, Goldingay remarks of the chiasmic structure of Isa 56–66, "[w]hereas a linear arrangement suggests that things are going somewhere, a chiasm suggests that they are simply going around and around" (75).

After discussing the arrangement of each individual collage, the focus turns to the theologies they contain. In the examination of the theology found in the book of Isaiah, many of the established methods for examining its message are cast aside in favor of a fresh approach. Notably, Goldingay rejects Bernhard Duhm's well-known identification of "servant songs" in Isa 40–55, claiming the approach is unhelpful in interpreting those passages (68–69).

Section Two, which focuses on the theology that emerges from the book of Isaiah, is presented as a series of vignettes on prominent theological topics found in Isaiah. These thirteen brief essays seek to present a holistic approach to Isaiah's major theological topics. Each essay compresses the enormous amount of material from Isaiah into an accessible snapshot of its topic. Even the complex thread of the roles played by the great geopolitical empires of Assyria, Babylon, and Persia in the book of Isaiah is woven together into a concise paragraph which summarizes its main theological importance in the book of Isaiah (130).

The Theology of the Book of Isaiah is written in a refreshingly readable style, which will appeal to a wide audience of readers. The book avoids devolving into discussing technical aspects of historical-context, exegesis, and theology that often make similar works difficult to read. Pastors and teachers who read Goldingay's work will be able to communicate his material to their audience without having to undergo the process of filtering out excessive technical information and language.

Evangelical readers will be challenged by Goldingay's adherence to a multiple-author view of Isaiah. Though his labor to make his work accessible to a broad variety of readers is commendable, it offers little discussion of the foundation and implications of the critical approach he espouses. Readers who hold to a unified view of Isaiah's authorship are given no compelling reason to adhere to the multiple-author view and no guidance for how to find value in Goldingay's work without changing their view on the issue. Chapter six presents a brief discussion of the theology of revelation in Isaiah, but fails to address the issue fully.

Goldingay's English translation of the Hebrew of Isaiah is intriguing. His translation often deviates from well-known English renderings of passages and phrases in Isaiah. The common phrase *YHWH sebā'ôt*, for example, is rendered in a rather wooden manner as "Yahweh armies." Even more unusual, the often-cited name of the son to be born to Israel in Isa 9:6 (Hebrew 9:5), frequently translated as "Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace" (NIV), is translated as "An-extraordinary-planner-is-the-warrior-God; the-everlasting-Father-is-an-officer-for-well-being" (28). Goldingay never offers a reason for his unique translations within *The Theology of the Book of Isaiah*, though he does mention that their exegetical foundation can be found in his commentaries on Isaiah. The lack of explanation for these significant deviations in translation leaves non-Hebrew readers in the uncomfortable situation of trusting a translation that significantly deviates from their English versions.

The Theology of the Book of Isaiah should be a welcome addition to the library of all who are interested in the theological message of Isaiah's prophecies. Though the work is not without faults, these are due primarily to its focus on brevity and readability. Readers who disagree with Goldingay's view on Isaiah's authorship or his unusual translation of some well-known passages may still find in the volume valuable guidance through the murky paths of interpreting prophetic literature.

– Cory Barnes, *New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, New Orleans, LA*

Truth Considered and Applied: Examining Postmodernism, History, and Christian Faith. By Stewart E. Kelly. Nashville: B&H Academic, 2011. 375 pages. Softcover, \$29.99.

Postmodernism is a topic of great interest for many academic disciplines in our day, as well as for culture as a whole. This book by Stewart Kelly, a Christian thinker who serves as Professor of Philosophy at Minot State University in North Dakota, provides a thoughtful discussion and critique of postmodernism from a Christian perspective. While the book provides a broad survey of postmodernism, it focuses on issues of the objectivity of epistemology and history. Although many other works address the epistemological problems of postmodernism, the careful discussion on the impact of postmodernism on history is rarer and thus makes a very important contribution.

