

7.3, 7). When the buildings of Nineveh were destroyed, it was natural that people would take away the expensive cedar timbers to use again elsewhere. This interpretation therefore seems to fit the context well, and many translators may wish to follow it.

DAVID CLARK

“We” and “I” in 2 Corinthians: a question

In preparing a Bible study on a few verses from this letter, I had to ask myself: When Paul says “we”, who does he mean? Himself alone? Himself and other evangelists? The evangelists and the readers together? Or Christians generally?

Of course, Paul may mean different things in different places, and he may glide from one meaning to another.

The situation may be complicated by the possibility that 2 Corinthians may not have been written as a single letter, but may be made up of parts of several letters from Paul to the Christians at Corinth. However, this possibility does not seem to result in sudden changes between one meaning of “we” and another.

As I read the whole of 2 Corinthians through, first in GNB and then in Greek, two things seemed to become generally clear:

1. That where Paul says “we”, he usually associates other people with himself. Where he means “I”, he says so plainly (see 1.23, 7.3, and especially chapters 10-12).

2. That this letter, perhaps more than any other, is Paul’s defence of himself and other evangelists against attacks by rivals, or by members of the church at Corinth. So “we” normally means “I, Paul, and my fellow evangelists”, except where he clearly indicates a different meaning: as in 1.21 “us (evangelists), together with you, sure of our life (the life of us all) in union with Christ”; 3.18 “all of us”; and probably 5.1 “we (all) know”.

These two ideas need to be tested. In doing this, I should be grateful for the help of readers of *The Bible Translator*, especially those who work in languages which express the two kinds of “we” (sometimes called “exclusive” and “inclusive”) in different ways. It would be useful to have your answers to two questions:

1. In translations you use, or draft translations you are making, is Paul’s “we” ever translated by “I”? (You can tell by comparing your translations with GNB or RSV, which follow the Greek in this respect).

2. In your translations of 2 Corinthians, where are you using “we” forms which include the readers?

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(Readers who may wish to respond to these final two questions should write by airmail to Dr Ellingworth at:

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