

encouraged. It is part of John's consummate genius to write cryptically at every turn, yet create a literary masterpiece of surpassing splendour. It would certainly run foul of his obvious intent were every question resolved in translation. In any case consistency would be quite impossible. How, for example, does a translator explain the riddle of 666 in 13.18, or preliminary allusions like *ho òn kai ho èn kai ho erchomenos*, 1.4? I am not suggesting that Revelation remain hidden from all but the wise. It is *apokalypsis*. But the task of unravelling John's conscious enigmas is not the translator's. Such details find their proper place in footnotes and introductory material. In 19.10 all that the translator need decide is whether the genitive is subjective or objective. With the evidence in mind he may then state it simply, the testimony of Jesus is the Spirit of prophecy.

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EQUIVALENT DYNAMICS: FOR WHOM DO I TRANSLATE?

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The term "dynamic equivalence" has caused me much consternation from the time that I first learned of it. Somehow, I have always had the feeling that I believe more in the virtues of a dynamically equivalent translation than did those who were developing and promoting the theory. The term was introduced to me as a contrast to a phrase which defines a contrary approach, i.e., formal correspondence. The frequent juxtaposition of these expressions created for me a false impression. I thought for quite sometime that the two approaches differed only in whether it was the *form* or the *dynamics* of the source text which were being emulated in the translation.

Formal correspondence recognizes that each source text has a particular form and that the goal is for the target language text to duplicate that form as closely as possible. I, therefore, inferred by analogy that each source text has a particular dynamic and the goal of a dynamically equivalent translation was to instill just that dynamic into the target text. If the one sought to translate using corresponding forms, the other sought to employ equivalent dynamics.

I began to realize my error upon hearing and reading criticisms of translations that were "not sufficiently dynamic". These evaluations were not expounded in reference to any particular dynamic of the source text. Instead they assumed some ideal concept of dynamic that is equally applicable to all texts. I saw that dynamic equivalence really meant "dynamic and equivalent", i.e., dynamic in reference to the target language, and SEMANTICALLY equivalent in reference to the original meaning of the source text. Evidently, I was not the only one confused by the term "dynamic equivalence", for many

writers have stopped using that phrase altogether. Nida and Waard now employ the expression "functional equivalence" in *From One Language To Another*.¹

Nevertheless, I am not content. While I applaud the new term as a clear expression of the theory's intent, I still have an "unscratched itch". The search for some characteristic dynamic in a text may have been based on a misunderstanding, but the discovery appears to be quite valid and significant, "Dynamic" can refer to more than how natural a text sounds to its target audience. It can signify various linguistic qualities, often associated with style,² which characterize the author, his intended audience, their relationship to one another and even perhaps their attitude towards a third entity. Taken in this light, there are certainly differing dynamics within the various source texts, each of which is equally natural to the original audience and which needs to be respected in the translation. In this sense, therefore, the concept of equivalent dynamics becomes a valid concern to Bible translators.

To be sure, speaking of dynamics in this way opens up a can of worms. We must find ways of describing just what these dynamics are and how they differ. What are the parameters by which each type of dynamic can be identified and by which a translation can be judged for its faithfulness to the original? I believe that to answer many of these questions, we must turn to the field of sociolinguistics.

Hartmut Wiens writes of "heterogeneity in linguistic competence" (*Notes on Linguistics*, No. 3, July 1986). Citing a number of sociolinguistic authorities, he contends that unilingual audiences have a nativelike command of many different levels of linguistic structures. These levels are loaded with sociological implications and are used accordingly. The different forms can convey identical denotations while changing drastically the connotations. The variable factors include region, status, style, age, sex, and ethnicity.

An equivalent dynamics approach should be sensitive this sociolinguistic phenomenon. The dynamic of a text indicates that a choice is always made from among many possible levels of equally intelligible linguistic structures. The sociological implications of a translation must reflect those of the source, and the linguistic structures of the target language must be selected accordingly. The variable factors noted by Wiens may prove valuable in better defining this notion of dynamics and in setting its parameters.

Like the moans of a patient in pain, this article is merely a cry for help. I sense a real need, and I appeal to the doctors with greater knowledge and experience to search for a cure. Nevertheless, to demonstrate that my appeals do not arise from an imaginary illness, let me suggest one possible direction of inquiry, i.e., an issue that may benefit from a concern for equivalent dynamics. I raise the question. "For whom do I translate?"

¹ I wish to thank the editor for calling this to my attention and for his other helpful comments.

² It may prove to be helpful to think of style in reference to surface characteristics and to think of dynamic as the deep structure impact of an author's style. Equivalent dynamics then makes no attempt to duplicate the surface forms but it does desire to respect the author's choice of these forms by seeking to replicate the intended dynamic. The goal is that of functional equivalence, a goal which can best be attained when more attention is given to the issues raised by the notion of equivalent dynamics.

