

HOW WAS THAT?

Many translators are called upon to do work other than their translation work. But that other work is not usually a condition of their employment.

Some time ago an advertisement appeared in a San Francisco paper inviting applications for a job as a Japanese/English translator on a fishing ship. According to the advertisement the work would involve 30 per cent translating and 70 per cent fish processing!

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These days we hear quite a bit about “shorter”, “abridged”, and “condensed” versions and translations of the text of the Bible. There are, in fact, quite a number of projects at the present time in which translation teams are working towards a “Shorter Old Testament”.

But how far can we go in “shortening” the text of the Bible? Just for fun, one translator has sent us the following “condensed” translation of one of the books of the Bible in English:

Moses was born, hidden in a basket in the Nile River, found by Pharaoh’s daughter, raised, and educated in Egypt. Then he killed a man, ran away to Midian, got married, and herded sheep for forty years.

Then God sent him back to Egypt to tell Pharaoh to let the people of Israel go. Moses told Pharaoh that if he didn’t let the Israelites go God would send a plague of blood, frogs, bugs, boils, hail, and darkness the next day. So the Israelites left.

When they got to the Red Creek everyone stepped over it.

The people complained about being hungry so God said he would send manna the next day, but Moses struck the rock instead of speaking to it and water came out. And God said that because Moses had struck the rock he couldn’t have any quail.

When the Israelites passed Mount Sinai God handed Moses a stone tablet with three commandments on it. The first one was “THOU”; the second one was “SHALT”; the third one was “NOT”.

Moses made a tent for offering sacrifices to God. The people brought their gold for making the decorations. When the craftsmen melted the gold a golden calf jumped out and the people worshipped it. But God got angry and wanted to destroy them, but Moses said not to; just make them drink the calf.

So they finished the tent and the priests’ clothes. The end.