

BIBLE TRANSLATION AND THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT

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I, the undersigned, hereby declare that the work contained in this assignment is my own original work and that I have not previously in its entirety or in part submitted it at any university for a degree.

SUMMARY

The purpose of the assignment is to present and illustrate modern translation methods using the Sermon on the Mount as a basis. As background to this, a brief summary of the history of Bible translation is given in four main epochs, extending from the LXX to the present. This history focuses on the approach and style of the various versions discussed, tracing the progress of translation techniques.

Following this is a discussion of modern principles of translation. Formal Equivalence and Functional (Dynamic) Equivalence are briefly described here, followed by various linguistic problems encountered by the translator. Translation is then considered in terms of communication theory in which the nature, and impact on translation, of Relevance Theory is investigated.

Modern translation theory is illustrated in two ways. The first is a critique of various modern English translations (NEB, REB, NIV, NRSV, TEV, CEV, JB, NJB) based on their individual renderings of the Sermon on the Mount and mainly considering style, readability and accuracy. The second is an original translation of the Sermon on the Mount which is felt to conform largely with modern techniques in general and with Relevance Theory in particular. Various translation choices are supported by notes and comments given in their support, and reference is made to the versions critiqued wherever this was thought to be relevant.

OPSOMMING

Die doel met hierdie werkstuk is om moderne vertalingsmetodes voor te lê en te illustreer deur gebruik te maak van die Bergprediking. 'n Kort opsomming van die geskiedenis van Bybelvertaling, verdeel in vier groot epogge wat van die LXX tot die hede toe strek, is voorgelê as agtergrond. Die fokus is op die benadering en styl van die verskillende vertalings, en die ontwikkeling van vertalingstegnieke is blootgelê.

Hierna is moderne vertalingsprinsiepe bespreek. Formeel-ekwivalente en Funksioneel- (Dinamiese-) ekwivalente vertalingsmetodes is kortliks verduidelik, waarna verskeie taalverwante probleme wat die vertaler mag teenkom ondersoek is. Daarna is vertaling in verband met kommunikasieteorie bespreek, en die aard en invloed op vertaling van *Relevance Theory* is ondersoek.

Moderne vertalingsteorie is op twee maniere geïllustreer. Eerstens deur 'n kritiek van verskeie moderne Engelse vertalings (NEB, REB, NIV, NRSV, TEV, CEV, JB, NJB) op grond van hul afsonderlike weergawes van die Bergprediking en hoofsaaklik deur hul styl, leesbaarheid en akkuraatheid te oorweeg. Tweedens deur 'n oorspronklike vertaling, in Engels, van die Bergprediking wat bedoel is om grootendeels met moderne tegnieke in die algemeen, en met *Relevance Theory* in die besonder te ooreenstem. Verskeie vertalingskeuses word deur notas en kommentaar ondersteun, en die vertalings wat vroeër ondersoek is word aangemeld waar dit ter sake geag is.

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BIBLE TRANSLATION AND THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT

INTRODUCTION

Bible translation has become of greater and greater importance through the ages as the Bible has become significant to an increasing variety of people, each with their own language or peculiar linguistic needs. A recent example of this is the production of a version for the deaf by the World Bible Translation Center in Fort Worth, Texas. Added to this is the increasing knowledge and insight regarding the process of translation which has developed as a result of the pressing need to communicate in various languages, not only in a religious context, but also in secular matters, concomitant with the rapid growth in international trade and commerce.

In this essay a brief survey will be made of the history of Bible translation, mainly in order to set the context for a discussion of modern translation techniques and principles. These modern principles will be illustrated by extracts from various recent English versions, using portions of the Sermon on the Mount (SM). The major thrust of the essay will be a comparison and evaluation of a number of authoritative modern translations and an original translation of the SM directly from the Greek text, to which explanatory notes on grammatical, contextual, cultural and historical matters which influenced the translation will be appended. It should be noted that this project is approached with some trepidation in view of the requirement to produce an "original" translation of such a well-known section of scripture. The difficulty of approaching the SM as though reading it for the first time is acknowledged, as is an awareness of possible preconceptions and subjectivity resulting from previous study and use of the SM. A sincere attempt will be made here to counteract these influences.

BRIEF HISTORY OF BIBLE TRANSLATIONS

On the basis of the approach to translation, and the degree to which the authority of a translation was influenced by theological or political factors, Van der Merwe discusses four major epochs in the history of the translation of the Bible (Van der Merwe, nd.:1). The following discussion will use these epochs as a framework, but the focus will be on the approach to, and nature of, the more important versions, concentrating mainly on the English translations. The purpose here is not to provide a comprehensive history of Bible translation, but rather to set the background for a study of modern translation techniques.

The First Epoch (200 B.C. to A.D. 400)

Swete (1914:1, 2) quotes from Aristobulus and notes that his words,

seem to imply the existence before B.C. 400 of a translation which included at least the Books of Exodus, Deuteronomy, and Joshua. A similar claim has been found in the statement attributed by Pseudo-Aristeas to Demetrius of Phalerium: τοῦ νόμου τῶν Ἰουδαίων βιβλία...οὐχ ὡς ὑπάρχει σεσήμανται, καθὼς ὑπὸ τῶν εἰδότην προσαναφέρεται. But no fragments of these translations have been produced, and it is more probable that the story arose out of a desire on the part of the Hellenistic Jews to find a Hebrew origin for the best products of Greek thought.

The earliest Greek translation of the Bible, and the earliest translation of the whole Old Testament, is therefore assumed to be the Septuagint version (LXX).

It is not possible to speak of the style of the LXX since it is not uniform in either style or approach. Swete (1914:315) comments that, "Strictly speaking the Alexandrian Bible is not a single version, but a series of versions produced at various times and by translators whose ideals were not altogether alike." Trawick (1963: 22), in discussing

this, states:

Naturally enough, the quality of the different books is uneven. Some of the books are quite literally rendered, others freely. Some of the translators took great liberties with the Hebrew text, changing, omitting, or inserting words or phrases as they thought best. It is almost certain that some of the scholars had sources which are not available to us today.

In this same era the Aramaic targumim came into being, first orally as an interpretative translation of the Hebrew scriptures in the synagogue, then later in written form. This generally resulted in free translations of widely different styles. Van der Merwe (nd.:2) notes that, “Oor die algemeen was die targoems dus nie sulke woord-vir-woordvertalings soos hulle Griekse ewekniee nie”.

The Greek translations of Aquila, Symmachus and Theodotion were initiated by the Jews to counter certain Christian interpretations of the Old Testament which were supported by the LXX. Swete (1914:33, 34) quotes Origen regarding Aquila as saying he was “a slave to the letter (δουλεύων τῇ Ἑβραϊκῇ λέξει); whatever was wanting in the Hebrew text was not to be found in Aquila.” On the other hand, Theodotion is said “to have produced a free revision of the LXX, rather than an independent version” (Swete, 1914:43). The style of Theodotion is equated with the best of the LXX (ibid. 45).

An approach more in keeping with modern theories of translation is found in Symmachus. Swete (1914:50) notes that, “The aim of Symmachus, as Jerome perceived, was to express the sense of his Hebrew text rather than to attempt a verbal rendering”. He was able, therefore, to “clothe the thoughts of the Old Testament in the richer drapery of the Greek tongue” (Swete, 1914:52), rather than slavishly following Hebrew idiom.

The translations of this epoch reveal that there was no standard theory or practice adhered to by translators of the Bible at this stage. The tendency was towards literal translation, even at the expense of clarity. In contrast, the targumim and Symmachus generally go too far in freedom of translation, even incorporating material not found in the original.

The Second Epoch (A.D. 400 to 1500)

Early in this epoch the important Latin version, the Vulgate, made its appearance. Trawick (1963:23) has the following comment:

Equal in importance to the Septuagint was the Latin translation of the Old Testament made by St. Jerome (Eusebius Hieronymus, c. 340-420), who revised the Old Latin Scriptures on the basis of the Hebrew and Greek texts. He did not attempt a strictly word-for-word translation, but preferred to employ idiomatic language. His free translation, which was very graceful and readable, came to be called the Vulgate, or "People's" version.

The need for this Latin version sprang from the inadequacy of the earlier Latin translations. These were based on the "LXX and the Greek texts of the New Testament and were for the most part quite literal" (Nida, 1992:6, 513).

Skilton (1975:5, 864) indicates that, "Manuscripts surviving from as early as the 8th and 9th centuries contain the tr. of Biblical material into vernacular languages of Europe". In this regard Nida (1992:6, 513) notes that, "during the Middle Ages, whatever translations were produced in the Western world tended to be quite literal and were greatly influenced by the Vulgate".

Of great importance in this period was Wycliff's translation of the Bible into English in 1328. According to Vos (1975:1, 575), "the first Wycliffite VS is a literal rendering of the Lat.". However, a second version was produced after the death of Wycliff by John Purvey who "started with the first Wycliffite VS and revised it completely, producing a Bible with much more natural and idiomatic Eng." (Vos, 1975:1, 575). The fifteenth century saw the production of French, Dutch, German, Spanish and Italian versions. Van der Merwe (nd.: 2) also mentions an Arabic version made by Jews in Southern Spain in the style of the targumim, saying, "Die vertaling wat die Jode gemaak het, was soos die Targoems nie uitermatig letterlik (woord-vir-woord) nie".

The Third Epoch (1500-1960)

Towards the end of the previous epoch, translation of the Bible, at least in England, was punishable by death. Since this was ineffective, the Roman and Anglican churches, in order to continue to control to some extent what the ordinary man could read, had to produce their own translations. Preceding this were the German translation of Luther and Melancthon, and the English version of Tyndale. Luther's translation was based on principles which he explained in his *Sendbrief zum Dolmetschen*, and "influenced a great many other translations made during the time of the Reformation" (Nida, 1992:6, 513). The significance of the Tyndale version lies in the fact that he translated the New Testament directly from Erasmus' Greek text, unlike his predecessors who relied on the Vulgate. Vos (1975:1, 576) also notes that,

There is a fresh naturalness in Tyndale's style, a simplicity and directness that mark the work as a truly great achievement in lit., apart from its epoch-making religious importance. A great deal of the beautiful Eng. style of the KJV goes back to the work of William Tyndale, so that one might rightly say that Tyndale's work lives on in the Bibles of the present day.

Other versions produced prior to the King James Version were The Coverdale Version (1535), Matthew's Bible (1537), Taverner's Bible (1539), The Great Bible (1540), The Geneva Version (1560), The Bishop's Bible (1568) and the Rheims-Douay Bible (1582-1610). Only the last mentioned survived the publication of the King James Version, in spite of the fact that "the Eng. style and diction are poor in comparison with the beautiful English of the KJV" (Vos, 1975:1, 578). This culminated in a version which Nida (1992:6, 513) describes as follows:

The most important translation in English was the King James Version, which was not designed to be an entirely new text, but to contain the best of existing translations. In view, however, of its extraordinary sensitivity to style, the KJV became widely used and constituted a base and a model for many translations produced by 19th-century missionaries in different parts of the world.

This version appeared in 1611, and owes part of its success to the circumstance that “the KJV trs. had at their disposal better Heb. and Gr. texts than the previous trs., though the best they had were still much inferior to the critical texts available today” (Vos, 1975:1, 578).

Of the remainder of this epoch, Nida (1992:6, 513) makes the following observations:

There is an assumption that there was little or no translating into English between the time of the KJV (1611) and the Revised Standard Version (1953). In reality, however, some 500 different translations of at least one full book (not including translations made in connection with commentaries) were published in English. These translations ranged from very literal to excessively free.

He goes on to indicate the importance of “John Wesley's New Testament (1755), which in many respects was ahead of its time, both in the level of language and exegesis” (ibid. 513). However, he considers George Campbell to be the “person who directly and indirectly influenced Bible translating most during the 19th century”, saying that in 1789 he “published a translation of the Gospels with an introduction of some 700 pages outlining in detail the principles which should govern the translation of the Scriptures” (ibid.).

The next translation of note is the English Revised Version of 1881. This was published in America, with certain changes reflecting the views of American theologians, as the American Standard Version in 1901. Trawick (1963:34) indicates that these were “idiomatic, but very literal” translations in a “simple and clear” style, but in which “many archaic forms” were retained. Nida (1992:6, 513) notes that, “In many respects the exegesis was more accurate and the textual basis more scientific [than the KJV], but the results were stylistically awkward and neither of these texts obtained wide acceptance”.

Following this, the Moffatt (1922) and Smith and Goodspeed (1935) translations made their appearance. Trawick (1963:35) refers to Moffatt as an “exceptionally free translation - sometimes almost a paraphrase”, and says of Smith-Goodspeed simply that it

is “fairly free”. The only archaisms retained by either is the use of *thou* forms with reference to God.

