

astheneia has to do with lack or limitation of spiritual ability and understanding, not with any of the other meanings that the word can have in other places. If this is so, it seems that Phillips brings out the meaning best of the eight translations referred to above. His rendering of the whole of verse 26 is:

“The Spirit also helps us in our present limitations. For example, we do not know how to pray worthily, but his Spirit within us is actually praying for us in those agonising longings which cannot find words.”

An alternative to “our present limitations” might be “our limited spiritual understanding”.

RAYMOND R. RICKARDS

HOW WAS THAT?

In many large African cities (as in most major cities of the world) there are numerous young women who earn their livelihood engaged in what has been called “the world’s oldest profession”.

Because it is considered unnatural for women to be unattached in most African societies, special names are often given to women who wander around the city after dark looking for a male escort. In some French-speaking cities the name is *femme libre* (“free woman”).

When a Bible translator in one such city came to the passage about Sarah and Hagar in Galatians chapter 4, he put down what seemed to him to be the best equivalent for what he found in the *Français Courant* NT (common language French translation). However, when a literal back-translation of the translation draft was given, it showed that poor Abraham had two wives: one a slave and the other a prostitute!

* * *

A Translation Consultant recently conducted a translator’s workshop, at which he gave instruction on a variety of topics related to translation of the Bible. As one part of the program he gave a series of talks on the book of Amos, going into some detail about the reaction to Amos’ preaching.

At the end of the workshop all those who had attended were asked to answer a questionnaire, to find out what they thought of the workshop, and whether they had found it helpful. Most questions like “What did you find most helpful?” were answered well, but there was one question which was apparently not too clear. In answer to the question “What did you dislike most?” a number of the participants replied, “I didn’t like the way the Israelites treated Amos!”

(Readers are invited to send in short humorous notes about translation, to help keep “How Was That?” as a regular feature of Practical Papers for the Bible Translator. Notes should not mention the names of languages or translators, of course.)