Vuelas llenando los vientos:
En un piano que sufre
Nace la música. Silencio.

(Luis Enrique Juan Vidales, 1971)

Example 7

Te diría al oído la palabra 'todo'
si descubriese de repente que sirve para algo ...
...
... Te juro que ignoraba los casi cien acrósticos
todos bellísimos y ciertos
que podían hacerse con las letras de la palabra amor.

(Camilo José Cela, "Casi cien acrósticos")

NOTE

A note on 1 Corinthians 15.1-2

The beginning of Paul's treatment of the resurrection in 1 Corinthians 15 contains a clause that has caused translators much perplexity: *tini logō euēngelisamēn humin* ("the good news that I proclaimed to you"). The difficulty can be summed up in two questions: (1) What is the function of *tini* ("who/which")? and (2) How is this clause syntactically related to its context? Incorrect answers to one or both of these questions have consistently led to mistranslations of the verse.

The pronoun *tis, ti* normally introduces a direct or an indirect question, but most translators, despairing of the normal interrogative usage in 1 Cor 15.2, have rendered *tini* as a relative: "(by) which word I preached to you." Along with this decision, most translators also opt for a connection between the *tini* clause and the words that follow it: *ei katechete* ("if you hold fast"). Thus: "If you hold fast to the word (by) which I preached to you." A translation along these lines has been quite popular.

KJV By which also ye are saved, *if ye keep in memory what I preached* unto you, unless ye have believed in vain.

ASV By which also ye are saved, *if ye hold fast the word which I preached* unto you, except ye believed in vain.

NKJV By which also you are saved, *if you hold fast that word which I preached* to you—unless you believed in vain.

NAS By which also you are saved, *if you hold fast the word I preached* to you, unless you believed in vain.

NAB Through it you are also being saved, *if you hold fast to the word which I preached* to you. Unless you believed in vain.

NJB And you are saved by it, *if you keep to the message I preached* to you; otherwise your coming to believe was in vain.

NIV By this gospel you are saved, *if you hold firmly to the word I preached* to you. Otherwise, you have believed in vain.

NRSV through which also you are being saved, *if you hold firmly to the message that I proclaimed* to you—unless you have come to believe in vain.

TNIV By this gospel you are saved, *if you hold firmly to the word I preached* to you. Otherwise, you have believed in vain.

Among major translations only the RSV and the TEV offer significant alternatives to the trend seen above. Their treatment of vv. 1-2 must be seen in full to appreciate how the translators have rearranged the Greek.

RSV Now I would remind you, brethren, in what terms I preached to you the gospel, which you received, in which you stand, by which you are saved, if you hold it fast— unless you believed in vain.

TEV And now I want to remind you, brothers, of the Good News which I preached to you, which you received, and on which your faith stands firm. That is the gospel, the message that I preached to you. You are saved by the gospel if you hold firmly to it—unless it was for nothing that you believed.

The RSV seems to combine the *tini* clause with 1a. If this is not the case, then the *tini* clause has been omitted entirely. The TEV reverses the order of the first two clauses in v. 2 and paraphrases the *tini* clause to such an extent that it is unclear how the translators construed the grammar. What is quite clear is that the grammar of these verses is confusing, even to capable translators. But their ingenuity aside, the above translations make choices that are grammatically and rhetorically unlikely, and ultimately unnecessary.

It is grammatically unlikely that the interrogative is functioning as a relative. Such a substitution is rare. (See Bauer, et al., *Greek-English Lexicon of the NT and Other Early Christian Literature*, 1007, and note that 1 Cor 15.2 is listed as a normal interrogative usage.) Acts 13.25 has been cited as an example, but the relevant clause can easily be punctuated as a direct question: "What (*ti*) do you suppose that I am?" The same is true for Jas 3.13—"Who (*tis*) is wise and understanding among you?" On the other hand, Jesus' prayer in Gethsemane seems to offer a clear example: "Not what (*ti*) I want, but what (*ti*) you want" (Mark 14.36). Other likely examples include Mark 4.24—"Pay heed to that which (*ti*) you hear"; Mark 6.36—"So they may buy for themselves something (*ti*) they may eat"; and Luke 17.8—"Prepare that which (*ti*) I will eat." But no clear example comes from a Pauline writing, and the alleged example of 1 Cor 15.2 would be unusual since *tini* there is adjectival, while the undisputed examples are all pronominal. It may also be worth noting that the undisputed examples involve the accusative-singular-neuter (*ti*), a rather limited, stereotyped usage. On the other hand *tini* is dative and masculine.

A greater grammatical difficulty for the usual translation is the near impossibility of the *tini* clause being the object of the verb *katechete* ("hold"). This verb consistently takes an accusative direct object in the NT. Translators may be led astray by English idiom in which one can "hold a thing" or "hold to a thing." The latter suggests an intransitive usage with a dative object, but such a construction does not occur with *katechō* ("I hold"). The only instance in which *katechō* is intransitive is the technical, nautical usage "to hold course." But even this usage does not employ the simple dative, but rather the preposition *eis*, normally followed by a geographical term. (See Acts 27.40; Bauer, 533, 7).