This epoch, contrary to Van der Merwe (nd:5), is closed after the production of the Revised Standard Version of 1952. Trawick (1963:35) says of this translation that it is an “idiomatic, but literal translation”, and that it “retains some of the King James eloquence, but simplifies and modernizes the diction”.

The Fourth Epoch (1960 to present)

Nida (1992:6, 514) has the following comments regarding this period:

Since World War II there has been an explosion in the number and variety of Bible translations, not only in English but in numerous European languages and in hundreds of languages and dialects throughout the world. These have ranged from the traditional and literal New American Standard Bible (1960) to the highly literary and relatively free translation of the New English Bible (1970). The New International Version (1978) is a kind of hybrid as far as the theory of translation is concerned. In a number of passages it aims at clarity of statement, and hence uses present-day language, but in passages which are well known by the conservative community there is a tendency to revert to traditional terminology, even when it is quite misleading.

To the versions mentioned above should be added the Today's English Version, or Good News Bible (1976), which made use of the dynamic-equivalent theory of translation proposed by E. Nida (Van der Merwe, nd:6).

This section would not be complete without mentioning the Jerusalem Bible (1966), the Contemporary English Version produced by the American Bible Society in 1995, the Revised English Bible (a revision of the New English Bible), the New Revised Standard Version and the New Jerusalem Bible. These will all be discussed in more detail in a later section. Many other translations have been made during this epoch which will not be discussed here. Carson (1993:37) states that, “from the publication of the RSV Bible

to the present, twenty-nine English versions of *the entire Bible* have appeared, plus an additional twenty-six renderings of the New Testament”.

Another noteworthy development is the work being done by the American Bible Society on a multimedia translation using an interactive combination of html text, video and sound. This is not envisaged as taking the form of a dramatisation of the Biblical text such as has been produced in movies and television films. Harley (1993:170) states that, “the distinctive feature of the ABS multimedia translation project, compared to others, would be its attempt to stay close to the meanings scripture had for the original receptor audiences”. This translation could include text, commentary, background, narration, video clips and music in various windows.

MODERN PRINCIPLES OF BIBLE TRANSLATION

With very few exceptions, such as Symmachus and Jerome, ancient Bible translators tended to strive for a literal rendering of the original in the target language. No standard theory of translation was available, although Cicero and Jerome had recorded thoughts on the general principles of translation. Friedrich (1992: 12) quotes Cicero as saying:

I translate the ideas, their forms, or as one might say, their shapes; however, I translate them into a language that is in tune with our conventions of usage (*verbis ad nostram consuetudinem aptis*). Therefore, I did not have to make a word-for-word translation but rather a translation that reflects the general stylistic features (*genus*) and the meaning (*vis*) of the foreign words.

Jerome is described by Friedrich (1992:12, 13) as having “adopted these sentences almost verbatim” and as having written that “the translator considers thought content a prisoner (*quasi captivos sensus*) which he transplants into his own language with the prerogative of a conqueror (*iure victoris*)”. In spite of this, the trend towards literal translation continued through the Middle Ages, the Reformation and on into the present century, although a few

men such as Luther, Campbell, whose work was plagiarised in Tytler's *Essay on the Principles of Translation*, published in 1790 (Nida, 1992: 513) and, more recently, Moffatt, Smith and Goodspeed, and Phillips produced freer translations and enunciated certain principles to be observed in translating the Scriptures.

In the last fifty years considerable progress has been made in describing the theory of translation and defining the principles involved. One of the leaders in this field is E.A. Nida of the American Bible Society. The remainder of this section will rely heavily, though not exclusively, on his findings. Nida (1961:11) states that "the principles of translation may best be treated under (1) methods used, (2) basic requirements to be met, and (3) fundamental factors of meaning". Nida (1992: 514) also says, "the present-day approach to the problems of Bible translating has required a careful consideration of four different disciplines: philology, linguistics, communication theory and sociosemiotics". Consideration will be given here to different approaches to translation, the resources to be used and a comparison of several modern translations of the SM.

In connection with a theory of translation, Grace (1988a) refers to four approaches adopted by different authors, saying:

Those of the first group appear to suggest that a number of different theories of translation already exist. A second group suggests that there is a single theory of translation which either already exists or is being proposed in the work bearing the title. A third may be said to assume only that such a theory is a desideratum toward which we are working, while a final group probably intends to claim nothing more than that translation practice has some kind (or kinds) of theoretical underpinnings.

This situation can only be resolved if translators systematise their approach and work more closely with one another.

Approaches to Translation

This will be considered under two main headings namely, Formal Equivalence and Functional (Dynamic) Equivalence. The application of these two approaches can lead to a translation which falls anywhere on a continuum from word-for-word to paraphrase, depending on the aim of the translator. Carson (1993:40) confirms this, saying,

This is not to say that adoption of functional equivalence as a controlling priority entirely determines just where a Bible translation will emerge on this matrix between 'literal' and 'free'. The theory has become so sophisticated and so flexible that the application of its principles by different parties can produce quite different results.

Formal Equivalence

The aim with this method is to reproduce as closely as possible the wording and form of the original text. The ultimate in this approach is the word-for-word, interlinear translation. This method also produces translations which, although adjusting the syntax to accommodate the target language, follow as closely as possible the syntax and idiom of the source language. Marrison (1966:131) comments that,

In the early nineteenth century one widely accepted view was that the Scriptures were delivered by God more or less verbatim through the passive agency of the writers. The result of this was that fidelity to the words of the original was perhaps the overriding principle of translation.

Modern versions such as the Revised Standard and, to a lesser extent, the New International Version are examples of this approach.

Functional (Dynamic) Equivalence

Nida and Taber (1974:1), introducing Dynamic Equivalence, state:

The older focus in translating was the form of the message, and translators took particular delight in being able to reproduce stylistic specialities...and unusual grammatical structures. The new focus, however, has shifted from the form of the message to the response of the receptor.

Functional Equivalence therefor aims at using the natural forms, syntax and idiom of the target language, so that the translation sounds natural to the receptor. Translations based on this method can range from idiomatic but literal, to a loose paraphrase or expanded version.

Louw (1991:1) makes the following comment:

However, in some circles of Bible readers there is presently a growing resistance to dynamic or functional translations. A contention often voiced in this respect holds that a more literal translation is to be preferred, since the reader needs to see the form and structure of the original text reflected in the translation in order to be sure that the translator has not incorporated, as it is often said, personal understandings of the source text into the translation.

Nabokov (1992:127) says that “the clumsiest literal translation is a thousand times more useful than the prettiest paraphrase”.

Translation and Language

Nida and Taber (1974:3, 4) state that

each language has its own genius. That is to say, each language possesses certain distinctive characteristics...e.g., word-building capacities, unique patterns of phrase order, techniques for linking clauses into sentences, markers of discourse, and special discourse types of poetry, proverbs and song.

This indicates that each language will, to some extent, have its own vocabulary, syntax, idioms and figures of speech. These will now be discussed and their bearing on translation techniques and problems will be examined.

Semantics and Lexicography

Concerning presuppositions held about the nature of language and linguistics, Smalley (1965:106) says, "They include assumptions that words have 'exact meanings' and that by studying the 'exact meaning' of a certain word in Greek you automatically have a greater understanding of what the Biblical writer meant...." This is carried over into translation by those who, having determined the 'meaning' of a Greek word, then choose an equivalent word in the target language and render every occurrence of that Greek word by the so-called equivalent in the target language. Wendland and Nida (1985:3) show the weakness in this approach in the following statement:

Not only do many words have several meanings, but between two languages the sets of meanings never completely correspond. A concordant type of translation of the Bible, that is to say, one in which the same Greek or Hebrew word is consistently translated by the same receptor-language word, inevitably distorts the meaning.

The problem with meaning arises from the fact that various factors influence the meaning of a word. These are context (or collocation), connotation, association and the semantic field in which the word is found. Lexicographers usually describe a word as used in different contexts and, sometimes, in terms of their semantic field, but do not normally give meanings determined by connotation or association. These last two are very difficult, or often impossible, to determine for Greek or Hebrew words in the Bible text as they depend on cultural factors, and sometimes even on individual perceptions, remote from our experience. Care must be taken, however, not to use words in the translation which have a connotation different from that of the context of the original text. Added to this is the problem of figurative or symbolic language.

Grace (1988b) contends that meaning is not necessarily the basis for a theory of translation. As an example he notes that, "in the case of poetry especially, it is apparent that maintaining equivalence of meaning is very often not the primary objective", then

concludes with, “the correspondence involved in translation cannot be simply equivalence of meaning”. Although this may be true for poetry or figurative and symbolic language, it is not very convincing when applied to the translation of discourse, in which the literal meaning is of primary importance.

Wendland and Nida (1985:28-30) discuss certain assumptions which must be made in determining the meaning of words in a given context. These are:

The principle that the correct meaning of a lexical unit in any context is that which fits the context best.... A second assumption is that a lexical unit in a specific context is much more likely to have one meaning rather than multiple meanings unless the context marks a lexical unit as a double entendre.... A third assumption is that the literal, or unmarked meaning, of a lexical unit should be assumed as correct unless the context points to some other meaning.... A fourth assumption is that there are no complete synonyms.... A fifth assumption is that the meaning of any verbal sign is only defined by means of other verbal signs which in turn require further definition.... For biblical texts, one must also apply certain additional assumptions.... In the first place, one should assume that the writers of the biblical books were not motivated by any desire to deceive readers.... In addition one should assume that the writers were not trying to be obscure.... A third assumption with regard to biblical texts is that the writers regarded what they were saying as both true and important.... A final assumption is that the biblical writers employed the genres and the literary devices which were familiar to the people of that day and which should be judged in accordance with their usage in that language-culture context.

Syntax

Much reference is made to the fact that any word is capable of more than one meaning. This should not be taken to infer that there is always, or even often, doubt about the exact meaning of a word in a particular context. Nida and Taber (1974:56) note that “in many cases, the particular meaning of a word that is intended is clearly specified by the grammatical constructions in which it occurs; this is what we will refer to as *syntactic* marking”. Related to this is what Nida and Taber (ibid.) refer to as “*semotactic* marking”,

in which the meaning of a word is determined by its relationship to the meanings of other words in its context.

Thiselton (1979:83, 84) warns against the danger of taking this ambivalence of words too far, quoting Stern as saying,

There is no getting away from the fact that single words have more or less permanent meanings, that is they actually do refer to certain referents, and not to others, and that this characteristic is the indispensable basis of all communication.

He also (1979:84) quotes Ullmann's statement that "there is usually in each word a hard core of meaning which is relatively stable and can only be modified by the context within certain limits".

In order to minimise ambiguity and to clarify the influence of syntax on meaning, Nida and Taber (1974:33ff) make use of transformational grammar, placing emphasis on the formation of kernel sentences by means of back-transformation. They warn, however (1974:47), "that the kernel expressions themselves are not to be translated literally.... They are only the basis for transfer into the receptor language." It is further pointed out that, once the kernels have been determined, translation must be accompanied by continued study of the style and grammar of the source text. To this should be added the need to constantly keep in mind the interrelationships between the kernel sentences if this approach is used. Thiselton (1979:98) warns that

The translator must be on guard against thinking of semantic equivalence simply in cognitive terms. If "decease", "departure from this life", and so on, could all be transformed into the kernel sentence "he dies", it would be easy to overlook the emotive, cultural, or religious overtones of meaning which may have been important in the original utterance.

Idioms and Figures of Speech

Nida and Louw (1992:72) state that, “All idioms pose certain problems of semantic analysis since one cannot add up the meanings of the lexemes and the meanings of the syntactic relations and come out with a meaning which fits the context”. As a result of this, idioms cannot usually be translated literally from one language to another, but must be translated into an equivalent idiom, or in terms of the meaning of the original.

All languages contain many figures of speech. Nida and Louw (1992:71) note that “the role of figurative language is especially important since it contributes so much impact and insight to any statement”. This aspect can be particularly difficult to translate because the figurative meaning of referents differs from language to language. A simple example, quoted by Nida and Louw (1992:72), is the figurative use of the word “heart”. In Hebrew (לב) this usually represents the mind, while in Greek (καρδία) the reference is to the emotions as well as to the mind. In English, however, the heart is a figure of the seat of desire or motivation.

In a figure of speech such as irony, the actual meaning may be the opposite of the normal meaning of the word or expression. Similarly, a parable attempts to convey a meaning which transcends the literal interpretation of the utterance. Clearly, the translation of idioms and figures of speech provides the translator with serious challenges and requires considerable insight and ingenuity.

