

can be rendered as follows: "What inspires the prophets is that they can witness (even unto death) to Jesus." It is possible that confessional presuppositions may have played a part in the development, in the west, of a purely evangelistic interpretation of *martyria*, whereas in Eastern Orthodox Christianity, the idea of martyrdom was from the beginning part of the meaning of the term.

The problem of *martyria* is linked to the Christian understanding of mission and evangelism. As such, it has been thoroughly examined in the last two decades by the World Council of Churches, with great success. It also, however, has some bearing on the practice of Bible translation, and gives additional justification for the UBS preference, wherever possible, for interconfessional translations. I believe that Orthodox participation in this process will increase the chances for better and more objective scientific results in our common task of faithfully translating the written Word of God.

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## FURTHER CONSIDERATIONS FOR THE PRESENTATION OF NEW MATERIAL

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As one who has grappled with the presentation of new information as a translator and a consultant, I read the article by L. Lode and the response by P. C. Stine in the January issue of **The Bible Translator** with real interest. Discourse analysis is a relative newcomer to the field of linguistics. For years linguistic analysis terminated with the study of the sentence level, but now it is clear that it is necessary to understand the discourse level characteristics of the receptor language in order to produce clear, accurate translations. However, discourse analysis, more than the other fields of linguistics, leads us to drastic modifications of the original structure.

Every serious translator should understand the natural discourse patterns of the receptor language: how participants are introduced, how new information is presented, how a natural discourse is formed, etc. These patterns must be understood and used in the translation as much as possible. The problem is, knowing the natural patterns, how far should we go in reproducing them in the translation of Scripture? Some South American languages use extreme repetition in even the simplest narratives. Should we follow that pattern? In the Chimane language of Bolivia, the action is regularly summarized before it is given in detail. Should we add a verse or a summary in brackets throughout the Scriptures to follow this pattern?

There are two points I would like to bring out. First, as stated by Dr. Stine, it is impossible to communicate, to most of the people for whom we translate, all or even a high percentage of the background information implicit in the gospels. It is suggested in the article that background information regarding Mark 1.40-45 be placed in brackets: [ . . . ordinary people did not offer sacrifices to the God of

heaven. God told his prophet Moses to choose a family, whose members were made priests . . . ]. However, in most of the groups for whom we are translating in South America, the basic concepts of sacrifice, prophet, priest, and even the God in heaven are totally unknown.

Second, adding enough information to communicate even the most basic background for these people will produce a document very different from the original. Apart from other considerations, here in South America, all of the groups, even the most isolated, are heading towards the use of the trade or national language. Our experience has shown that they will tend to judge the accuracy of the Scriptures in their own language by how closely they correspond to the national language translation. A drastic difference will cause them problems. This greatly complicates our job, but it is a reality and must be faced here.

Lars Lode makes a significant statement regarding the translation of Mark 2.1–12. He states that the implied information “that God disapproves of sin and punishes people for doing wrong to others” is unknown to the peoples with whom he has been working (TBTT 35, January 1984, page 105). This is certainly true. It is the most basic truth of the Scriptures, but it requires a total reorientation of the receptor’s worldview and is not likely to be fully grasped by a statement made between verses in the Gospel account.

There is an alternative, however. The Gospels were never meant to be the introduction to God’s eternal message. They were meant to be built upon the Old Testament truths. One group, given a printed Gospel, concentrated fully upon his healing ministry instead of seeing that his healing ministry was basically to demonstrate his credentials as the awaited Messiah. They had never heard of the Messiah.

Many New Tribes Mission translators are now first translating all or portions of Genesis, portions of Exodus and other key Old Testament portions before beginning the Gospels. We use teaching outlines developed by Trevor McIlwain (a New Tribes Mission missionary working in the Philippines). These Old Testament outlines are designed to take the people through the accounts that teach concerning God, sin, punishment, sacrifices, priests, and the Messiah who will be the perfect sacrifice. With this background, the gospels make sense. Much of the implicit information is known and understood—just as God has planned.

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#### ERRATUM

In processing Mr Murray Gow’s article “Literary Structure in Ruth” (July 1984), a number of mistakes, mainly in the numbering and placing of footnotes, were unfortunately introduced on pages 213ff. A complete list of these is available on request from the Editor.