The book is organized in three main sections. In the first section, Kelly describes the characteristics of both modernism and postmodernism, and provides a critique of each. Kelly's evaluations are from a moderate foundationalist perspective, and thus finds points of agreement and disagreement with aspects of both a Cartesian Enlightenment perspective and a full-blown

postmodernist perspective. Kelly identifies ten characteristics of modernism, providing a rich discussion of each of these: belief in the omniscience of human reason, the rejection of original sin, the affirmation of meliorism, belief in progress and the emancipation of humanity, affirmation of objective truth and a sharp distinction between history and fiction, a commitment to historical realism, a commitment to the correspondence theory of truth, the assertion of a sharp subject/object distinction, a faith in science and its application, and a commitment to human autonomy. Kelly's critique of modernism from his moderate foundationalist perspective raises nine questions about modernism: human reason is not omniscient, misgivings about meliorism, doubts about inevitable progress, the untenability of a sharp distinction between history and fiction, the rejection of classical foundationalism, the myth of complete objectivity, the reality that metanarratives may lead to oppression, and doubts about human autonomy.

After providing a framework for analyzing postmodernism, Kelly then describes eleven characteristics of postmodernism: the rejection of modernism, the affirmation of "radical situatedness," interest in intertextuality and the problem of reference, the belief that truth is socially constructed, doubts about the substantial self, the affirmation of deconstruction and the instability of texts, the demise of methodological objectivity, the assertion that all truth claims are ideological and oppressive, doubts about realism and the correspondence theory of truth with a concomitant affirmation of anti-realism and constructivism, incredulity toward metanarratives, and the rejection of the logocentricity of human reason. Again, Kelly provides cogent critiques of each of these affirmations. Kelly's discussion of the epistemological foundations of modernism and postmodernism is too rich to discuss in the detail it deserves, but is a thoughtful and insightful investigation.

Kelly's careful investigation of historiography, however, may be an even greater contribution, since less has been written on this subject from a philosophical perspective. He provides a helpful survey of three main perspectives on historiography: the historical objectivism (or "scientific history") of Leopold von Ranke, George Burton Adams, G. R. Elton, and Keith Windschuttle; the moderate relativism (or "progressivist history" or "New History") of Charles Beard, Carl Becker, James Robinson, and Frederick Jackson Turner; and the postmodern ("perspectival history") of Hayden White, Keith Jenkins, and Peter Novick. Kelly affirms a "modest historical realism," which describes as the "default position" in historiography. Kelly describes the default position as affirming the following ten claims: the historical record is incomplete, historians tend to ask questions from their own situatedness, history is selective, facts of history are not self-explanatory but require emplotment in an interpretive narrative, objectivity does not require absolute neutrality, all historical claims are potentially defeasible, history should be written with fairness, a distinction may be made between the epistemological claim that ideas are socially constructed and the ontological claim that objective facts do not exist, physical objects are not socially constructed, and history is interested primarily in explanation. Kelly then provides a defense of these propositions against postmodernist criticisms. He also provides illustrations of how these various historical theories apply to the interpretation of the Holocaust and the Cold War.

Kelly returns to epistemology proper in the third section, starting with a discussion of why truth matters. He then surveys various approaches to epistemological justification—the correspondence theory of truth, coherence theory of truth, pragmatic theory of truth, and three

deflationary theories of truth (the performance theory, the minimalist theory, and the disquotational view). Kelly then proposes a more modest correspondence theory of truth.

Truth Considered and Applied is an incredibly well-researched book and well-documented work, evidenced by over 1,700 footnotes. The thirty-two page bibliography and the extensive footnotes alone provide a rich resource on this subject for scholars. At the beginning of each chapter heading and most of the subheadings in the book, Kelly introduces each of these sections with as many as seventeen quotations, a total of over 340 quotations. Also, the text often cites one quotation after another. While these are interesting and cogent illustrative quotes, the author many times does not provide the reader with the background from which these are drawn. Since postmodernists vary widely from each other in their perspectives and their terminology, some of these citations may not fully represent the intention of the author. However, citing so many somewhat-disconnected quotations may make the author vulnerable to the criticism that he has taken some of these thinkers out of context, or that he makes these thinkers appear more artificially monolithic than they actually are. Another minor issue with the documentation is that while the quotations in the headings list the full name of the authors, those in the text and the footnotes only provide the first initial of the authors. While this style is common in some disciplines, it is rare in theology and philosophy, and with this many authors being cited it would add to clarity to spell out the first name of each author. With so many topics addressed in this work, an index of topics would have been a valuable addition to the index of thinkers that is provided.

Truth Considered and Applied is a remarkably well-written work. It is obviously a philosophical volume that is too technical for beginners, although Kelly does interject humor and some devotional thoughts along the way. Scholars will find it an excellent contribution on postmodern epistemology and historiography. I highly recommend it.