Inclusive Language

Inclusive language describes the attempt to avoid gender bias in a translation. Often such words as ἀδελφός or ἄνθρωπος and others are used to refer to both male and female in the Greek New Testament. These words should be translated by a gender-inclusive English equivalent when they are not gender-specific in their context.

Carson (1998:19, 20) indicates that this is not new, nor is it foreign to the scriptures, showing that the apostle Paul did this in his rendering of 2 Samuel 7:14 in 2 Corinthians 6:18. The LXX has αὐτὸς ἔσται μοι εἰς υἱόν, which Paul quotes as ὑμεῖς ἔσεσθέ μοι εἰς υἱοὺς καὶ θυγατέρας.

In applying this to a translation, each passage must be considered separately in its own context to determine whether its meaning is gender specific or inclusive. How a passage is made inclusive in translation also requires careful consideration, not only in terms of its acceptability among the target readers, but also for its theological implications. Carson (1998:16) notes that strong emotions have been aroused by this aspect of translation, referring to what he calls “Bible rage”.

The Oral Background of the Bible

It is worth noting that, historically, spoken language preceded written language. For this reason, Wallwork (1969:15) says, “If one wishes then, to study language, it is logical to go to the primary source, i.e. spoken language, rather than to the derived, secondary source, such as writing represents”. He goes on to comment (ibid. 16) that “there are two major independent forms of the ‘same’ language - the written and the spoken - which are alike in many aspects, but which have independent and possibly mutual influential characteristics”.

In discussing this aspect of the text of the Bible, Nida (1993:206) comments that “we are so accustomed to the written texts of the New Testament that we often fail to realize how important is the underlying orality”. To this is added the statement that “it is also important to recognize that in the ancient world written texts were almost always read aloud...”(ibid.207). A final consideration is that “since many more people hear the message of the Bible than actually read it...far greater attention needs to be given to the oral form of the biblical message” (ibid. 208). Rhythm, rhyme, assonance, alliteration and

plays on words are far more obvious and effective in spoken form, and recognition of these may assist in interpretation and in effective translation. Because of this “underlying orality” and the fact that the Bible is so often read aloud to an audience, any translation of the Bible should be tested for its effectiveness and intelligibility when read aloud.

Translation as Communication

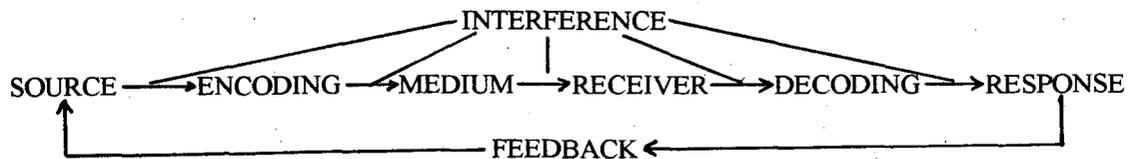
Phillips (1965:30) comments that “good translation today is *almost entirely a matter of communication*”. In a sense, every form of human interaction may be classified as communication, therefore Blakemore (1992:3) states:

Given this diversity, the possibility of a theory of human communication might seem remote....Even if we confine ourselves...to the study of verbal communication, the task of encapsulating its nature and goals within a single principle or set of principles would seem to have very little chance of success.

Nevertheless, some aspects of communication theory are of great value in understanding and applying the translation process and, as Winckler and van der Merwe point out (1993:44), “issues of translation are issues of verbal communication. In other words, an adequate theory of translation would follow from an adequate theory of verbal communication”.

Aspects of Communication Theory

Until recently, communication theory was generally based on a model involving a source, encoding, transmission through a medium, a receiver, decoding, response, feedback and some form of interference. A typical diagram of such a model, based on that in Terry and Franklin (1982:359), is as follows:



Note that the interference can influence any part or parts of the system as it includes anything that could lead to the receiver misunderstanding the original message.

Concerning this approach, Gutt (1992:11) says,

there are serious problems with the view that communication *consists in* the encoding and decoding of messages. The main reason for these reservations is that there are many aspects of human communication for which the code model simply cannot account.

For this reason he advocates Relevance Theory as a way of accounting for aspects such as inferences, figures of speech and so on.

Relevance Theory

In setting the background to Relevance Theory, Blakemore (1992:31, 32) comments that

in processing information people try to balance costs and rewards - they automatically process each new item of information in a context in which it yields a maximal contextual effect for a minimum cost in processing. This means that someone who is searching for relevance will extend the context only if the costs this entails seem more likely to be offset by contextual effects.

This theory has an influence both on the communicator and the receiver, since both will be striving to achieve minimum processing cost. Blakemore (1992:36), states this as follows:

The presumption of relevance carried by every act of overt communication has two aspects: on the one hand, it creates a presumption of adequate effect, while on the other it creates a presumption of minimally necessary effort. Taken together, these presumptions define a level of *optimal relevance* - a presumption that the utterance

will have adequate contextual effects for the minimum necessary processing. Sperber and Wilson call the principle that gives rise to the presumption of optimal relevance *the principle of relevance*.

Clearly this has a bearing on what is explicit and what is implied in any act of communication. The sender and receiver contexts will determine the inferences which may be drawn and, therefore, what constitutes adequate effect and minimal effort in that setting.

Gutt (1992:17) describes Relevance Theory as an inferential approach to communication and states that “the inferential approach is superior to a code-based approach in that it encourages the analyst to penetrate to the level of the actual thought processes in order to get a proper understanding of the text”. This is so because the principle of relevance presupposes the existence of implicit information while the code-based approach does not.

The influence of the foregoing on translation is described as follows by Gutt (1992:18):

This failure to recognize the inferential nature of communication has had far-reaching consequences in translation. For one thing, it has led to the belief that the main problem in translation is finding the right target-language expression for the meaning intended in the source language; it is assumed that correct encoding will ensure correct understanding. However, just as identity in encoded meaning of two expressions in the *same* language does not guarantee identity of the message conveyed by them, neither does identity in encoded meaning of two expressions of *different* languages guarantee identity of the message conveyed.

An important factor to consider in the inferential approach to communication is that from any utterance a large number of inferences may be drawn. Gutt (1992:21) therefore notes that “there is obviously a need for some constraint that will enable the audience to know which inferences are the intended ones”. This constraint is the principle of relevance, concerning which Gutt (1992:21) says, “For an utterance to be relevant, it needs not only to be *new* (in some sense), but it must also link up with the *context* in some way”. The context referred to consists of the entire *sitz im leben* of both the sender and

the receiver. When translating the Bible, because the context of the original author is remote, it may be necessary in places to make implicit content more explicit in the translation, but Gutt (1992:74) cautions that,

implicated meaning cannot usually be communicated explicitly without some distortion, for explication often narrows the range of information conveyed and misrepresents the strength with which it was intended to be communicated.

Relevance theory requires that the receiver be aware of the sender's intention to communicate. If this is the case, then both parties expect the message to be optimally relevant. The importance of this is that "it entitles the audience to assume that the first interpretation which has adequate contextual effects and which did not cause the audience unnecessary processing effort must be the one intended by the communicator" (Gutt, 1992:25). Because the Bible is largely overt communication, this principle will be applicable, not only in interpreting it, but also in translating.

In order to deal with statements, the truth of which the communicator accepts with some reservations, the idea of *interpretive use* is introduced. The communicator's intended level of truthfulness may be derived from the context, or may be stated explicitly (Blakemore, 1992:104, 105). When dealing with figures of speech, however, a different principle, that of *interpretive resemblance* is proposed. For example, a metaphor contains some form of resemblance to the idea or object signified. Gutt (1992:42) discusses the significance of these ideas saying:

Translation seems to fall under this category of interpretive representation. Translations are representations of texts in other languages and, in order to communicate successfully, these texts must be faithful representations of the originals. That is, they must resemble the originals closely enough in respects relevant to the target audience.

These conditions seem to provide exactly the guidance that translators and translation theorists have been looking for. They determine *in what respects* the translation should resemble the original: only in those respects that can be expected to make it adequately relevant to the receptor-language audience. They determine

also that the translation should be clear and natural in the sense that it should not be unnecessarily difficult to understand.

Code-based theories of communication view non-literal language as abnormal, as they focus on affirmation as the norm in the communicative process. In relevance theory, the “utterance is expected to resemble the thought or thoughts closely enough in relevant respects. Thus in relevance theory, the use of less than literal expressions does not involve the violation of any norm” (Gutt, 1992:48). Applying these considerations to metaphor leads to the conclusion that “metaphors are not formal devices with an embellishing function; rather they are needed to get the communicator’s intended meaning across” (Gutt, 1992:51). This leads to the conclusion that transforming or translating a metaphor into literal language will result in a loss of meaning or force.

A further weakness of the code models is their inability to account for the expression of attitude in the communicative process. The description of irony as a statement whose meaning is the opposite of its literal meaning is inadequate as this could also be the definition of a lie, and because not every ironic utterance fits this description. Relevance theory resolves this by recognising that the communicator is not only trying to convey thoughts, but also at times attitudes. Gutt (1992:55) comments that, “this kind of interpretive use, in which the main thing one wants to get across is an attitude to some thought or utterance, is called *echoic* use”. Similarly, relevance theory is able to account for poetic and other stylistic effects with the one limitation that “the crucial factor for successful communication, especially when figures are employed, is that both the communicator and the audience share the same cognitive environment” (Gutt, 1992:61).

Gutt (1992:62-64) establishes the fact that a direct quotation gives the audience optimal opportunity to access the true meaning of the original statement, then proceeds to apply this to the problem of translation. Clearly, it is not possible to give a direct quotation in one language of what was said in another. Gutt (1992:65) responds to this with the statement that “we want to produce a stimulus in the target language that will

communicate to the target audience the full interpretation of the original, that is, that it will share with the original *all* implications the original author intended to communicate". To achieve this, it is necessary that the "target-language stimulus be processed *using the context envisaged by the original author*" (Gutt, 1992:65). Gutt (1992:66) then proposes the following definition of translation, which he calls "direct translation" as analogous to direct quotation: "A receptor-language utterance is a direct translation of a source-language utterance if, and only if, it presumes to interpretively resemble the original completely (in the context envisioned for the original)." Sixteen keys to successful translation are then discussed by Gutt (1992:67-74). These will be briefly stated:

- 1) Any translation must agree with the general laws of communication.
- 2) The primary question is not what we want to communicate, but what it is possible to communicate.
- 3) Much of the meaning of a translation depends on the contextual knowledge of the receptors.
- 4) A translation that ignores the receptor context will fail.
- 5) Any difference between the original author's context and that of the receptors will distort or reduce the meaning conveyed.
- 6) If relevance for the receptors is not considered, the translation may fail.
- 7) The final objectives of Scripture translation (i.e. evangelism) cannot be realised by translation alone.
- 8) Translation projects must provide strategies to help the receptors to bridge the contextual gap.
- 9) The intentions of the translator must, as far as possible, match the expectations of the receptor.
- 10) A comparative study of original and receptor contexts should involve representatives of the receptors.

- 11) Areas of contextual overlap can be used to optimise the impact of the translation program.
- 12) Bridging strategies must be developed to overcome contextual gaps.
- 13) The aim of Bible translation is to communicate the full intended interpretation of the original.
- 14) Translators must study and take into account previously neglected aspects of meaning.
- 15) Translators must be able to differentiate between translation problems and communication problems.
- 16) If a rendering appears unnatural it is either inconsistent with the principle of relevance, or influenced by the contextual gap.

Resources

The main resources available to the translator are the text, linguistic knowledge and helps, commentaries, history and socioculture. Cognisance must be taken of the cultural and social setting in which the text originated and that of the recipients of the translated text. The linguistics of both the source language and the target language must be examined and the two compared. In addition, the history of transmission of the text will have a bearing on interpretation and the selection of variants.

Comparison of Some Modern Translations

The versions to be considered here are: The New English Bible (NEB), the Revised English Bible (REB), the New International Version (NIV), the New Revised Standard Version (NRSV), the Contemporary English Version (CEV), Today's English Version (TEV), the Jerusalem Bible (JB) and New Jerusalem Bible (NJB). They will be

compared, as far as possible, in terms of clarity of meaning, accuracy and style as assessed from their respective renderings of the SM, together with comments by scholars.

NEB and REB

Carson (1998: 22) states:

Three factors ensured that neither the NEB nor the REB would become the Bible of the people. (1) The English is elegant, the vocabulary large, the style impressive - characteristics which attract the best-educated people in the English-speaking world, but no one else. (2) More important, the NEB adopted critical stances toward the Bible with which virtually no confessional Christian could feel comfortable.... The most egregious features of the NEB have been rectified in the REB, which in fact reads very smoothly. (3) Nevertheless, both the NEB and the REB stand far enough away from traditional language in many passages that some Christians...find that distance a little off-putting.

