

The Best Translator Is One Who Is Translating Into His Mother Tongue

This is a truism, yet there are historical reasons why it is still necessary to state it with some emphasis. As the Christian Church has reached out into new areas, the New Testament has been regarded as a means of evangelism, and the translation of portions, at least, has often preceded the founding of a Church. Inevitably this meant that the initiative was taken by foreigners, and in India this meant that the pioneer versions in the major languages were "missionary versions." We refuse to accept this as a term of reproach! The pioneer missionaries deserve our thanks for what they did, but the very name does indicate the limitations of their work and this is one reason for the tremendous amount of revision in progress today. It will have been worth while provided we can redress the balance, and give due place to the work of nationals. The very effort of translation gave to the earlier missionaries a familiarity with the language and culture of the people among whom they lived, which is comparatively rare among missionaries today. So we aim to give as much responsibility as possible to nationals.

(Taken from *Translation Adviser's Occasional Bulletin*, by Wesley Culshaw.)

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