J. A. Loewen's article, "Who Am I Translating For?" (*Practical Papers*, Vol. 37, No. 2, April 1986) gives a succinct expression of the "orthodox" answer to this question. He rightly states:

A long period of involvement in Bible translating has convinced me that this question is one of the most fundamental, if not THE most fundamental question every translator must ask himself. Furthermore, I feel that all translators must ask this question not once, but repeatedly, if not every day. (p. 201)

In challenging us to "re-ask" the question. Loewen does not imply that he expects the answer to change from text to text. Rather, each time the issue is raised, the translator should once more envision the single target audience to whom a meaningful translation is to be directed. Stated concisely, it is for Loewen a non-churched woman of child-bearing age and average education. This audience is targeted because "most translators will agree that the translation they are making is to be an evangelistic tool for reaching people outside of the church."

Loewen's position is right as far as it goes, but needs expansion to convey the full truth. Most translators will agree that the translation they are making is to be an evangelistic tool for reaching people outside the church, AND A NURTURING TOOL FOR BUILDING UP BELIEVERS WITHIN THE CHURCH. (Cf. W. L. Wonderly's article "The Bible in the Church" in the same issue of *Practical Papers*.) The Bible is not a single book speaking to only one need and audience. It is a library that contains just the right message—from an appropriate spokesman to a representative audience—for every stage of spiritual growth.

Therefore, an equivalent dynamic translation, by making reference to the dynamic of each source text, will reflect its distinguishing elements on the assumption that the range of human spiritual needs have not changed over the centuries. The need addressed by each text is the need to which the translation will speak, and this will define the target audience today as it did originally.

Those texts which were written for evangelistic purposes (e.g. the Gospels) must remain faithful to the authors' intent. For these. Loewen has correctly identified the audience which must be kept in mind to produce the appropriate dynamic. On the other hand. Paul's letters to the churches were not evangelistic messages to first-time hearers, and they must reflect a different dynamic appropriate to their audience and purpose.

In II Cor 10–11 and Gal 1–2, for instance. Paul is claiming the authority, as an apostle of God to the Gentiles, to expound all that is necessary for salvation. Could he convincingly defend this claim by writing as if both he and his readers were unfamiliar with the key terminology of the Jewish tradition and of the Church's faith? It may well be that many non-Christians today will not understand terms used by the local church, e.g., apostle. Indeed, it is presumptuous to assume that all non-believing Greeks and Jews of Paul's day understood the word as he used it in his teaching. But surely, his letters could not avoid its appropriate use without raising questions of authenticity. Likewise, to avoid the church's terminology in our translation of these letters may create a psychologi-

cal barrier that only undermines the clearer cognitive meaning of the words we substitute.

And what of the Pastoral Epistles? These purport to be letters of instruction and encouragement from a seasoned Christian apostle to one of his young proteges. Does it seem reasonable that he would speak in circumlocutions as if either he or his correspondent were a woman unfamiliar with the vocabulary of the churches that they served? No. The dynamic required to address Loewen's audience is simply not appropriate here. If the church is to understand the these writing as the authoritative voice of experience that they are intended to be, I contend that at least the choice of vocabulary should reflect this quality as one expression of the text's dynamic. Perhaps sentence length and other grammatical structures should also be chosen accordingly, i.e., should we have Paul writing only simple sentences of ten words or less?

I can imagine the objections that will be raised due to the possible misuses of such an approach to translation. Will not someone use this rationale as an excuse to return to the horrors of formal correspondence? Will not someone propose that for a passage to speak to the church with authority it must use archaic or a foreign terminology that only the educated elite can decipher?

Certainly not! Equivalent dynamics must be defined and expounded in such a way as to avoid such abuses as faithfully as has the old dynamic equivalence approach. Paul's letters were not filled with obscure and archaic terminology, and therefore, an equivalent dynamic translation must avoid such elements as doggedly as it does inappropriate circumlocutions.

I have sought to explain how a misunderstanding of the term "dynamic equivalence" has led me to a concern for a notion of "equivalent dynamics". Conceding that I do not yet grasp the full implications of my concern, this is an appeal to wiser minds for help. Nevertheless, in order to demonstrate that the notion is worth pursuing. I first noted a recent concern of sociolinguistics and I then sought to demonstrate the effects of an equivalent dynamics approach by applying it to the question, "For whom do I translate?".

A translator may at times have to make a choice between a form that conveys the message, "This is being written to someone unfamiliar with my message" and a form that connotes, "This is an apostolic message to the Church." Should a new Christian or a non-Christian stumble over some of the terms in Paul's instructions regarding the qualifications of Church leaders, it would be regrettable. But should the Church itself fail to grasp accurately both the denotations and the connotations of such instruction, it would be disastrous! For this reason, I make an appeal for more attention to be given to the production of equivalent dynamic translations.