With regard to style, Lewis (1982:156) has the comment, "One must admit that evaluation of style is subjective; but the NEB reads easily, and one will often wonder why the passage has not been rendered that way before". Concerning readability, he says (*ibid.* 163) that "the readability of the NEB, with minor exceptions, is indisputable", but goes on in the same place to state that "the freedoms it exercises and the paraphrases it contains will likely make it unacceptable for widespread use among evangelicals. For the student, it leaves a great deal to be desired".

Although generally the NEB meets the requirement set down in the preface to remove the archaisms of the KJV and to "employ contemporary idiom rather than reproduce the traditional 'biblical' English (1970:v), the following may be noted:

1) There is, in places, a mixture of literal and idiomatic translations. For example, in Matthew 5:14-16, the literal "meal-tub" is found in the middle of an idiomatic translation, where "bowl" would perhaps have been more appropriate. Similarly, in 5:38,

39 the quotation “eye for eye, tooth for tooth” is given literally, and, in 5:46-48, the whole passage, with the exception of the last verse is rendered literally.

2) The translation contains some odd grammatical constructions. In Matthew 5:1 there is the expression “he took his seat”, and in 5:13 “salt to the world”, and the word “saltness”. The ellipsis “I did not come to abolish but to complete” is found in 5:17. The statements “stand high in the kingdom” (5:19), “do not set yourself against the man....” (5:39), “doubly dark” (6:23), “thrown on the stove” (6:30), and “he taught with a note of authority” (7:29), are other examples.

3) The use of uncommon words such as “calumny” and “exultation” (5:11, 12), “farthing” (5:26), “attired” (6:29), and “perdition” (7:13) detracts from the intelligibility.

4) Some archaisms have been retained, such as, “thy” (6:9, 10) and “hallowed” (6:9).

5) There are renderings that do not appear to accurately reflect the meaning or intent of the original. These are “nurses anger”, “abuses” and “sneers” (5:22), “unchastity” (5:32), “Father who is there in the secret place” (6:6), “devils” (7:22), and “your wicked ways” (7:23).

6) Rendering μακάριος as “how blest” appears to be simply an attempt to be different.

Some of the foregoing have been addressed in the REB, notably; “took his seat” becomes “sat down” (5:1), “how blest” is “blessed” (5:3ff), “stand high” is “rank high” (5:19), “abuses” and “sneers at” are “calls his brother ‘good for nothing’” and “calls him ‘fool’” respectively (5:22), “farthing” is “penny” (5:26), “eye for eye, tooth for tooth” becomes “an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth” (5:38), “do not set yourself...” is “do not resist...” (5:39), “Father who is there in the secret place” becomes “Father who is in secret” (6:6), “thy” is translated “your” (6:9, 10) “doubly dark” becomes “how great a darkness” (6:23), “perdition” is “destruction (7:13), and “devils” is “demons” (7:22). The

other examples given above for the NEB are retained by the REB and added to by the use of the word “constricted” in Matthew 7:14.

It appears that the readability and accuracy of the REB are superior to the NEB, while the style appears very similar. The footnotes of the REB are enhanced by the inclusion of the verse reference, making for easier location of the text, and by the omission of the less significant variant readings.

An attempt appears to have been made in these versions to accommodate inclusive language. See, for instance, Matthew 5:9 where υἱοί is translated “children, and 5:16 in which ἀνθρώπων is rendered “fellows”. This has not been consistently applied so that, in 5:22-24, ἀδελφός is translated “brother”, and the personal pronoun “him” is used.

NIV

The following extracts from the preface to the NIV (1988:xxiv-xxvi) will illustrate the approach and intentions of the translators:

The Committee on Bible Translation held to certain goals for the New International Version: that it would be an accurate translation and one that would have clarity and literary quality and so prove suitable for public and private reading, teaching, preaching, memorizing and liturgical use....

The first concern of the translators has been the accuracy of the translation and its fidelity to the thought of the biblical writers.... At the same time, they have striven for more than a word-for-word translation. Because thought patterns and syntax differ from language to language, faithful communication of the meaning of the writers of the Bible demands frequent modifications in sentence structure and constant regard for the contextual meaning of words....

Concern for clear and natural English... motivated the translators and consultants. At the same time, they tried to reflect the differing styles of the biblical writers.

Certainly the translation of the SM appears to have met these goals to a very large extent. Lewis (1982:309) notes that, “the NIV is a combination of traditional renderings, renderings that have previously appeared in other modern translations, and innovative

renderings”, and (ibid. 314) that, “while striving for accuracy, dignity, and clarity, the NIV has moved beyond the RSV, the NEB, and the NASB in attaining a contemporary style for the English reader”. The following points may, however, be noted:

1) The archaic forms “hallowed” (Matt 6:9) and “debts” and “debtors” (Matt 6:12) have been retained.

2) Obscure terms are treated inconsistently, for example *ῥακά* (5:22) is transliterated, while *μαμωνᾶ* (6:24) is translated as “Money” with a capital letter.

3) No attempt appears to have been made to accommodate inclusive language.

The footnotes usually refer either to Old Testament parallels (which are duplicated in the center-page references), or to variant readings, with occasional explanations of translation choices.

NRSV

This version claims to follow the traditions of the RSV, ASV and KJV. The following extracts from the introduction to this version (1994:xv, xvi) reveal the rationale and aims of the revisers:

The need for issuing a revision of the Revised Standard version of the Bible arises from three circumstances: (a) the acquisition of still older Biblical Manuscripts, (b) further investigation of linguistic features of the text, and (c) changes in preferred English usage....

As for the style of English...among the mandates...was the directive to continue in the tradition of the King James Bible, but to introduce such changes as are warranted on the basis of accuracy, clarity, euphony, and current English usage....the Committee has followed the maxim, “As literal as possible, as free as necessary.”

The mandates from the Division specified that, in references to men and women, masculine-oriented language should be eliminated as far as this can be done without altering passages that reflect the historical situation of ancient patriarchal culture....In the vast majority of cases, however, inclusiveness has been attained by simple rephrasing or by introducing plural forms when this does not distort the meaning of the passage....

It will be seen that in prayers addressed to God the archaic second person singular pronouns (*thee, thou, thine*) and verb forms (*art, hast, hadst*) are no longer used... Furthermore, in the tradition of the King James Version one will not expect to find the use of capital letters for pronouns that refer to the Deity.

The desire of the translators to follow in the tradition of the KJV is achieved to the extent that this is a literal, formal-equivalent translation. Inclusive language problems have also been handled well, without unnecessary additions to the text. The following points, however, are thought to be worth considering:

- 1) Although most archaisms have been removed, the word “hallowed” is still used in Matthew 6:9.
- 2) Some words not in common use have been included, such as, “bushel-basket” in Matthew 5:15, “trespasses” in 6:14, “swine” in 7:6 and “toil nor spin” in 6:29.
- 3) The word “unchastity” in 5:32 is felt to be both an inadequate rendering of πορνεία, and an archaism.
- 4) The following are clumsy and obscure: “do not bring us to the time of trial” in 6:9, “put oil on your head” in 6:17 and “deeds of power” in 7:22.

TEV

In the preface to the TEV, the aims of the translators are described as follows:

The primary concern of the translators has been to provide a faithful translation of the meaning of the Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek texts.... After ascertaining as accurately as possible the meaning of the original, the translators' next task was to express that meaning in a manner and form easily understood by the readers. Since this translation is intended for all who use English as a means of communication, the translators have tried to avoid words or forms not in current or widespread use.... Every effort has been made to use language that is natural, clear, simple, and unambiguous. Consequently there has been no attempt to reproduce in English the parts of speech, sentence structure, word order, and grammatical devices of the original languages. Faithfulness in translation also includes a faithful representation of the cultural and historical features of the original, without any attempt to modernize the text.

These comments indicate that this is a Functional (Dynamic) Equivalent translation. It is also apparent that the goals stated by the translators are, to some extent, conflicting, especially the desire to use current expressions as opposed to that to avoid modernising the text. That they were, to a large degree, able to achieve their aims is evident from Lewis' (1982:271) comment that, "the shifting from traditional theological language to language as that used in the newspaper - in many cases with a gain in accuracy in communication - is everywhere evident in the GNB".

Certain aspects of this version could possibly be improved, such as:

1) Too much use of interpretive translation. Perhaps the most striking is the translation of passive forms as divine passives wherever it is possible. Consider Matthew 5:4,5,7,9; 6:33; 7:1. Another example is the explanation of metaphors as in Matthew 5:13 (you are like salt), 5:14 (you are like light), 6:3 (in such a way that not even your closest friend will know about it) and 6:22 (your eyes are like a lamp). Also, in 5:32, the addition of "if she marries again" is without warrant in the text and overinterprets the original. The same is true of the insertion of "one of the occupation troops forces" in 5:41

2) There are also inaccuracies and unnecessary additions to the text. For example, in Matthew 5:17 Jesus is said to have come "to make their teachings come true". This is only one aspect of the meaning of πληρώσαι. The phrase ἕως ἄν πάντα γένηται in 5:18 is rendered "until the end of all things", which points the reader to an exclusively eschatological interpretation, whereas the Greek is capable of being interpreted eschatologically, or in terms of the Cross. Δικαιοσύνη is translated as "faithful" in 5:20. In 5:39, μὴ ἀντιστηναί τῷ πονηρῷ is paraphrased as "do not take revenge on someone who wrongs you". The addition of "of your fine" in 5:26 is not supported by the context, while "Do not be like them" at the start of 6:8 is superfluous, as is the insertion of "hard" in 6:13. Then there is the rendering "May your holy name be honoured" in 6:9.

3) The meaning of some passages tends to be obscure, such as, “wants to possess her” in 5:28, and “do not use any vow when you make a promise” in 5:34. While “flooded over” (7:25, 27) and “what a terrible fall that was” (7:27) are clumsy.

4) No attempt has been made to accommodate inclusive language.

The footnotes are divided between cross-references and notes regarding variants, alternative translations and background material. The descriptive footnotes are less extensive than might be expected in a translation aiming at modernising the vocabulary and producing more idiomatic English than previous versions.

CEV

In the preface to the CEV it is stated that, “the translators of the *Contemporary English Version* of the Bible have diligently sought to *capture the spirit* of the *King James Version* by following certain principles set forth by its translators....”. The following extracts from the preface will outline these principles:

Accuracy, beauty, clarity, and dignity - all of these can and must be achieved in the translation of the Bible.... Every attempt has been made to produce a text that is faithful to the meaning of the original....

A contemporary translation must be a text that an inexperienced reader can *read aloud* without stumbling, that someone unfamiliar with traditional biblical terminology can *hear without misunderstanding*, and that everyone can *listen to with enjoyment* because the style is lucid and lyrical.... [The translators] struggled to discover the best way to translate the text, so that it would be suitable both for *private* and *public* reading, and for *memorizing*....

In everyday speech, “gender generic” or “inclusive” language is used, because it sounds most natural to people today...when both men and women are intended [in the original], this intention must be reflected in the translation....

The translators of the *Contemporary English Version* have not created new or novel interpretations of the text. Rather, it was their goal to express mainstream interpretations of the text in current, everyday English.

Some of the above aims seem rather idealistic. Catering for the inexperienced reader is not likely to be compatible with the desire for a text which accurately reflects the

original and is lyrical. The requirement that the text be capable of being heard without misunderstanding would be an unwise “improvement” of the original, since even Peter admitted that some of Paul’s writings were hard to understand (II Pe 3:16). Consider also the following:

1) The most striking aspect of this version is that of over-interpretation and over-simplification of the text. This often deprives the reader of alternative possible interpretations and of the opportunity to be challenged by the text. The translation of μακάριος (Mat 5:3ff) as “God blesses” removes the possibility of psychological rewards and the blessing of other people responding in kind. Rendering οἱ πτωχοὶ τῷ πνεύματι (Mat 5:3) as “people who depend only on him”, excludes other possible interpretations. Another example is found in 5:32 where ποιεῖ αὐτήν μοιχευθῆναι is given as “cause her to be unfaithful”, where faithfulness is not the issue, but rather, the woman, thinking she is free from the marriage, will remarry and thereby commit adultery in God’s eyes, if not in man’s. In the same place, the man who marries a woman divorced on the wrong grounds is said to be “guilty of taking another man’s wife”. Again the point is not that he marries another man’s wife, but that, although he may regard his marriage to this woman to be legitimate, in God’s eyes he is committing adultery. In both cases the responsibility lies with the man who divorced the woman in the first place, as he causes others to sin unknowingly. Translating οἱ ὑποκριταὶ as “show-offs” (Mat 6:2, 5, 16) detracts unnecessarily from the seriousness of this sin, especially when the word “hypocrite” is well-known in current usage. Similarly, rendering νηστεύετε (Mat 6:16) as “go without eating” does not distinguish between voluntary fasting and involuntary, as in times of need or illness, and has no warrant as the word “fasting” is commonly used today in the biblical sense.

