

Swellengrebel, J. L.: **In Leijdeckers Vootspoor II. 1900–1970.** Haarlem: Nederlands Bijbelgenootschap 1978.

Part II of “In Leijdecker’s footsteps” covers the period from 1900 to 1970. This marks a new era of Bible translating. The line that separates missionaries and translators is now crossed. A good example is the close co-operation between Adriani and the missionary, A. C. Kruyt. Middelkoop was designated to work as a missionary pastor in Timor, but later developed into a full-fledged translator. Another new approach was the exchange of information between colleagues in the field, which was later on channelled through a theological committee set up by the NBS. From the sixties on, the UBS have taken over much of this kind of advisory function, enhancing the co-operation between translators of diverse regions. Policy-making by the NBS board was the result of thorough consultation with the men in the field.

Indonesians came on the stage, actively involved as informants or even as translators. J. Wismar Saragih, nicknamed “the Simalungun Luther” by the author, took the initiative in translating the Bible himself and in promoting translation activities. In 1944 he founded, with sponsors, the local Bible Society—Kongsi Bibel Simaloengoen. The primary aim was to translate the Bible into the local language. Simalungun, and also other languages if feasible. His ideals came into reality when the responsibility for translating the Bible was transferred to the Indonesian Bible Society. The author, who started the project in the national language, Bahasa Indonesia, in 1952, had earlier expressed his feeling that it would be a risky endeavour when non-natives carried out the job. A triumvirate, consisting of Abineno, Soedarmo, and Grijns, was appointed by the IBS board in 1962 to continue and finish the project. More Indonesians were directly engaged in the translation process, making up the committee sections for the OT and NT. “Any translation composed by a non-native should be just a model for the native to draw up a more suitable one”, said Adriani. He saw the Indonesian as the future main translator and the Dutchman only as a consultant.

While co-operation between field-workers was stimulated, it seemed hard to join them in a common task such as the unified Malay project proved to be. The first committee broke up through lack of co-operation. The second one, consisting of two natives (one from Malacca and the other from the Moluccas) and one expatriate, Bode, under the supervision of Kraemer, managed to finish the NT. However, the achievement did not win the approval of Shellabear, who considered his own translation as normative. The BFBS, though co-sponsor of the unified translation, backed up Shellabear’s views, resulting in separate translations in the peninsula and in the archipelago. Another attempt was made in the late sixties when Buxton of the BFBS explored the feasibility of a joint project (not reported by the author of this book). This, too, broke down for linguistic reasons.

Meanwhile, co-operation was offered by the Roman Catholics. At the 1968 Tjipajung Consultation they surprisingly withdrew their own project for a translation in the national language for liturgical purposes. It was the first-hand work of the Christian constituency, in making inter-confessional drafts, which were to replace the Klinkert OT and the Bode NT translations.

Another significant development was the interest in languages with a smaller

number of speakers, from ten thousand to a few hundred thousand. The medium to communicate the Good News was to be these hitherto unknown languages, not Malay alone. That was Adriani's line of thought, adopted by the NBS directors, and later by other translators. They integrated themselves with the customs and culture of the local population and so found the proper solution to the problem of communicating difficult passages. Their attitude towards the indigenous counterparts was uncommon at that time when colonial power was unquestioned. Van der Veen even fostered indigenous leadership. What Adriani and others were doing intuitively has now been given a theoretical grounding by Nida.

The author admits that in some parts the narrative resembles an autobiography. He was the leading figure in translation projects like the Balinese and Indonesian, though like Moses he saw the completion thereof only from afar.

Parts I and II together cover a span of 144 years: from Gericke (1826), the first person sent out for translation purposes by the NBS, to Grijns (1970), the last to participate in a national and ecumenical endeavour. Part II has also a survey and a map of languages in which at least a portion is translated.

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Van Bruggen, Jakob: **The Future of the Bible**. Nashville and New York: Thomas Nelson Inc. 1978, 192 pp. \$3.95.

In this book van Bruggen, professor of New Testament exegesis at the Reformed Theological College in Kampen, the Netherlands, issues a call to the churches to reclaim their God-given task of Bible translation—a task which they have unfortunately let fall to the Bible societies. He urges all of the churches in any one country to use the same translation. The churches moreover should ensure that this one translation is used in the church, at informal gatherings, in the schools, and in the families. The need for church unity and correct doctrine is so great, and therefore the need for one Bible, that he even argues for use of “the national language of the liturgy, even if this national language is still a second language for some members of the church” (145–146).

What kind of translation will provide this basis for unity and sound doctrine? It must be a “reliable” translation, and that means one which will “reflect faithfulness to the form, clarity, completeness, loyalty to the text, spirituality, authoritativeness, and ecclesiastical usage” (99). The RSV, TEV, NIV, NASB, LB—all modern translations fail to measure up in one or more of the above requirements. None, for example, shows a “loyalty to the text”. Instead all err by failing to follow consistently the original text, i.e. the Masoretic text in the Old Testament and the Majority text in the New Testament. Others such as the TEV are lacking in spirituality. A reliable, spiritual translation does not reject a theology of imputed righteousness, substitutionary atonement, and reconciliation through the sacrificial blood of Christ. In the English language, the King James Version is reliable and deserves to be made completely usable again in the twentieth century by updating the language. Otherwise, the future of the Bible is threatened as readers choose modern but unreliable translations over old-fashioned but accurate translations.