

cold. The Standard Dictionary gives as the fourth meaning of *help* "to change for the better; to give relief to; remove wholly or in part; remedy; ease; comfort; as, the treatment *helped* his cough". As an example of this usage, our verse is quoted, "Lord, I believe, *help* thou mine unbelief", Mark 9 : 24. In our 1929 edition we accepted this meaning and translated the sentence thus, "Cast out my unbelief". Here is a list of various renderings given to this sentence: Bible Society's editions, 1893, 1898: "Lord, I believe; help me concerning my unbelief"; 1908, 1920, 1924: "I believe; help concerning my unbelief"; 1927: "I believe; help on account of my unbelief"; 1929: "I believe; cast out my unbelief"; 1931: "I believe; help me to cast out my unbelief"; 1939, 1947: "I believe; help me to throw out my unbelief"; 1950: "I believe; cast out my unbelief"; Pandita Ramabai, 1924, 1939: "I believe; do Thou Thyself help concerning my unbelief"; Rao Bahadur Athavle, 1944 (third edition): "I have faith; if it is not as it should be, do you yourself provide the remedy". Finally I may mention Swete's note in his Commentary on Mark: "Help my unbelief", "help my faith when it is ready to fall", nearly equal to "help me the unbelieving".

Mossi Proverbs and Their Use in Translating and Illustrating Gospel Messages

John F. Hall

It is our observation that a tremendous amount of wisdom is preserved orally in the proverbs of the Mossi people in the Upper Volta region of French West Africa. They reveal keen knowledge of human nature and its reactions under varying situations. They give us an insight into the thinking of the people and help us better to orientate ourselves in order to be more effective in our approach with the gospel.

The appropriate use of proverbs may arouse reactions of hatred or laughter, shame or honor. We have found various oft-quoted proverbs far more effective in getting a point across than a long-worded lecture, e.g. on the question of inherent sin: better than a long theological argument is the proverb *nwamba zounri, biga zounri*, "A monkey has a tail and so does its offspring!"

The proper use of proverbs also seems to raise one in the esteem of the Mossi people. This heritage of the people's accumulated wisdom is especially valuable in making the older people more interested in the gospel message.

Sometimes the depth of proverbs is not fathomed by our Western minds because we lack the knowledge of tribal legends and history. It is therefore imperative to wait patiently the time when some sage is willing, as a result of long friendship, to divulge the well-guarded knowledge.

Proverbs as Sources of Words Helpful in Translating

Our missionaries experienced considerable difficulty in finding adequate equivalents for “justify, justification, be just”, etc. The proverb *pañga sen tou sore, bouem bouta mogen*, “When force comes down the path, justice goes off into the woods”, gave us the key to other idioms used in the administration of justice.

The use of words in Mossi proverbs reveals meanings beyond those understood in everyday conversation. Frequently the connotation of a form can only be understood as one learns about the legend which gives rise to its use. We may say simply “sour grapes” to each other, but a stranger to our culture would have to know the fable of the fox and the grapes (or construct some metaphorical context) in order to grasp the meaning. The phrase “dog in a manger” would similarly require the fable of the cow and the dog, or some type of explanation.

Just as in our fables and legends, animals, birds, and inanimate objects are personalized, so are they in Mossi proverbs, e.g. unimportant people may be spoken of as stones and important persons as beans. A woman’s mouth may be called a “quiver”, and it refers to her collection of sharp words.

The Syntax of Proverbs Often More Complicated than Usual Expressions

Sometimes the subject of a proverb is formally lacking, and the meaning is only understood from the context. There are also a number of other types of syntactic reductions (the omission of words expected in regular syntactic form) and patterns of parallelism and chiasmus. In translating the proverbs of the Bible one should bear such syntactic patterns in mind if one is to be fully effective and idiomatic. One characteristic continually opposed by some missionaries in translation is complete elision, but it occurs continually in the proverbial forms. In proverbs certain verb tenses have been discovered which had not been noted previously in regular narrative portions. However, in proverbs the people use some forms which are vulgarisms and cannot be employed in Bible translating.

With no written language, no books or mechanical means of preserving their tradition, it is remarkable how the acute observations and experiences of many generations are succinctly described in these proverbs, which give an insight into the thought-life of the energetic and the lazy, the royal and the common, the rich and the poor, the proud and the humble in war and peace, love and hatred, life and death.

Insight into the People’s Point of View

Many, many times the missionary’s message is discounted because he is unknowingly obnoxious to the people. Pointing with the finger instead of with the lips, speaking to commoners before greeting the chief, failing to belch noticeably after the meal—all these actions contribute to hinder the reception of the gospel message. Knowledge of a people’s proverbs

helps one to understand better their viewpoints and social standards. Thus one may avoid those phrases and mannerisms which hamper one's message. Adjusting oneself in so far as possible to everything indigenous is not contrary to Bible standards. Too often the missionary tries to compel the people to adopt his "civilized" ways, but our commission is not "Westernize" but "evangelize", i.e. to preach the Good News. And it certainly is not "good news" to any people if they are required to change their style of dress and manner of eating in order to be Christians!

Some Problems of Translation in Kikuyu

A. R. Barlow

Kikuyu (Gikūyū) is the language of the Kikuyu (Agikūyū) people of Kenya Colony, British East Africa. It is a member of the great Bantu division of African languages and is spoken by some 1,026,000 of Kenya's population. Missionary work among the Kikuyu is just over 50 years old and a considerable proportion of the tribe is now Christian. The complete New Testament in Kikuyu was first published in 1926. The Old Testament is now on its way out to Kenya. Both books have been published by the British and Foreign Bible Society in conjunction with the National Bible Society of Scotland. The following problems arise in the course of revising the New Testament, which task has recently been taken in hand.

The Unity of the Trinity and of Believers

- John 10 : 30 I and my Father are one.
.. 17 : 11 ... that they may be one even as we.
.. 17 : 21 ... that they may all be one;
.. 17 : 22 ... that they may be one, even as we are one;
.. 17 : 23 ... that they may be perfected into one.

"One" in Kikuyu is expressed by the stem *-mwe* combined with a prefix appropriate to the noun it qualifies (when used as an adjective) or represents (when used as a pronoun). As in all Bantu languages, nouns fall into groups or classes, each of which, generally speaking, has its distinctive prefix. Thus with the word for "shoe" (*kīratū*) *-mwe* becomes *kīmwe* (*kīratū kīmwe* "one shoe"); with the word for "man", "person", "being" (*mündū*) it becomes *ūmwe* (*mündū ūmwe* "one person"); with *ihinda* "a time" it becomes *rimwe*; and so on. Singular and plural are likewise distinguished by change of prefix, and a singular noun necessitates the use of a singular prefix with its associated adjective or pronoun, whereas a plural noun requires its adjective or pronoun to take a plural prefix.

In common with other adjective-pronouns *-mwe* assumes plural as well as singular forms. When used with a plural noun it conveys one of three meanings: (a) "one lot (set, kind, family, fraternity, group, etc.)", (b) "the same", or (c) "some". The form appropriate to persons, men, beings (*andū*) is *amwe*.