– Steve W. Lemke, *New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, New Orleans, LA*

Word Studies Made Simple: How to Study the Bible in the Original Languages. By Norris Grubbs and Francis Kimmitt. Mountain Home, AR: BorderStone Press, 2012. xi + 139 pages. Soft-cover, \$24.95.

Books containing chapters on lexical analysis are not uncommon. If there is an abundance of material which addresses lexical analysis, then why did Norris Grubbs (Associate Provost for Extension Centers and Enrollment Management and Professor of New Testament and Greek at New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary) and Francis Kimmitt (Vice President of Academic Services, Dean, and Professor at Temple Baptist Seminary) write *Word Studies Made Simple: How to Study the Bible in the Original Languages?* The reason is that the book seems to fit a niche in the area of word-study literature.¹

¹See, as examples, Douglas Stewart, *Old Testament Exegesis: A Handbook for Students and Pastors*, 3rd ed. (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 2001), 134–43; Gordon D. Fee, *New Testament Exegesis: A Handbook for Students and Pastors*, 3rd ed. (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 2002), 79–95; Mi-

In their book, Grubbs and Kimmitt demonstrate how to conduct a word study. This book is divided into seven sections, consisting of fourteen chapters. Three sections are devoted to Greek, three to Hebrew, and one to word studies in general. At the end of the book, the authors have provided four appendices and a select bibliography. Readers are given some basic grammar in both the Hebrew and the Greek sections. The authors write, “[b]efore we can teach you how to do a word study in the original languages, you have to learn something about the original languages. To perform a word study, you do not need to know how to read Greek or Hebrew, but you should know enough to use the resources, including being able to understand their terminology” (12). Sections one and four are devoted to issues such as the alphabet, nouns, verbs, and other miscellanea (e.g., adjectives, the definite article, participles). All of this is standard. The goal is not to overload readers with information. After all, the point of the book is to show people how to do word studies. Grubbs and Kimmitt rightly understand that in order to work with Greek, a basic and foundational knowledge of grammar is necessary. Although some might debate what constitutes a healthy foundational knowledge, Grubbs and Kimmitt have kept their treatment brief. One must know, for example, the alphabet, that Greek nouns operate on a case-system, and that Greek verbs require more attention than exegeses sometimes give them. Readers will not invest a great deal of time learning the intricacies of Greek or Hebrew grammar.

Grubbs and Kimmitt demonstrate how to use several resources. For Greek, they utilize the following: (1) *The New Greek-English Interlinear New Testament*, edited by J. D. Douglas (1990); (2) William D. Mounce’s *The Analytical Lexicon to the Greek New Testament* (1993); and (3) *The Greek-English Concordance to the New Testament with the New International Version* by J. Kohlenberger, E. Goodrick, and J. Swanson (1997). For the Hebrew, readers will work with the following three resources: (1) *The Interlinear NIV Hebrew-English Old Testament* (1987); (2) Benjamin Davidson’s *The Analytical Hebrew and Chaldee Lexicon* (reprint of 19th century resource; 2000); and (3) *The Hebrew-English Concordance to the Old Testament* by J. Kohlenberger and J. Swanson (1998). The authors also provide a glimpse of what it looks like to delve into some of the more detailed word-study tools (e.g., *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* and *New International Dictionary of Old Testament Theology and Exegesis*). The interlinears are used to demonstrate how to identify Greek and Hebrew words within specific passages. The lexica provide a basic range of meaning for any given word. They also provide users with morphological data such as case and gender for nouns, tense and voice for verbs, etc. The concordances help students to see how Greek and Hebrew words have been used and translated in different contexts. Words are given alphabetically according to their lexical forms with a catalogue of “glosses” for how the word has been translated in the NIV. This is followed by a running list of verses (in English) where the word appears.

Overall, the book is very practical. For example, Grubbs and Kimmitt do not just tell readers to select a word for more in-depth study. Rather, they provide concrete criteria for determining which words warrant further study. A word one does not understand when reading

chael J. Gorman, *Elements of Biblical Exegesis: A Basic Guide for Students and Ministers*, rev. ed. (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2009), 105–11; and Craig Blomberg and Jennifer Foutz Markley, *A Handbook of New Testament Exegesis* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2010), 117–42.

an English Bible translation is a good word to study, as are key theological terms and words that occur repeatedly in the text. The authors encourage readers to do something I instruct my students to do all the time: consult as many translations as you can in as many languages as you know, and look for the words that are significantly different. There are basically two goals: (1) search out and study those words that significantly impact the meaning of a passage (i.e., not words like “and” or “he said”); and (2) consider which words are not properly or adequately understood, either by you or those you are teaching. Grubbs and Kimmitt provide sample pages from all of the resources that they work through.