2) One of the dangers of using kernel sentences is illustrated by the rendering of Matthew 5:18, where the link between the two ἕως clauses is lost, and the second ἕως is not translated, making the passage claim that the Law is eternal, rather than that it would

remain in place until fulfilled. This problem leads to a strange doctrine in 5:6, where the verse ends “They will be given what they want”, while in the first part they are those “who want to obey him”, implying that God will give people obedience.

3) Other problems include Matthew 6:9, “help us to honor your name” which places a limitation on what, in the original, is much more general. “Come and set up your kingdom” in 6:10, adds an eschatological emphasis which may or may not be implied in the original, depending on how the concept of the kingdom is interpreted. The renderings “what they do” and “by their deeds” (7:16, 20) are inaccurate in that their deeds are what make them appear to be sheep. They are to be judged by the results of their actions.

4) Some passages seem clumsy or odd. For example the phrase “Don’t worry and ask yourselves” (6:31), or “forced out demons” (7:22).

As far as emulating the spirit of the KJV is concerned, it must be said that the translators have failed to achieve the same level of faithfulness to the available text, and to rise to the literary heights required of a “lyrical” translation. In places this version reads like a children’s Bible, which is not surprising given some of the aims of the translators.

JB and NJB

The JB is the English version of the French *La Bible de Jerusalem* produced by the Dominican Biblical School in Jerusalem, and is therefore a Roman Catholic version. The following excerpts from the editor’s foreword (1966:v, vi) reveal the purpose and approach of the translators:

Now for Christian thinking in the twentieth century two slogans have been wisely adopted: *aggiornamento*, or keeping abreast of the times, and *approfondimento*, or deepening of theological thought. This double programme must be for the Bible too. Its first part can be carried out by translating into the language we use today, its second part by providing notes which are neither sectarian nor superficial....

The translation of the biblical text itself could clearly not be made from the French. In the case of a few books the initial draft was made from the French and then compared word for word with the Hebrew or Aramaic by the General Editor and amended where necessary to ensure complete conformity with the ancient text. For the much greater part, the initial drafts were made from the Hebrew or Greek and simultaneously compared with the French when questions of variant reading or interpretation arose. Whichever system was used, therefore, the same intended result was achieved, that is, an entirely faithful version of the ancient texts which, in doubtful points, preserves the text established and (for the most part) the interpretation adopted by the French scholars in the light of the most recent researches in the fields of history, archaeology and literary criticism.

The translator of the Bible into the vernacular may surely consider himself free to remove the purely linguistic archaisms of that vernacular, but here his freedom ends. He may not, for example, substitute his own modern images for the old ones...nor must he impose his own style on the originals.... Still less must it be supposed that there should be throughout a kind of hieratic language, a uniform 'biblical' English, dictated by tradition however venerable.... It would certainly be dangerous to give the form of the translation precedence over the meaning.

It appears from the Editor's Foreword to the NJB that none of the above sentiments have been altered in producing this later version, since no reference is made to them, but the following statement shows that this version is in the same tradition:

The work of many devoted scholars has contributed to this Bible: those who produced the parent *Bible de Jerusalem* in 1956, the collaborators on the first English *Jerusalem Bible* (1966), the revisers of the *Bible de Jerusalem* (1973), and those who combined to produce the Regular Edition of *The New Jerusalem Bible* in 1985.

An examination of the text shows the close affinity between the JB and the NJB. The comments in the following discussion will therefore apply to both versions, unless otherwise indicated.

Lewis (1982:206, 207) makes the following general comment:

While the editor claims to have rejected any attempt to preserve "biblical English" and to have aimed at producing a completely new rendering on the basis of contemporary usage and vocabulary, he has only partly succeeded. The English of his product is less modern than that of the NEB and is a strange combination of innovation and tradition.

He (ibid. 214) also notes that, “It is in a more modern idiom than the RSV, but it also represents a more liberal modern scholarship than the RSV does. The freedoms it has taken in dealing with the text leave it unreliable for doctrinal study or for biblical exposition”.

Consider the following comments:

1) The use of uncommon words such as “calumny” (Mat 5:11), “a writ of dismissal” (5:31), “tunic” and “cloak” (5:40), “pull long faces” in 6:16, which is changed to the better “put on a gloomy look” in the NJB, “cubit” (6:27), “spin” (6:28), “regalia” in 6:29, which the NJB renders “all his royal robes”, “perdition”, improved to “destruction” in NJB (7:13), and “ravenous” in 7:15. In addition, the NJB has “uprightness” in 5:6, 20; 6:1, and “upright” in 5:45, which could be construed as having something to do with evolution.

2) Idiosyncrasies and inaccuracies. The use of “how happy” (“how blessed” in the NJB) at the start of the beatitudes seems to imply that the poor in spirit are in some way more blessed than the other categories. The JB renders ἀμὴν γὰρ λέγω ὑμῖν/σοι 5:18, 26; 6:5, as “I tell you solemnly”. The NJB has the better “in truth I tell you”. In 5:20 the JB has “if your virtue goes no deeper”, which is not really improved in the NJB rendering, “if your uprightness does not surpass”. Both translate ῥακὰ as “fool”, leading to a problem in dealing with μωπέ (5:22). This last word is rendered as “renegade” in the JB and “traitor” in the NJB, neither of which has any support in the lexicons. The strange construction “do not have it trumpeted before you” (6:2) is found in both. Both also have “your Father who is in that secret place” in 6:6, as in the NEB. The JB has “your whole body will be all darkness” (6:23), which is only slightly improved in the NJB, “your whole body will be darkness”. A serious mistranslation is found in 7:21, where the JB has “It is not those who say to me, ‘Lord, Lord’, who will enter the kingdom of heaven” and the NJB has “It is not anyone who says to me...”, for the original Οὐ πᾶς ὁ λέγων μοι.... Both versions exclude all those who call Jesus “Lord” from the kingdom.

The editor’s claim that the “intended result was achieved, that is, an entirely faithful version of the ancient texts” has been produced, is one that not everyone would agree with, and one that probably cannot be made for any translation.

Although the foregoing discussion of the various versions is largely critical, it should not be inferred that they are all poor translations. Each has its own merits, and will serve the audience for which it was designed. Each also contains the word of God with sufficient accuracy and clarity to enable the reader to discover God’s will for mankind and man’s response as required by God. In this sense, all are good translations. The following chart, taken from Tyndale (1999:1) is relevant and useful in this context:

	12th grade		KJV		
Hard to Read	11th grade				
	10th grade	NASB			
	9th grade				
Average Adult Level	8th grade				TLB
	7th grade	NRSV NKJV	NIV		
	6th grade			NLT	Message
Children’s Bibles	5th grade				CEV
	4th grade				ICB
	3rd grade		NirV		
		Formal Equivalence		Dynamic Equivalence	Paraphrase
TRANSLATION METHODOLOGY					

This chart shows how various translations are placed along a continuum from

very literal to paraphrase, in accordance with the underlying approach of the translators. It also reveals the level of difficulty of each version in terms of the educational level of the reader. Those versions in the range of the average adult would probably be of most use generally. The abbreviations not previously defined are as follows: TLB is The Living Bible, NLT is the New Living Translation, NKJV is the New King James Bible, Message is The Message, ICB is the International Children's Bible, New Century Version and NIRV is the New International Reader's Version.

Qualities of a Good Translation

Any translation of the Bible should be as meaningful as possible to as wide a range of users as possible, while remaining faithful to the original text. Clearly a translation for a particular constituency would have to be tailored to the needs and desires of that group. Phillips (1965:28) says, "Apart then from liturgical use before a large congregation, it seems to me that intelligibility, readability, and accuracy in a present-day translation are by far the most important considerations". The translation presented in this essay is produced as if for general use. It is suggested that a good translation should have the following qualities:

1. The language should appear natural to both readers and hearers.
2. The level of difficulty of the language and of interpretation of meaning should parallel that of the source text.
3. Untranslatable words (i.e. words whose meaning cannot be determined) should be transliterated and perhaps explained in footnotes.
4. Customs or idioms beyond the knowledge of the target audience should, if possible, be converted into customs or idioms which are familiar and comparable, or explained in a footnote.
5. Ambiguities and obscure passages in the source text should, where possible,

be translated into equally ambiguous or obscure language.

6. Symbolism should be translated as literally as possible, with special attention to aspects such as symbolic measures and dimensions, which should not be converted to modern units.

APPLICATION OF THESE PRINCIPLES - TRANSLATION OF THE SM

The text used will be that of the fourth revised edition of the United Bible Societies Greek New Testament. Reference will be made to significant textual variants wherever these have an influence on the translation. Comments on the translation will be indicated by superscript numbers in the text, while the verse numbers appear on the left of the text, aligned as closely as possible to the start of the relevant verse. Since the chapter divisions coincide with paragraph breaks in the text, the numbering of the comments will start at 1 in each chapter. In order to avoid confusion, matters which would normally be dealt with in footnotes, will be inserted in the text as follows: an alternative translation will appear in parentheses, an explanatory comment in square brackets. These will be kept to an absolute minimum so as not to unnecessarily interrupt the flow of thought.

In preparing this translation, the following procedure was followed:

1. The Greek text of the SM was read through several times in an attempt to gain an appreciation for its literary qualities, themes and impact.
2. Several English versions were read through and compared.
3. All key words in the source text were parsed, and their meanings checked and compared in the lexicons.
4. Commentaries were consulted for clarification of obscure or difficult passages as guides to both interpretation and translation.
5. The completed translation was tested in the following ways:
 - 5.1 It was read before an audience of mixed theological and cultural

background, and comments were requested regarding intelligibility, impact and style as perceived by hearers.

5.2 Copies were given to competent theologians for comments on language, interpretation and style.

5.3 Copies were given to people with no theological training for comments on intelligibility, readability and style.

6. The translation was revised in the light of comments received.

7. During the above process, comments were compiled explaining the reasoning behind the major choices made in translating various passages. This also led to some revision of the translation.

Chapter 5

The Basis of Spiritual Success

1. Jesus¹, seeing the crowd, went up to the mountain. When he had sat down his disciples
2. went to him and he started teaching them, saying:
3. "Blessed² are the poor in spirit³ because the kingdom of heaven belongs to them⁴.
4. Blessed are those who mourn⁵ because they will be comforted⁶.
5. Blessed are the gentle because they will possess the earth⁷.
6. Blessed are those whose strongest desire⁸ is to do what is right⁹ because they will be satisfied.
7. Blessed are those who show mercy because they will receive mercy.
8. Blessed are those whose motives are pure¹⁰ because they will see God.
9. Blessed are those who make peace because they will be called children¹¹ of God.
10. Blessed are those who are persecuted for doing what is right⁹ because the kingdom of heaven belongs to them⁴.
11. Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and slander you falsely¹²

12. because of me. Be happy and rejoice because you have a great reward in heaven. Remember¹³ that people also persecuted the prophets in the past.

On Being a Good Disciple

13. You are the salt of the earth. But if salt becomes tasteless¹⁴, what can make it salty again¹⁵? It becomes worthless and is thrown outside where people trample on it.
14. You are the light of the world¹⁶. A city built on top of a mountain cannot be hidden.
15. No-one lights a lamp and puts it under a bowl¹⁷, but they place it on a lampstand so
16. that everyone in the house can see. In the same way, let your light shine among people¹⁸ so that, when they see the good that you do, they may give honour to your Heavenly Father.

What About the Law?

17. Do not think that I came to annul¹⁹ the law or²⁰ the prophets. I did not come to annul them, but to fulfil them.
18. I assure you²¹ that as long as heaven and earth continue²², not the smallest letter, or part of a letter shall disappear from the law until everything is accomplished²³.
19. Whoever removes the smallest commandment, and teaches others to do the same, will be considered²⁴ the least in the kingdom of heaven. But whoever keeps and
20. teaches the whole law²⁵ will be considered²⁴ great in the kingdom of heaven. I tell you that, unless you are more righteous²⁶ than the lawyers and Pharisees, you cannot even enter the kingdom of heaven.

