

There is no clear evidence that in the original Greek New Testament when Paul writes Christ Jesus instead of Jesus Christ he means something different. It seems to be only a change of style. *A Translator's Handbook on Paul's Letters to the Thessalonians* says on page 123: " 'Jesus Christ' and 'Christ Jesus' are commonly used by Paul without any distinction of meaning; the translator should feel free to use the more natural order in the receptor language. 'Christ' here, as normally in Paul's writings, is a name, not the title 'Messiah'."

Jesus Christ and Christ Jesus are, of course, one person not two different people, and a translator should be careful not to confuse his readers.

PAUL C. BRUNS

### Notes on translating parables

At a recent translation seminar in Luwuk Banggai on the island of Sulawesi, a literary form that was discussed at some length was the parable. This short note comes out of discussions from that seminar.

A very important aspect of translating parables is how to mark a text as a parable. In most if not all languages there are ways of distinguishing between a real story (history) and a story that did not actually happen. This is usually indicated by the formula used at the beginning of the story. The English expression "there was a certain man" (which in English can be either the beginning of a historical or a non-historical account) can be translated into Indonesian in two ways: (1) marking it as the beginning of a historical account (*Ada seorang*) and (2) marking it as a non-historical account (*Adalah seorang*). In the Indonesian Common Language Bible (1985), the second formula is used in the parable of the Prodigal Son (Luke 15), in the parable of the rich man and Lazarus (Luke 16), and in many other places.

The first formula however is used in the parable of the Good Samaritan in Luke 10:25-37. Why is it used here when in fact this is a non-historical account? Simply because while it is a parable, yet Jesus told it as if it was a real historical account. This is shown, for example, by the ending of the parable where Jesus asked the religious teacher to give his opinion as to which man showed love to his neighbor.

This would mean that a case can be made for some parables in the Bible to be related as historical accounts. An excellent example of this is Nathan's story to David (2 Samuel 12.1-4) which, although a parable,

was understood by David as a real historical event, as shown by his emotional response to the story (verses 5-6). In such cases, the translator should be careful to mark these parables as historical events rather than as non-historical accounts. On the other hand, parables which are told as non-historical events should be marked as such, and not as historical events. For example, many translations have not marked Luke 16 as a parable, and this has led to many people regarding the passage as a real historical account.

If there are no formal markers in the language which distinguish between historical and non-historical events, then an explanation can be included in the translation to mark parables. For example, in Luke 16, the section could begin with the statement, "Then Jesus told another parable; he said," or some such similar formula.

DANIEL C. ARICHEA JR.

### **Mount Seir**

In an earlier edition of the TEV New Testament it was decided that the word "miracle" was not the appropriate level of language for the TEV, and should be changed to "mighty works" or some such expression. However, when the changes were made, it was forgotten that the word occurred not only in the Gospels and Acts, but also in Revelation. As a result, an edition appeared in which Jesus was "only" doing "mighty works" but the powers of evil in Revelation were performing "miracles". This of course provided good ammunition for those trying to prove that the translators of the TEV were trying to dishonor Christ in some way, but in fact it was simply a failure to make sure that a change was carefully applied to every relevant passage. So far as I can tell, the word "miracle" has been reinstated into all parts of the New Testament, and the problem no longer exists. But it still stands as a warning to us to be very careful in carrying out systematic changes in our translations.

Unfortunately, examples of similar problems can still be found in the Good News Bible (TEV), and no doubt in many other translations as well. In the Hebrew Old Testament "Mount Seir" is often used to refer to the country of Edom (see Gen 36.9 and Dt 2.4-5). Although occasionally the GNB translators have used "the mountains of Seir" in contexts where it will be clear to the reader that it refers to the land of Edom (Jg 5.4 and Ezek 35.15), they felt that it was usually clearer to translate "Seir" by "Edom", and this is probably a valid decision for a translation like the GNB.