Chapter thirteen, entitled “Common Mistakes in the Use of Word Studies,” may be the most important chapter. Every step in the exegetical process has certain parameters within which students of God’s Word must operate. Dangerous conclusions, well-dressed misinterpretations of Scripture, and “guaranteed-to-wow-the-crowds” nuggets of lexical pyrite are impediments to the faithful exposition of biblical texts. Rightly handling the Scriptures certainly means avoiding the mistakes the authors cite in this chapter.

Their discussion in chapter fourteen of the benefits of and precautions for word studies is commendable. Word studies are beneficial. Teachers of the Bible too often either do not use the biblical languages at all, or they suffer from an overdependence on a single way that Greek and Hebrew can be used in Bible study. Thankfully, this resource addresses this issue by encouraging all Christians to dig deeper into God’s Word. Sometimes, seminary and Bible college professors treat the biblical languages like an *all or not-at-all* kind of tool. Using Greek effectively and knowing all the nuances of Greek grammar are not the same thing. Perhaps this is why so many set aside their Greek after their first or second course in seminary. If we cannot show someone how to get some immediate transfer into the ministries where they serve, beyond just a five-minute devotional, we are not going to succeed as instructors in getting our students to go past the one or two semester mark. I want my students to be life-long Greek students and life-long beneficiaries of using Greek in ministry. That is the desire of every Greek professor. The important factor is to show students sooner rather than later how to use the language in meaningful ways. This book successfully teaches how to look up Greek and Hebrew words, check certain language tools, and ultimately synthesize all of that information into meaningful Bible exposition and application.

There are some weaknesses, including errors with the use of the Greek breathing marks and accents. Sometimes the authors provide them, and sometimes they do not. Occasionally, there is a grave accent where an acute should be found. Also, the title of the book might be misleading, *Word Studies Made Simple: How to Study the Bible in the Original Languages*. At first glance, the title leaves the impression that word studies are *the* way to study the Bible in the original languages. I am sure that the authors do not think word studies are *the* way, but *a* way. Nevertheless, it is a point worth noting. There are more ways to use Greek than just paying attention to what a word means. We have to pay attention to how a word is used, to its morphological features (such as tense, voice, and mood), to units of language larger than the words (clauses, phrases, and discourse), not to mention things like idiomatic expressions. One must move past the typical glosses that are found in translations and lexicons. One must use the tools, but also think beyond the tools. Consider, for example, Gal 1:6. The Greek word *thaumazō* that Paul uses is generally translated “I marvel” or “I am amazed.” Does this really capture the utter dismay and shock that Paul experienced when he found out that believers in Galatia were turning

away from God and embracing a gospel of works? The tools are useful, but students must learn to use them and not allow their study of God's Word to be confined to them.

Consider also that the total cost for five of the six foundational resources that Grubbs and Kimmitt recommend and use is almost \$150 (not including the cost of the expensive *The Hebrew-English Concordance to the Old Testament* by J. Kohlenberger and J. Swanson). Also, this estimate does not include the larger Greek and Hebrew dictionaries mentioned on pages 54 and 113. The burden of high costs might be ameliorated by using Bible software, such as Logos, Accordance, or BibleWorks.

I appreciate this book and the authors who labored to produce a valuable resource, designed to equip Christians to deepen their study of God's Word. I am confident this book will aid in meeting that goal.

– *Thomas W. Hudgins, Capital Seminary and Graduate School, Washington, D.C.*

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Bart Ehrman is the James A. Gray Distinguished Professor at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. At UNC he has served as both the Director of Graduate Studies and the Chair of the Department of Religious Studies. A graduate of Wheaton College, Professor Ehrman received both his Masters of Divinity and Ph.D. from Princeton Theological Seminary. Since then he has published extensively in the fields of New Testament and Early Christianity, having written or edited twenty-nine books, including the bestselling *How Jesus Became God: The Exaltation of a Jewish Preacher from Galilee* (2014), *Jesus Interrupted* (2009), *God's Problem* (2008), and *Misquoting Jesus* (2005).

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