The grammarian A. T. Robertson pointed out that four instances of the relative pronoun precede *tini* in 1 Cor 15.1-2—"which I preached to you, which you also received, in which also you stand, by which also you are being saved." Robertson wondered if *tini* in v. 2 might be an example of the interrogative for the relative (*A Grammar of the Greek New Testament in the Light of Historical Research* [Nashville: Broadman, 1934], 738). But to construe *tini* as a relative, under the influence of the preceding clauses, is not only grammatically unlikely, but also rhetorically improbable because the *tini* clause is not parallel to the three clauses immediately preceding it. Those clauses clearly have *euangelion* ("gospel") as their antecedent, whereas the *tini logō* (*logos* "word") clause, if it could be thought of as quasi-relative, contains its own antecedent, and that antecedent surprisingly has changed to *logos* ("word"). Moreover, the three previous relative clauses all have 2nd person verb forms, referring to the Corinthians. The *tini* clause has Paul as its subject and it repeats a verb (*euēngelisamēn* "we preached") and dative pronoun (*humin* "to you") from v. 1. All of this suggests not a clumsy substitution, but a deliberate change to the interrogative *tini* and a closer relationship with the very first relative clause ("which I preached to you") than with the three immediately preceding clauses.

Finally, the common remedy is entirely unnecessary because the *tini* clause is most naturally construed as an indirect question and object clause of *gnōridzō* ("I remind") in v. 1. Thus *tini logō euēngelisamēn humin* ("the word we preached to you") is parallel to *to euangelion ho euēngelisamēn humin* ("the gospel we preached to you") in v. 1, and the three relative clauses in vv. 1b, 1c, and 2a are parenthetical.

The *tini* clause resumes and clarifies the apostle's initial statement after the parenthesis of the three relative clauses. This feature of resuming an initial statement is evident from the repetition of the exact same verb form and the dative pronoun: *euēngelisamēn humin* ("we preached"). The clarification is seen in the substitution of *tini logō* (*logos* "word") for *to euangelion* ("gospel"). Paul is reminding them of his preaching (v. 1), or more precisely, of the particular character and content of the message that he preached to them (v. 2). Vv. 3-8 then give the content of Paul's gospel, a message that is essentially the same as the gospel embraced by the Corinthians and proclaimed by the other apostles.

I know of no compelling argument against this interpretation. Anthony Thiselton thinks that the distance between *tini* and the verb *gnōridzō* ("remind") makes a connection between them unlikely. Moreover, he sees "the addition of other themes" in the intervening words. (*The First Epistle to the Corinthians: A*

Commentary on the Greek Text [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000], 1185). But the distance between the *tini* clause and *gnōridzō* is not that great when one correctly perceives the parallelism and sees the intervening relative clauses as a parenthesis. Furthermore, "the addition of other themes" is not an apt description of those clauses. They are critical to Paul's point that he and the Corinthians share certain basic assumptions. Not only did Paul preach this message, but they, the Corinthians, embraced it, are committed to it, and continue to reap its saving benefits. The *tini* clause is the perfect transition from the general statement of v. 1a to the particular contents of Paul's preaching in vv. 3ff.

The following schematic translation shows the relationships of the clauses:

Now I would *remind* you, brothers [and sisters],
1. of the **gospel** that I preached to you (first object of *gnōridzō*)
(which also you received,
in which also you stand,
through which also you are being saved)

[that is, I would remind you]
2. with what sort of **message** I preached to you (second object of *gnōridzō*)
if you are holding firm [to that message],
unless you believed in vain.

(Although translators have repeatedly mishandled this text, a few commentators correctly discern the structure. The analysis here corroborates the work of C. K. Barrett, *A Commentary on the First Epistle to the Corinthians* [New York: Harper & Row, 1968], 336, and Gordon Fee, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians* [Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1987], 719-721.)

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Review

Gowan, Donald E. (ed.) *The Westminster Theological Wordbook of the Bible*. Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster John Knox, 2003. Pp. xii, 551.

Things have come a long way since James Barr's first book, *The Semantics of Biblical Language* (1961). He criticized Kittel's *Theological Dictionary of the NT*, the use of etymology to determine a word's meaning, and the "totality" principle in which the entire range of a word's possible meanings was assumed to be present in each individual case. As a result of his work, subsequent theological dictionaries have generally tried to ensure that theological concepts are understood in terms of their wider context, in sentences or in combinations of words.

The recent appearance of *The Westminster Theological Wordbook of the Bible*, edited by Donald Gowan, represents a work that pays close attention to the wide context in which key theological and ethical terms in the Bible are used. The