The Dangers of Anger

21. You have heard the ancient commandment²⁷ 'Do not commit murder', and that
22. anyone who murders shall be liable to prosecution²⁸. But I tell you that anyone who is angry with his brother or sister²⁹ is liable to prosecution, Also, if anyone insults³⁰ his brother or sister²⁹, he will be liable to court action, while if anyone says
23. 'You fool', he will be liable to the fiery hell³¹. If, therefore, while you are performing an act of worship³², you remember that you have wronged

24. someone³³, leave your worship and first go and be reconciled with that person,
25. then go and offer your worship. Make friends³⁴ with your accuser before you
get to court³⁵, otherwise he will hand you over to the judge and the judge to the
26. jailer, who will throw you into jail. I assure you that you will not get out until
you have repaid all that you owe.

Adultery

27. You have heard it said, 'Do not commit adultery'. But I tell you that anyone who
28. eyes a woman with the desire to have her³⁶, has already committed adultery
29. in his mind³⁷. If your right eye offends you, pluck it out and throw it away.
It is better to lose one of your parts, than to remain whole and be thrown into
the fiery hell³¹. If your right hand offends you, chop it off and throw it away.
30. It is better to lose one of your parts, than to remain whole and be thrown into
the fiery hell³¹.

Divorce

31. It was also said that 'Anyone who divorces his wife³⁸ must give written notice
32. of dismissal'. But I tell you that anyone who divorces their partner³⁸, except on the
grounds of sexual immorality, makes him or her guilty of adultery³⁹, and whoever
marries this person⁴⁰ commits adultery.

Oaths

33. You have also heard the ancient commandment²⁷, 'Do not break your oath, but fulfil
34. your oath to the Lord'. But I tell you not to take oaths at all, neither by heaven,
35. because it is God's throne, nor by the earth, because it is His footstool. Not by
36. Jerusalem, because it is the city of the great king, nor by your own head, because
37. you cannot make one hair white or black. Just let your yes mean yes and your no mean
no⁴¹, anything beyond this comes from wickedness⁴².

Submissiveness

38. You have heard it said, 'An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth'. But I tell you not
39. to resist evil people⁴³. If someone slaps your right cheek, turn the other one to them.
40. If someone wants to sue you for your coat, give them your shirt also.
41. Should someone force you to accompany him for one mile, go with him for
42. two. To the one who asks, give, and do not turn away from whoever wants to borrow
something from you.

Love

43. You have heard it said, 'Love your neighbour and hate your enemy'. But I tell you
44. that you must love your enemy and pray for those who persecute you, then you will be
45. children⁴⁴ of your Heavenly Father, who lets His sun shine on the wicked and the
46. good, and His rain fall on the righteous and the unrighteous. If you love only⁴⁵ those
who love you, what do you benefit⁴⁶? Even the most despised members of the
47. community⁴⁷ do that! And if you greet only your brethren, what is so great about
48. that⁴⁸? Even the pagans do that. You must be perfect, like your Heavenly Father.

Chapter 6

Benevolence and Hypocrisy

1. Be careful not to do good deeds publicly¹ in order to impress people. If you do you
2. will receive nothing from your Heavenly Father. Therefore, when you give to the
needy², do not blow a trumpet to draw people's attention³ to what you are doing.
This is what the hypocrites do, both in the synagogues and in the streets, in order to
3. be admired by people. I assure you, they have received their full reward. When you
give to the needy, do not even let your left hand know what your right hand is doing⁴.
4. Do your giving secretly and your Father, who sees what is done in secret⁵, will
reward you.

Prayer and Hypocrisy

5. When you pray, do not be like the hypocrites. They love to pray standing in the synagogues and on street corners so that people can see them. I assure you, they have
6. received their full reward. Rather, go into your room and close the door when you pray, and pray to your Father in secret. Your Father, who sees what is done in secret⁵,
7. will reward you. Also when you pray, do not say the same things over and over⁶ like the pagans do. They think God will hear them because they say long prayers⁷.
8. You must not be like them. Your Father knows what you need before you ask Him.

How to Pray

9. Pray like this:
‘Our Heavenly Father,
let your name be held sacred⁸,
10. let your kingdom come,
let your will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven.
11. Give us today our food for tomorrow⁹.
12. Forgive us what we owe you,
as we have forgiven those who owed us.
13. Do not put us to the test¹⁰,
but save us from the evil one¹¹.’
14. If you forgive people the wrong they do to you¹², your Heavenly Father will also
15. forgive you. But if you do not forgive others, your Heavenly Father will not forgive you.

Fasting and Hypocrisy

16. When you fast, do not look sad like the hypocrites do who distort their faces so that people will notice¹³ that they are fasting. I assure you, they have received
17. their full reward. Rather brush your hair¹⁴ and wash your face so that people will not

18. notice¹³ that you are fasting. Your Father, who sees what is done in secret⁵, will notice and will reward you.

Build up Treasure in Heaven

19. Do not build up treasures on earth, where moths and use¹⁵ destroy, and thieves
20. break in and steal. Rather build up treasures in heaven, where moth and use¹⁵ do
21. not destroy, neither do thieves break in and steal. Your mind will focus¹⁶ on
wherever your treasure is.

The Metaphor of the Eye

22. The eye provides light for the body. If your eye is well, your whole body is
23. provided with light. But if your eye is bad, your whole body is in darkness. So if
the light in you is darkness, how great is that darkness!

Serving two Masters

24. No one can properly serve¹⁷ two masters. Anyone who tries¹⁸ will hate one and love
the other, or will support one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and
wealth¹⁹.

Do not Worry

25. Therefore I say you should not worry about your life (or yourself)²⁰ regarding
what you will eat or drink²¹, nor about your body regarding what you will wear.
26. Are you not greater than food? Is your body not greater than clothes? Look at
the wild birds²². They do not plant, they do not harvest, nor do they store food²³
in barns, yet your Heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not more important than
27. the birds? Who of you, by worrying, can increase your height (or lengthen your
life)²⁴?
28. Why do you worry about clothes? Look how the lilies grow in the field. They do not
29. work, nor do they make thread. But even Solomon, with all his beautiful
30. clothes²⁵, was not dressed like one of them. If God dresses the grass so well, which
grows today but tomorrow is burned to heat an oven²⁶, surely he will dress

31. you even better, you people of little faith²⁷. Therefore, do not worry about what
32. to eat, what to drink, or what to wear. These are the main concerns of the pagans,
33. but your Heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. Seek His kingdom and righteousness first, and you will also receive all these things.
34. Do not worry about tomorrow, tomorrow will take care of itself. Each day has enough problems of its own.

Chapter 7

Judging and Hypocrisy

1. Do not judge, so that you may not be judged¹. For the standard of judgement² by which
2. you judge, will be used to judge you, and how you deal with others is how you will be
3. dealt with³. How is it that you can see a speck in someone else's⁴ eye, but do not notice
4. the log in your own? How can you ask someone⁴ to let you take the speck out of their
5. eye when there is a log in your own? If you do, you are a hypocrite. First take the log out of your own eye, then you can see clearly to take the speck out of another's.
6. Do not give holy things to dogs, nor throw your pearls in front of pigs, in case they trample them underfoot, and the dogs⁵ turn and attack you.

God Answers Prayer

7. Ask and it will be given to you, search and you will find, knock and the door will
8. be opened for you. For everyone asking receives, everyone searching finds, and to
9. everyone knocking, it is opened. What kind of a person, if his children⁶ asked for
10. bread, would give them a stone, or, if they asked for fish, would give them a snake?
11. If you, who are bad⁷, know how to give your children good things, how much more able is your Heavenly Father to give good things to those who ask?
12. Whatever you would like other people to do to you, do that to them, for this is the essence of the Law and the Prophets.

The Broad and Narrow Ways

13. Enter through the narrow gate. The way to destruction is through the wide gate and

14. along⁸ the broad way, and many go that way. But the way to life is through the narrow gate and along⁸ the difficult way, and few find it.

Beware of False Prophets

15. Look out for false prophets. They come to you looking like disciples, but they are

16. your enemies⁹. You will know them by what they produce¹⁰. You do not get grapes

17. from thorn bushes, nor figs from thorn trees. Any good tree will produce good fruit,

18. but a bad tree produces bad fruit. A good tree cannot produce bad fruit, neither can a

19. bad tree produce good fruit. Any tree which does not produce good fruit is chopped

20. down and thrown on the fire. Similarly, you will know the false prophets by what they produce.

True and False Disciples

21. Not everyone who addresses me as Lord¹¹ will enter the heavenly kingdom,

22. only those who do what my Heavenly Father wants them to do. In that day many will ask me, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy, cast out demons and do many

23. miracles in your name?' Then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you. Go away from me, you who do not obey God's laws¹².'

24. Everyone who hears what I say and does it will be like a wise man who built his

25. house on rock. The rain fell, the river rose, the wind blew and they beat against that house, but it did not collapse because it was built on rock.

26. Everyone who hears what I say and does not do it will be like a foolish man who

27. built his house on sand. The rain fell, the river rose, the wind blew and they battered that house, and it collapsed and was completely destroyed¹³."

The Amazement of the Crowd

28. When Jesus finished saying these things, the crowds were greatly astonished by his

29. teaching, because he taught with real authority¹⁴, unlike their scribes.

NOTES AND COMMENTS

These comments are numbered in accordance with the superscript numerals in the above translation. For ease of cross-reference, the verse in the text is indicated at the start of each comment.

Chapter 5

1. Verse 1. The name Jesus is inserted to compensate for the lack of context, but could be excluded in a full translation of the book.
2. Verse 3. It is felt that “blessed” has little meaning for those not familiar with the Bible, and that “happy” is too much associated with the pleasures of the world and frivolity to have the correct impact. “Blessed” also does not convey the real meaning of μακάριος, which may explain why some versions use “happy”, or “how happy” (JB), or “God blesses” (CEV), or even “how blest” (NEB). The lack of a more suitable English word, together with the familiarity of “blessed” and the general rejection of the suggestion “success”, led to the retention here of the word blessed.
3. Verse 3. The common translation of this phrase is retained in order to preserve the ambiguity which must have struck the original readers. The statement οἱ πτωχοὶ τῷ πνεύματι may refer either to those who have a spiritual need, to those who are humble, or to those who have a spirit of poverty, that is those who place little value on material possessions, whether they have them or not (cf Phil. 4:11, 12). This latter interpretation aligns with Luke 6:20, where Luke avoids the ambiguity by writing only μακάριοι οἱ πτωχοί. For a fuller discussion of this see Guelich (1982:75), Betz (1995:114,115) and M’Neile (1952:50). The CEV

rendering “people who depend only on him” does not convey the full meaning.

4. Verses 3, 10. The genitive, αὐτῶν, may be a Possessive Genitive (Wallace, 1996: 81f), giving the reading “for the Kingdom of Heaven belongs to them”. It may also be a Genitive of Content (Wallace, 1996: 92ff), which gives the translation, “for they are in the Kingdom of Heaven”. Also, this could be a Genitive of material (Wallace, 1996: 91f), which may be rendered “for the Kingdom of Heaven consists of them”. All three possibilities are compatible with other passages of scripture such as Colossians 1:13; Matthew 19:14; Revelation 1:6. The fact that the Genitive of possession is very common with the copulative verb, together with the comment by Wallace (1996:82) that “possessive *pronouns* will be the primary words used for the genitive of possession. In fact, when one sees a possessive pronoun he/she can *usually* assume that its primary nuance is that of possession”, has led to the preference for this option.
5. Verse 4. Πενθοῦντες is often described as referring to sorrow for the sins of the world. In view of Luke’s use of κλαίοντες, this may be too restrictive an interpretation. M’Neile (1952:50) notes that, “Both πένθειν and κλαίειν are quite general, and cannot be confined to penitence for sins.... πένθειν is most frequent in the LXX for mourning for the dead, and for the sorrows and sins of others”. Betz (1995:120) agrees saying, “one has no reason to limit its scope to one or other of possible issues”.
6. Verse 4. Παρακληθήσονται is described by Wallace (1996:437) as a divine, or theological passive, indicating that “God is the obvious agent”. For this reason the TEV has, “God will comfort them”. Although this is doubtless correct, it is felt that it should be left to the reader to reach this conclusion. Note that the CEV transfers the divine passive to μακάριος and translates it as “God blesses”. This alters the meaning and connotation of the original.
7. Verse 5. The word “possess” is used in preference to “inherit” because, as

Bratcher (1981:38) notes, inherit “implies the death of the original owner”. Any attempt to translate τὴν γῆν by anything other than “the earth” would require either a phrase such as the TEV, “they will receive what God has promised”, which is very vague, or some lengthy theological explanation.

