

Meurer, Siegfried (ed.): **Mittelpunkt Bibel. Ulrich Fick zum 60. Geburtstag.** ("Die Bibel in der Welt", vol. 20). Stuttgart: German Bible Society 1983. 336 pp., no price stated.

The German Bible Society's 1983 Year Book, dedicated to the UBS General Secretary, contains six articles directly concerned with translation, and at least four others of interest to readers of *The Bible Translator*.

In the section entitled "Translating the Bible", Hans Peter Rüger examines the ancient versions of, and Targums on, Ex 24.10–11, analysing how they handled the apparent conflict between the plain statement that Moses and others "saw God", and the deep conviction that no one could do so in this age. The problem is bigger than it seems, since it involves the right use of context in translation and interpretation (Ex 24.17 speaks of "seeing God's glory"), the personal yet exclusive nature of God's revelation, and even present-day dialogue between Christians and Jews, in the light of Jn 1.18.

Eduard Lohse presents Martin Luther as a Bible translator, a renewer of the German language, and a life-long student and creative interpreter of the Bible. Siegfried Herrmann criticizes the German common language translation of Gen 3.15, which in the first half of the verse uses a collective noun (= "posterity") to translate the reference to the serpent's "seed" or descendants, but follows this in the second half by a plural "you" which has no antecedent. The author notes that on this point, exegesis and church tradition are in conflict, but feels that translators should in this case leave a place for tradition, if only in a note.

Eugene A. Nida, under the title "Style in Bible Translation", pleads for fuller analysis by translators of rhetorical features both in the original texts and in the receptor languages. Jan de Waard cites a wealth of non-biblical examples in support of the thesis that plays on words are often not as untranslatable as Bible translators often assume. Hellmut Haug examines Bible translations into German dialects.

This translation section of the book is preceded by a survey by Kurt Aland of New Testament textual criticism from Westcott and Hort to the "'standard text'" of Nestle-Aland²⁶ and UBS³; and followed by chapters on "explaining the Bible", with special reference to study Bibles. Heber F. Peacock pleads for Bible Societies to accept the (admittedly never definitive) findings of modern biblical research, especially the historical-critical method, and overtly apply them in introductions and notes (as for example in the much maligned Reader's Digest Bible, to which Peacock does not refer). Only in this way, Peacock believes, can the distinctive voice of each author be clearly heard, and the straitjacket of later dogma be loosened.

Joachim Lange, under the title "'I believe in the Holy Spirit'", takes as his starting-point some of the problems encountered in writing the notes in the 1983 German common language Bible. He then moves to the creative role of the Holy Spirit, especially in developing saying attributed to Jesus, such as the explanation of the Parable of the Sower, which the author considers inauthentic in their present form. He concludes by courageously proposing a one-page note on inspiration.

Rudolf Kassühlke discusses the purpose of study Bibles, particularly the 1973 *Gute Nachricht erklärt*, the principles proposed for an ABS Good News Bible study edition, the BFBS/Lion Bible and its German counterpart, and plans for a study edition of *Die Bibel in heutigem Deutsch*, based on a precise definition of the target readership and its needs.

Space allows only passing mention, among a dozen other contributions, of John Dean's "All Things to all Churchmen? A case for the confessional Bible Society", the editor's contrasting "One Bible—one Church", and Savas Agourides' "Teaching Scripture by an Orthodox Today".

The German Bible Society is to be warmly congratulated on publishing a book designed to keep the Bible Society movement moving, and a worthy tribute to its beloved leader.

P.E.

BOOKS RECEIVED and SHORT NOTES

Gunnemark, Erik, in collaboration with Donald Kenrick: *What Language do they speak? A geolinguistic handbook covering languages, countries and peoples in the whole world*. iii+271 pp., 1983. Published by the authors, available from D. S. Kenrick at 61 Blenheim Crescent, London W11 2EG, price £6.00. "The primary aim of the book is to tell the readers what languages are spoken in all the countries of the world. Its secondary aim is to give more information (distribution, number of speakers, genetic classification, etc.) on some 300 languages which we have judged to be of special interest from the practical point of view." (From the Introduction).

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Die Bibel in heutigem Deutsch mit Erklärungen und Bildern. Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft [1983]. vi+912+414 pp. This is the German counterpart to the Special Edition of the Good News Bible published by the BFBS in conjunction with Lion Publishing. All the additional non-biblical material has been thoroughly revised.

The Bible Translator and the Word Processor

It is clear that word processors are coming rapidly into use in many parts of the world, and that they are particularly useful for any document which may need to be revised or edited.

One or two articles have already reached the editors of *The Bible Translator* which have been prepared in this way. This enables the editors to mark on the copy any changes which they may wish to suggest, and then send the print-out back to the author for revision. This saves time, and helps to keep the cost of *The Bible Translator* to a minimum.

We should therefore be grateful if contributors who have access to word processors would use them; let us know that they have used them; and keep their contributions on diskette or tape until editing is complete.

It goes without saying, however, that we are no less happy to receive articles prepared in more traditional ways.

The Editors