Readers' Corner

We print the following letter in full, including the references to articles which appeared in earlier numbers of The Bible Translator, so that this useful material may be brought to the attention of more recent readers of the journal. Most back numbers may be obtained from the Business Manager upon request. Ed.

From Sylvester Dirks

I became acquainted with the Bible Translator in March 1958 when a friend presented me with back numbers of your excellent journal. I consider it indispensable for the work I am doing.

Prepositions and conjunctions have given me a lot to think about. Many of these are not directly translatable into Campa.[1] In solving some of the problems involved I have found Dr. Greenlee's article "The Genitive Case in the New Testament" (Vol. 1, No. 2, April 1950) especially helpful. I appreciated also the article by Dr. E. A. Nida on "Equivalents of the Genitive in other Languages" immediately following. These papers served also to give me confidence and reassurance in certain cases where I had come to conclusions on my own.

In Campa possession is indicated, for the most part, by simple noun inflection *'my* son' *'n*otomi'. Duplication and redundancy are widespread in the language and especially when possession is indicated. One can also say *'nashi n*otomi' or even *'n*otomi *nashi narori'*, in which all the italicized part has to do with possession.

I appreciated especially the treatment given the Greek subjective and objective genitives. The expression "cleansing of the Jews" in Jn. 2:6 requires a separate sentence in Campa: "It is their custom" *Irotaque yamejeitari.* Differing from this is the objective genitive in 2 Cor. 10:5 "the obedience of Christ". This we translate with a subordinate clause "in order that we obey Christ" *aquemisantantearíri Quirishito.*

The Campa sentence is frequently very short, consisting of nothing more than a verb construction or an extended noun expression. The latter is indicated in Jn. 6:45 for the genitive of source. We translate "He, God, the one who will teach them" *Irio Tasorentsi oame jeiterine.* A different form of the nominalized verb is employed in Lk. 24:42 to indicate genitive of material "a piece of broiled fish" "fish, that which has been roasted" *shima aquishitachari.*

There are two possibilities for a partitive construction such as the one in Mt. 9:3, "some of the scribes said". One can employ two coordinate clauses such as "There were scribes; they said" *Itimaiti oametirori, icantajeiti;* or the second clause can be nominalized and placed in apposition to the remaining clause "There were scribes, those which said" *Itimaiti oametirori cantajeitaintsiri.* A declarative sentence not introducing a quotation, "There were some scribes", would become "Were there scribes some" (literally 'one-plural') *Itimaiti ara oametirori aparopai.*

[1] Campa is spoken in part of Peru, and is a member of the Arawak family of languages.

Jn. 2:21 "the temple of His body" I have translated "that which is different temple that (deictic) his body" *pashinitatsiri yapatotantaitari irointi itsempequi.* This is another case of nouns in apposition with the difference that the deictic pronoun *irointi* appears between the nominal elements "temple" and "body". "John, the son of Zebedee" is simply "John, his son Zebedee" *Joa itomi Severeo.*

Strictly speaking there is only one 'preposition' in Campa. It is affixed to nouns and is always the last in order of noun suffixes. This is *'-qui',* a locative indicating both position and direction, spatially and temporally. It is variously translated "in, into, towards" etc. Hence the temporal genitive "by night" of Jn. 3:2 does not present a problem. It is translated "night in" *osaiteniqui.*

It appears that Mk. 1:4 presents a real problem to those translating into aboriginal languages and Campa is no exception. An idiomatic translation must employ direct quotation here. The content of John's message must be direct quotation: "He proclaimed: 'Repent. Be baptized also.' " *Pipashinitajea. Povincatajea aisati.* Although these forms are the reflexive passive, they give to understand that the baptizing is done by another. Campa does have a regular passive form but this cannot be used here.

The genitive case as employed in Mt. 10:29 to indicate price, demands the introduction of the seller: "Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing?" becomes "Does he not ask him for coin one, that one who sells him birds two?" *Tempa yamananteri quirequi aparo yora pimantaqueriri tsimeri apiti?*

Campa morphology and syntax are extremely complex. Again and again in the course of translation one is called upon to change not only the word order but also the category of words used. This is illustrated in Jn. 3:15 "That whoever believes in Him may have eternal life." There are at least three possible renderings of this verse, all of them acceptable. But the preferred alternative is the one employing the verb form for "life". Hence we translate "Forever they live who believe Him" *Ocantaitatempane yaneajeiti quemisantajeitiriri.* The other forms are "Not ends their life who believe Him" *Te ontsoncanetea yaneantari quemisantajeitiriri;* "Is their life not ending who believe Him" *Timatsi yaneantari cari tsoncanetachane quemisantajeitiriri.* It seems that the plural forms are preferred in such narration.

At every turn I learned that "translation involves more than mechanical consistency and literal correspondences," and that "important types of syntactic adaptations must be made if the indigenous translation is to be understood by the people." In doing this I find much is dependent on the alternate expressions I myself can suggest to my informant. This ability has rightly been called "the missionary translator's primary function". Campa is eminently productive and so I find myself doing this constantly. At times a single word will do to translate an entire phrase. The eight words of Jn. 3:29 "he who has the bride is the bridegroom" require only three in our translation: *amanantaquerori irio jinantearone* "He who asked for her, he, the one who will marry her".