8. Verse 6. The decision to replace “hunger and thirst for” by “whose strongest desire is”, was based on the feeling that most first-world readers/hearers have no idea of the power of real hunger and thirst, never having been close to starving or dying of thirst.
9. Verses 6, 10. To avoid construing righteousness as a gift from God, rather than as personal ethical actions, it is translated as “do what is right”. This is supported by the comments of Guelich (1982:87), Betz (1995:130) and Bratcher (1981:38). The CEV inadvertently alters the meaning of this macarism by translating the condition as “those people who want to obey him”, and the result as “they will be given what they want”.
10. Verse 8. Because the heart is no longer perceived as the seat of human emotions and will, the phrase οἱ καθαροὶ τῇ καρδίᾳ has been rendered, “ whose motives are pure”.
11. Verse 9. In keeping with the current inclusive language debate, υἱοὶ θεοῦ has been translated by the neutral “children of God”, rather than literally.
12. Verse 11. The variant, ψευδόμενοι, has been included as it appears to fit the context. The beatitudes all require a high ethical standard, thus any slander against one of Christ’s followers ought to be false. See also Betz (1995:148). The NIV, NJB, TEV and CEV also include this variant.
13. Verse 12. Although there is no word in the Greek text corresponding to “remember” here, this appears to be the thrust of this statement. When you are persecuted, do not despair, remember that you are in good company.
14. Verse 13. Guelich (1982:121) remarks that μωρανθῆ “literally means to become

foolish”. This, of course, makes no sense in the present context, but the use of ἀλισθήσεται indicates that the idea of “saltiness” is in view. For this reason the word “tasteless” is used. The fact that salt cannot become “unsalty” adds strength to this metaphor by showing the indelible nature of true discipleship.

15. Verse 13. Ἐν τίνι ἀλισθήσεται; This rhetorical question has various possible interpretations. Betz (1995:159) gives the following three alternatives:

- (1) “If the salt becomes tasteless, how will it be made salty again?”
- (2) “If the salt becomes dull, with what shall one salt?”
- (3) “If the salt becomes dull, with what will God salt?”

The first is felt to fit the context more logically than the second, while the third gives the theological conclusion that the reader is expected to arrive at by meditating on the question. This is one of the weaknesses of the TEV, that it tries to explain all metaphors.

16. Verse 14. An attempt is made here to maintain the difference between γῆ in verse 13 and κόσμος here, although the two words appear to be synonymous in this context.

17. Verse 15. The word “bowl” was chosen to translate μῶδιον as it is more commonly understood than the literal “bushel”. The NIV also uses “bowl”, while other versions use less satisfactory words such as “tub” (JB and NJB), “meal tub” (NEB) and “bushel-basket” (NRSV).

18. Verse 16. Τῶν ἀνθρώπων is rendered “people” in the interests of inclusive language translation. Although ἄνθρωπος is inclusive, the translation “men” as found in JB and NIV is not.

19. Verse 17. Bauer (1952: 415) gives the following meanings of καταλύω when used in connection with law: “do away with, abolish, annul, make invalid”. Of these, annul is perhaps the most commonly used today in connection with a law or legal contract.

20. Verse 17. Τὸν νόμον ἢ τοὺς προθῆτας. Strecker (1988: 53) says that ἢ here is equivalent to καί. Blass (1961:231) notes that “ ἢ also comes close to the force of a copulative conjunction, especially in negative clauses”, and refers to Acts 1:7 and John 8:14 which, however, make good sense if ἢ is taken as disjunctive, as does Mat 5:17. What appears to be meant is that Jesus did not come to annul the Old Testament as a whole, nor in any part. The TEV has “the Law of Moses and the teachings of the prophets”, which is unnecessarily specific.
21. Verse 18. Guelich (1982:144) notes regarding ἀμήν λέγω ὑμῖν that “ the function of the formula is to introduce the saying with a note of authority comparable to Thus says the Lord”. Ἀμήν is generally used to confirm the truth of, or express agreement with, a statement. In view of this, the best translation is possibly “I assure you”.
- 22, 23. Verse 18. It is difficult to express in English the force and relationship of the two ἕως clauses here. Betz (1995: 184) comments that “the Torah will not simply pass out of existence, but will be replaced by salvation itself, which, after all, is its content.” However, he clearly misses the significance of this statement as he goes on to say that, “This view of a temporal limit differs from that of Paul for whom the end of the Jewish Torah coincided with the coming of Jesus and the coming of faith”. Since Jesus came to bring salvation, these two limits are the same. The only thing that could have prevented Jesus from bringing salvation, and thus annulling the law, would have been the end of the world. Hence the translation “ as long as heaven and earth continue”. Note that the CEV loses the connection between the two ἕως clauses and implies that the law will be eternal, which is not the point that is being made here.
24. Verse 19. Bauer (1952:400) says of καλέω, “Very oft. the emphasis is to be placed less on the fact that the name is such and such than on the fact that the bearer of the name actually is what the name says about him”. This appears to be its force

here, therefore *καλέω* is translated as “considered”. The NEB has the strange rendering, “will stand high in the kingdom”.

25. Verse 19. “The whole law” is inserted here since, although it is not explicit in the Greek text, it is required in English to complete the thought.
26. Verse 20. Strecker (1988:60) and Guelich (1982:158, 159) both assert that the double comparative, *περισσεύση...πλείον*, with the genitive, indicates a quantitative rather than qualitative comparison. The idea is rather that of “doing” more righteousness than of “being” more righteous. Prof. J.C. Thom rejects this “in view of the radical nature of Jesus’ ethics”, and his view is in keeping with the context as Jesus is showing that the requirements of the law need to be internalised so that righteousness is no longer measured by deeds alone, but by the thoughts and motives lying behind the deeds. It is interesting that the TEV translates *δικαιοσύνη* here as “faithful”. Also the JB has “if your virtue goes no deeper”, while the NJB says “if your uprightness does not surpass.” The CEV puts it in the realm of the impossible by saying “You must obey God’s commands better than the Pharisees...”, as these were noted for their strict observance of the minutiae of the law.
27. Verse 21, 33. A literal translation of the start of these verses is: “You have heard that it was said to the ancients”. Any attempt to remain close to a literal rendering results in clumsy or confusing English. The reference is clearly to the teachings of the Old Testament, therefore “the ancient commandment” is felt to convey the meaning and thrust of this statement.
28. Verse 21. Guelich (1982:184) gives two possible interpretations of *ἔνοχος ἔσται τῇ κρίσει*: 1) “Whoever kills shall be liable to the sentence of the death penalty”, or 2) Whoever kills shall be “liable to a criminal proceeding”. The second option is preferred as being more in keeping with known practice.
29. Verse 22. Carson (1998:130, 131) argues convincingly for the translation “brother

or sister”, saying that “there is plenty of unambiguous evidence, both in the New Testament and outside it, that ‘brothers’ often meant what we mean by ‘brothers and sisters’.” Then he asks the question, “Is Jesus restricting the sanction to anger toward a brother, but not toward a sister?” The alternative, “fellow-believer”, is felt to be clumsy, artificial and unemotive.

30. Verse 22. Although the true meaning of ῥακά has not been conclusively determined, the context shows it to be some form of insult. Some of the modern versions struggled with this with strange results. The NEB renders ῥακά as “abuses” which has the wrong connotation in present society, and then translates μωπέ as “sneers at”. Both the JB and NJB render ῥακά as “fool” which forces them to find an alternative for μωπέ, which JB gives as “renegade” and NJB as “traitor”.

31. Verses 22, 29, 30. Concerning γέενναν τοῦ πυρός, Hill (1978:121) says, “The original Valley of Hinnom was a ravine S. of Jerusalem, where the refuse of the city was burnt. It ... later became the symbolic designation of the place of future punishment”. The translation “fiery hell” treats πυρός as a descriptive genitive. Other versions either ignore the genitive, for example JB and NJB have “hell fire”, or transfer the genitive to γέενναν, as in the NEB, CEV and NIV which have “fire of hell”.

32. Verse 23. In a society relatively unfamiliar with animal sacrifice, the paraphrase, “act of worship”, is felt to be more relevant than “offering your gift at the altar”.

33. Verse 23. It is difficult to render ἔχει τι κατὰ σοῦ literally in idiomatic English. By reversing the subject and object, the same meaning is conveyed concisely and idiomatically. The possibility that the person only thinks you have wronged him, which the Greek allows, is excluded as it is not possible to remember what someone else thinks. To accommodate inclusive language, ἀδελφός is translated as “someone”.

34. Verse 25. Strecker (1988:68), Hill (1978:122) and the CEV translate ἵσθι εὐνοῶν as “make friends”. Although this phrase literally means “be friendly”, since the thrust of the passage is the importance of reconciliation, “make friends” seems to be more adequate.
35. Verse 25. The literal “while you are still with him on the way”, with “to court” understood, is a clumsy circumlocution in English, and looks like a euphemism, while in the Greek it appears more as a veiled threat. Thus, the rendering “before you get to court” is preferred. It is clear from the context which includes a judge, an officer and a possible jail sentence, that “on the way” implies “to court”.
36. Verse 28. Πρὸς τὸ + the infinitive (ἐπιθυμῆσαι) expresses purpose (Wallace, 1996:591). This passage states that if the purpose of looking at a woman is to lust for her, then adultery has already been committed. The use of “eyes” in place of “looks at” brings in the connotation of lust or desire as the purpose of looking. The TEV has the ambiguous “looks at a woman and wants to possess her”.
37. Verse 28. As a concession to modern understanding of the source of our desires and will, ἐν τῇ καρδίᾳ is rendered “in his mind”.
38. Verses 31, 32. “His wife” is retained in verse 31 as this is a quotation from the OT law and thus should reflect the original setting. In verse 32, however, a new application is presented, and “partner” is used in keeping with the desire for inclusive language.
39. Verse 32. “Makes him or her guilty of adultery” is an attempt to deal with the aorist passive infinitive, μοιχευθῆναι, which implies that others may perceive the divorced person to be guilty of adultery, or that the divorced person may be placed in a position where they unwittingly commit adultery, thinking their divorce to be valid. Note that the passive of μοιχεύω is applied to the man in Mark 10:11. The TEV adds the phrase “if she marries again”, which prevents the reader

from detecting the other nuance. In the CEV the reading “will cause her to be unfaithful” does not fully convey the seriousness of the original.

40. Verse 32. Inclusive language requires the translation “this person”.
41. Verse 37. This passage says literally “Let your word be ‘Yes, yes, no, no’.”, which conveys little sense in English. Strecker (1988:80) says the “double negative or affirmation...[is] a formula of solemn declaration”. This, of course, is not the case in our language or culture. “Let your yes mean yes, and your no mean no” is an attempt to express the solemnity and retain some of the simplicity of this statement.
42. Verse 37. Τοῦ πονηροῦ can mean “evil” or “the evil one”. The present context, together with the fact that people often swear an oath in order to make a lie more convincing, led to the translation “wickedness”.
43. Verse 39. Taking τῷ πονηρῷ as referring to abstract evil, could lead to the idea that evil is to be accepted or submitted to. The context, talking about slapping, suing and forcing, indicates that it is evil people who should not be resisted. This is also the view of Strecker (1988:82) and Guelich (1982: 219).
44. Verse 45. Υἱοί is translated “children” for the purpose of inclusive language.
45. Verse 46. The word “only” is inserted here as it is implied in the Greek.
46. Verse 46. “Benefit” is used here in place of “reward or wage” because of its broader range of meaning which, in this context, appears to coincide more closely with the force of μισθόν.
47. Verse 46. “Tax collectors”, although not highly popular today, do not fall into a sufficiently low category as to be used proverbially to represent the dregs of society. Thus the paraphrase “most despised members of the community” has been used here.
48. Verse 47. In an attempt to reflect the irony in τί περισσὸν ποιεῖτε, a more colloquial paraphrase was chosen, rather than the literal “what more do you do”,

which is too unemotive in this context.

Chapter 6.

