

# THE BIBLE TRANSLATOR

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EDITOR: Wilfred J. Bradnock

EDITORIAL ASSISTANT: Lesley Walmsley

EDITORIAL BOARD: Fidel P. Galang, Åge Holter, John J. Kijne, Eugene A. Nida

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## FROM THE EDITOR'S CHAIR

Once again the time has come for a change of editors, and it is the first pleasant duty of the new incumbent to pay tribute to his predecessor and colleagues, who for the last four years have succeeded so well in maintaining, and in some respects improving, the standards of our journal. Perhaps the members of the Editorial Board are those best qualified to know what is entailed in maintaining the standards of a technical journal of this kind. There are of course all the normal routine responsibilities of soliciting and assessing contributions, maintaining a right balance, guarding against the bizarre or eccentric (of which not a little comes our way), keeping busy writers and assessors to their deadlines, dealing with printers and proof-readers, and similar tasks. But above all there is the constant demand for alertness and a keen sensitiveness to all that is going on in various parts of the world of translation, and the ability not only to reflect it in the pages of our journal, but to interpret it correctly and to serve faithfully those who are wrestling with the manifold problems of tomorrow's Bibles. Our debt to Mr. J. J. Kijne and his assistant, Mr. D. H. Wallington, in all these matters, is a considerable one, and we offer them our sincere thanks for service admirably rendered.

For ourselves we look back to our earlier period of office and are glad to have another opportunity of serving the cause of translators. We undertake to do all we can to carry on with the good work. But we have no illusions. The task, always a demanding one, today has become immense. Harry M. Orlinsky, writing about the new Jewish version of the Torah in a recent number of the *Journal of Biblical Literature*, begins with the following words: 'The rage to translate (really to re-translate) the Bible is more widespread today than it has been since Protestantism burst upon the European scene in the 16th and 17th Centuries.' The rage to translate! Perhaps this may be regarded as a somewhat light-hearted way of drawing attention to a profoundly significant phenomenon. The fact is that this timeless Book is today being discovered by scores of peoples with all their infinite variety of language and culture; in as many more it is being rediscovered, as people conventionally familiar with the text of Scripture are being driven by the pressures of modern life to think again about the Christian revelation. In this connection

one of the most significant facts is the new understanding of the nature and purpose of Holy Scripture as reflected in the current attitude of the Roman Catholic Church to the whole question of Scripture translation. Here incalculable possibilities are opening up before us, and in this field all of us, church leaders, Bible Society officials, translators and revisers, all who are involved in Bible programmes of any kind, will be called in the immediate future to some exacting and powerful rethinking of the whole background to our task. Another factor with which we shall be confronted is the growing initiative of the 'national' as distinct from the 'foreign' translator or reviser. The move in this direction has long been apparent in India and the Far East (Japan, China and Korea). It is increasingly so in Africa, the Middle East and parts of South-East Asia. *The Bible Translator* must certainly move with the times in these matters and we shall try to adjust ourselves properly to whatever new demands may be made on us. This may be all the easier in that *The Bible Translator* is committed to no special theories of translation and to no special categories of translators. Our aim is essentially simple and the policies which derive from it are similarly direct and adaptable. That aim is to bring all the resources of world scholarship to bear on the prime task of 'communicating' the Bible to all men everywhere in their own tongue. We believe that the supreme instance of God's Will to 'communicate' with men is the Incarnation itself in all its utter simplicity, intelligibility and universality. We also believe that in a real sense the Holy Scriptures can be understood to be an extension of the Incarnation and that the same characteristics of simplicity, intelligibility and universality are divinely intended to accompany them into all the languages and cultures of mankind. The humbling thought is that this may not be achieved without devoted, inspired and determined human effort. And that is the cause in all its simple grandeur to which this modest journal will continue to be dedicated.

## CONTRIBUTORS

*Robert G. Bratcher* is a Research Associate in the Translations Department of the American Bible Society.

*Edward Dalglish* is Professor of Old Testament Interpretation at the Eastern Baptist Theological Seminary, Philadelphia.

*Harold W. Fehderau* is a missionary linguist in the Congo under the American Mennonite Brethren Mission in co-operation with the American Bible Society.

*G. E. Marrison* is linguistic adviser of the British and Foreign Bible Society serving with the Bible Society of India and Ceylon in Assam.

*Henry R. Moeller* is a former Associate Professor of Biblical Language at the Central Baptist Seminary, Kansas, now doing special Biblical research in New York.

*Elias Newman* is a founder of the Hebrew Christian Alliance in America, and has spent much time in Israel.

*Brynmor F. Price* is Old Testament Adviser in the Translation Department of the British and Foreign Bible Society.

*David H. Wallington* was formerly Assistant Editor of *The Bible Translator*, and is now preparing a Bible correspondence course in simplified English.

*S. J. de S. Weerasinghe* is Study Secretary for Asia of the United Bible Societies, and has been for many years a member of the Sinhalese Bible revision committee.

*John Wils* is Professor of General Linguistics at the Roman Catholic University of Nijmegen.

*W. A. A. Wilson* is Research Fellow at the Institute of African Studies, University of Ghana.