"The translator must avoid the tendency to select terms purely on the basis of their etymology" but he cannot afford not to look into the

etymology of words he uses. My experience with Jn. 10:9 exemplifies this. Our word for "door" is *ashitacorontsi* and so we employed it here. It was from the verb construction based on the same root that I later learned that the noun means "that which closes or shuts in". The idea of entering is not even included in the word and so we had to drop it. We substituted a word meaning "that which they customarily enter" *iqueantapinitari*. Metaphors on the whole are difficult to translate. Thorough acquaintance with both the grammar and culture of the people are necessary if one is to do a fair job with them. "Living water" is not water that lives, so I had translated it "water that gives life" *nija pimantirori aneantsi*. I felt rather satisfied with it but one day my informant suggested "water which causes to live" *nija oaneantatsiri*. The causative offers one great possibilities in problems such as these. Needless to say there is a much more intelligent response from the audience when we speak of the "water" with this qualification.

Now that I understand somewhat the intricate structure of Campa I am often amazed at the wealth and variety of native expression. They seem to be almost unlimited. Certainly here is a case where potential for a good translation of the Scriptures is not lacking. As the need for the Scriptures increases so does our responsibility toward this people. I feel very keenly my own inability but am determined to go on. A missionary translator working for a tribe up in the hills of Burma wrote: "for problems of this kind, in our experience, solutions can come forth only through prayer." One must seek wisdom and direction through prayer but, thank God, that is our privilege! I concur also with Mr. Pham Xuan Tin, Vietnamese, that "it is good to have an ardent desire to translate God's Word as soon as possible, and yet a missionary should not try to translate it too soon." Veteran Norwegian missionary J. I. Kaardal who for over twenty years laboured in Cameroun is right when he says "It is essential that a missionary should not do much translating until he knows the indigenous language well enough so that he can easily explain himself and discuss all pertinent matters in that language. If he must depend on some intermediate language, there are too many possibilities for serious errors." I am just now beginning to qualify for translation work.

It is impossible to say how much I have benefited from the article "Syntax Problems in Mazateco Translation" (July '50, p. 135) or how much I owe the author of "A New Methodology in Biblical Exegesis" (July '52, p. 97). Like Guajiro, Campa belongs to the Arawak family of languages, so I read with interest and profit the paper entitled "Gender, Pronominal Reference and Possession in Guajiro" (Oct. '50, p. 165). The articles on "Information Correspondence" (July '52, p. 135; Jan. '53, p. 14) were very helpful as was also "What about Italics?" (July '56, p. 114) by the same author.

I never fail to read the Book Reviews and have already benefited tremendously from the reading of books recommended by the Bible Society. I have a fairly good idea of books I want to get, once I have the means. This section has served to point out to me the value of Greek and Hebrew and I shall not let slip an opportunity to study them when the opportunity presents itself. In the meantime I find

comfort in what was written several years ago by one who should know: "It cannot be said that a deficiency of Greek and Hebrew is responsible for the greatest number of errors or that the most common errors reflect a lack of study of the original languages." "Difficult Words and Phrases" are always read with keen interest and I find this section both stimulating and helpful. The same is true of "Questions and Answers". In fact every feature of the journal is so good and has such practical value that I read every number from cover to cover.

For more than a decade I had been using a borrowed word, Spanish "Dios" for "God". To begin with, this must have had a zero meaning to many of my listeners since many are monolinguals. Mr. Kindberg of Wycliffe Bible Translators has pointed out that *Tasorentsi* is an adequate native term for "God" and I have recently begun to use it. Yet I do not feel that even in the case of the monolingual listener these years have been entirely lost. Mr. G. W. Sheppard's paper on "The Problem of Translating 'God' into Chinese" (Jan. '55, p. 23) proved a source of real consolation. God has in the past used imperfect rendition of His Name to bring glory to Himself. He must continue to do this in many places even to-day. The all-important thing is that one should minister in the power of the Spirit. Only then can God reveal Himself to the people. The great Judson's translation of "Holy Spirit" into Burmese is further proof of this.

Book Reviews

Meet the Greek Testament by Adam Fox, Canon of Westminster. SCM Press Ltd., 56 Bloomsbury St., London, W.C. 1. 8s. 6d.

This delightful little book is described in the sub-title as "Two Essays and a Dialogue intended for those who have little or no Greek".

The two essays deal respectively with the topics of "Externals" and "Interpretation". The former essay deals at an elementary level with the subject-matter of textual criticism and all that, and ends with a practical section entitled "On buying a Greek Testament: a question of getting your money's worth". The second essay discusses the particular kind of Greek found in the New Testament, and looks at some of the problems involved in interpreting the Gospels and Epistles against the background of the Roman Empire in the first Christian century.

But it is the dialogue that will provide most help for the Bible translator. Here a number of people with first-century names but twentieth-century minds talk about a number of words used in the Greek Testament, and their various meanings. They consider *logos* (word [1]) and *kosmos* (world); *sôma* (body), *psuchê* (soul) and *pneuma* (spirit); *huiothesia* (adoption); *prosôpon* (countenance), *hupostasis* (confidence)

[1] We give in each case only one basic meaning so that readers without Greek may gain a rough idea of the terms under discussion.