1. Verse 1. “Publicly” is used for ἔμπροσθεν τῶν ἀνθρώπων in place of the clumsy and unidiomatic “before men” found in many translations.
2. Verse 2. Ποιῆς ἐλεημοσύνην is rendered “give to the needy”, as the older translations such as “give alms” are outdated. Guelich (1982:277) uses “deeds of charity”, but this also is rejected due to the negative connotation often attached to the word charity.
3. Verse 2. Μὴ σαλπίσσης ἔμπροσθέν σου is translated as “do not blow a trumpet to draw people’s attention”, in order to retain the hyperbole. It is difficult to express this in English in a way that does not seem strained. The CEV has “don’t blow a loud horn”, the JB and NJB have, “do not have it trumpeted before you”, while the NEB says, “with a flourish of trumpets”.
4. Verse 3. The usual translation is retained here in order to express the hyperbole of the Greek text. This is lost in the TEV which has, “do it in such a way that even your closest friend will not know about it”.
5. Verses 4, 6, 18. “Who sees what is done in secret” translates ὁ βλέπων ἐν τῷ κρυπτῷ, “what is done” being added to complete the sense implicit in the Greek.
6. Verse 7. Βατταλογήσητε is rendered “say the same things over and over” as this appears, from the context, to be the sense. Strecker (1988:105) translates as “go babbling on”, while Guelich (1982:283) says, “regardless of the derivation, this verb’s specific meaning follows from the reference to πολυλογία”, and uses “prattle” to translate it. Prattle is archaic, while babbling often implies incoherence, thus the above rendering was chosen.
7. Verse 7. The translation of πολυλογία as “they say long prayers” is suggested by

Bratcher (1981:59).

8. Verse 9. Betz (1995:389) describes ἀγιασθήτω as a “peculiar aorist (complexive) passive imperative [which] allows for several aspects of interpretation”. One of the possibilities is to take this to be a divine passive in which God is asked to ensure that His name is sanctified. Another is that God is to ensure that people sanctify His name. The translation “let your name be held sacred”, attempts to convey this ambiguity. “Sacred” is felt to be more meaningful to a wider range of people than the more technical “sanctified”. The TEV has the weak rendering may your holy name be honoured”, while the CEV removes the ambiguity with, “help us to honor your name”. In spite of attempts to modernize the language, the NEB, NIV and NRSV have all retained the archaic “hallowed”.
9. Verse 11. Strecker (1988:117, 118) offers three possible interpretations of ἐπιούσιον namely:
 1. According to a derivation from ἐπιέναι, ‘future’, the requested bread is identified with the heavenly bread of life....
 2. Similarly, the translation ‘for tomorrow’ is derived from ἐπιέναι.
 3. Through division into ἐπί and οὐσία, we derive the translation ‘needed for existence’....

Guelich (1982: 293) notes that “the evidence does seem to tip the balance in favour of ἐπιούσιος meaning ‘tomorrow’s bread’.” In Acts 7:26; 16:11; 20:15; 21:18; 23:11 the cognate, ἐπιούση, refers to the next day. Give us today our bread for tomorrow is not an unreasonable request, even in the light of Matthew 6:25ff, since how else could breakfast be possible?
10. Verse 13. Πειρασμόν can mean either a test or a temptation to sin. Since the New Testament teaches that God does not tempt us to sin, it is thought that “do not put us to the test” is a better translation than “do not lead us into temptation”. The TEV has the unnecessary addition of “hard”, rendering this as, “Do not bring us to hard testing”.
11. Verse 13. Τοῦ πονηροῦ is, as in other passages, ambiguous. This ambiguity cannot

be concisely expressed in English so that a decision must be made as to whether this should be rendered “evil” or “the evil one”. Since the context is that of testing, and Satan is the one who puts obstacles in the way of God’s people, it is felt that the context requires the translation “the evil one”.

12. Verse 14. Betz (1995:416) says, “The reference is to ‘transgressions’ (παραπτώματα) of the Torah....” He also comments that “the future tense of ἀφήσει (‘he will forgive’) points to the eschatological judgment....” Both of these statements may be challenged. Firstly, we have no authority to forgive those who transgress God’s law and secondly, the future tense need only indicate that God’s forgiveness of us is conditional on our forgiveness of others, and thus follows our forgiveness of others in time. The reference in Matthew 18:18 to the disciples binding and loosing on earth does not support the teaching that we can forgive sins as is clear from the perfects δεδεμένα and λελυμένα, which show that the decision to bind or loose is first taken in heaven. We forgive penitent sinners because God has already forgiven them, but we forgive those who sin against us on the basis of mercy. Since such an eminent scholar can come to the above conclusions, it was decided to make the translation somewhat more specific by putting “the wrong they do to you”.
13. Verses 16, 18. The clumsy literal translation of φανῶσιν τοῖς ἀνθρώποις νηστεύοντες, that is, “they might appear to men fasting”, is made more idiomatic by translating as “so that people will notice....” The CEV rendering, “go without eating”, does not have the same connotation as “fasting”. Also the translations of σκυθρωποί in the JB, “pull long faces” and NJB, “put on a gloomy look” are clumsy.
14. Verse 17. “Anoint your head” is replaced by the more relevant “brush your hair”, as suggested by Bratcher (1981: 63).
15. Verses 19, 20. Guelich (1982:326) says of βρώσις: “*Worm* can only offer an approximate translation, since the Greek noun βρώσις means ‘eating’ (I Cor 8:4) or ‘food’ (Jn 6:27). The occasional translation ‘rust’ (ῥίος) for βρώσις stands without

parallel in extant literature....” Louw and Nida (1989: 2, 48) list the meanings of βρωσις as: “eating, meal, food, meat, rusting”. Doubt is expressed by them (1989:1, 28) as to the correctness of “rusting”. The force of this word, namely “eating”, is generalised in this translation by using the word “use”.

16. Verse 21. ἐκεῖ ἔσται καὶ ἡ καρδία σου is translated “your mind will focus” in order to reflect modern understanding of the source of our drives and motives.
17. Verse 24. “Properly” is inserted here, although not explicit in the Greek, as the original historical setting would have placed this in the context of slavery where serving two masters would be virtually impossible. The present society does not generally oppose the holding of two jobs by an individual.
18. Verse 24. The Greek literally says, “For either he will hate....” In this translation, “anyone” is used for the purpose of inclusive language. The word “tries” is inserted in order to reflect back on “properly”.
19. Verse 24. Μαμωνᾷ is translated as “wealth”, although Guelich (1982:334) says, “ ‘money’ or ‘wealth’ renders the term too narrowly. The term connotes in a positive manner one’s possessions in general”. This is felt to be the exact connotation of the word wealth. This is not the view of the modern versions, however, as the TEV, JB, NJB and CEV all have “money”, while the NEB and NIV have “Money”.
20. Verse 25. The word ψυχῆ can refer to the life of an individual, as in Romans 11:3, or to the person, as in Acts 2:41, or to the inner self, as in Matthew 26:38. In the present context, either of the first two possibilities makes good sense. Thus the alternative is given in parentheses.
21. Verse 25. The words “or drink” are included as the support for the variant, πίητε, appears to be stronger than that for its omission.
22. Verse 26. τὰ πετεινὰ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ is rendered “wild birds” as this appears to be the thrust. Tame, or domestic birds are fed by men, wild birds by God.
23. Verse 26. “Food” is inserted here as it is implicit in the Greek, but is needed to

complete the sense in English.

24. Verse 27. The meaning of ἡλικίαν ranges from age or duration of life, to height or stature, therefore the alternative translations are provided. The use of πῆχυν implies that stature is the main thought here rather than age. The matter is not conclusively decided, however, and most versions give the alternative reading in a footnote.
25. Verse 29. δόξα is here taken, in light of the context, to refer to the glory of the clothing worn by Solomon. In the JB this is given as “regalia”, but the NJB has “all his royal robes” which is better, although it is an unnecessary circumlocution.
26. Verse 30. εἰς κλίβανον βαλλόμενον, if translated literally, may lead to confusion regarding the thrust of the passage, as we put things in an oven to cook them, not to heat up the oven. Therefore the meaning is rendered “is burned to heat an oven”.
27. Verse 30. The vocative, ὀλιγόπιστοι, is rendered by the phrase “you people of little faith” as no single English word conveys the meaning. Also, the rhetorical question is transformed into a statement of confidence, which is felt to have equivalent force, because the construction, “will he not also dress...”, is felt to be clumsy and archaic.

Chapter 7.

1. Verse 1. Strecker (1988:143) notes that “the Greek concept does not distinguish between judging and condemning”. Guelich (1982:349) states that, “*do not judge* (μὴ κρίνετε), contains several possible meanings because of the various uses of *to judge* in Greek as well as in English. They span the scale from an aesthetic discerning to a legal act of judiciary”, but goes on (ibid. 350) to say, on the basis of the context, “*Judging*, therefore, refers to the censorious condemnation of another....”. These considerations led to the adoption of the more literal translation, allowing the reader to draw a conclusion from the context.

2. Verse 2. ἐν ᾧ κρίματι, literally, “with what judgement”, is translated as “the standard of judgement by which” as being more idiomatic English.
3. Verse 2. ἐν ᾧ μέτρῳ μετρεῖτε is translated as “how you deal with others” on the basis of the discussion on μετρέω in Louw and Nida (1989:1, 568), where they suggest the translation “he will deal with you in the manner that you deal with others”. Note also that the so-called divine passives, κριθῆτε, κριθήσεσθε, μετρηθήσεται, are translated as ordinary passives since we tend to receive the same treatment from men as we give them. It is, of course, recognised that God ultimately judges us on the same basis.
4. Verses 3, 4. Rendering τοῦ ἀδελφοῦ as “someone else” is an attempt to accommodate inclusive language.
5. Verse 6. In order to draw attention to the chiasm in this verse, the word “dogs” is repeated in the last phrase.
6. Verse 9. ὁ υἱός is translated “children” to accommodate inclusive language.
7. Verse 11. “Bad” was chosen to represent πονηροί as it appears to cover the semantic range of the Greek word more closely than the words “wicked” or “evil”. It also does not carry the connotation of inherent and irreversible depravity found in the word “evil” but retains the possibility of reformation to an original state of purity.
8. Verses 13, 14. The word “along” is added here in keeping with English idiom. It also helps to bring out the force of the participle ἀπάγουσα.
9. Verse 15. The metaphor of sheep and wolves is perhaps less striking in our present urbanised society than the plain statement relating disciples and enemies.
10. Verse 16. Because of the English idiom “fruit of one’s labour” referring to the physical rewards or gains for work done, the expression “you will know them by fruit” could lead to the assessment of a “prophet” in terms of material possessions or position. To avoid this, the word “produce” is used here. The CEV renderings “by

what they do” (7:16) and “their deeds” (7:20), miss the point that it is not what they do that is to be examined, but what the results of their deeds are.

11. Verse 21. The double vocative, Κύριε, κύριε, implies an address in the form of a petition or prayer, therefore this phrase is translated as “Not everyone who addresses me as Lord”. Both the JB and the NJB contain a serious mistranslation of this passage, the JB saying, “It is not those who say to me, ‘Lord, Lord’, who will enter the kingdom...”, and the NJB, “It is not anyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord’, who will enter the kingdom...”, thus excluding all who address Jesus as Lord from the kingdom.
12. Verse 23. Louw and Nida (1989:758) say, with regard to ἀνομία, that it may be translated as “to live as though there were no laws, to refuse completely to obey the laws, or to live as one who despises all laws”. In the context of verse 21, ἀνομία is taken to refer to those who do not obey God and thus the translation given here is “you who do not obey God’s laws”.
13. Verse 27. ἡ πτώσις αὐτῆς μεγάλη is rendered “was completely destroyed” as this is better English than the literal “great was its destruction”. The TEV has the clumsy expression, “And what a terrible fall that was!”.
14. Verse 29. The point here appears to be that the scribes always referred to some well-known teacher of the past to support their teachings, as noted by Bratcher (1981:81), whereas Jesus gave his own interpretation or teaching without appeal to any other authority. The versions have here “with authority” (NJB, JB, TEV), “with a note of authority” (NEB), “as one who had authority” (NIV) and the rather weak “like someone with authority” (CEV).

CONCLUSION

It is apparent that, historically, translation was initially regarded more as an art than as a science. In the twentieth century the scientific method has been applied to every branch of endeavour including translation. But the process of translation cannot be reduced to a set of rules or principles which will invariably produce the desired result.

An important advance in this respect is the Principle of Relevance. This provides parameters within which to work, but also allows for the artistic use of language. The translation presented in this essay is thought to reflect the Principle of Relevance in most aspects. A possible exception is the translation of the metaphor in 7:15 into literal language.

No theory or set of rules can ever remove the subjective aspect from translation, particularly when dealing with concepts such as style. This is one of the underlying reasons for the multiplicity of English versions currently available. Each is based in its own rationale and designed for a specific audience, and therefore each has its own validity.

The amount of information available in the various disciplines which have a bearing on translation has increased to such a degree that no one person can possibly master it all alone. For this reason it is clear that a carefully selected panel of translators, each competent in a particular field, should be appointed for any new translation. It is accepted that this would probably not be possible when translating into a language for the first time, as the people familiar with that language and the culture of its people are seldom likely to be experts in Bible languages, or linguistics, or historical background and so on.

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