Here the repetition of the verb "come" provides flow of discourse, with same object.

When selecting this verse as an example, I noted that I had the morphemically correct second verb of the final sentence *i-katigan-es* ("he-interrogated-them"), which could also mean, "they interrogated him"; so I omitted the plural marker and tested it with informants. With the word given in the isolated context of one man speaking to several, they said that it should have the plural marker; but in the context of the full discourse, they preferred to omit it. Thus a rule of word affixation is broken because of grammatical requirements at a higher level. Perhaps we can find this sort of thing in many languages—attraction of the case of Greek nouns to something which is semantically clear but grammatically incorrect at the word-level of analysis. In English also we have lucid utterances such as "It is me" which are forbidden by our grammatical purists.

This brief study has helped me to handle the Muyuw language more precisely for the purpose of Bible translation, and it is presented in the hope that it may be of some use to other translators, especially those who work with Melanesian languages.

RUDOLF KASSÜHLKE

PROBLEMS OF BIBLE TRANSLATING IN EUROPE TODAY

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In this article the Reverend Rudolf Kassühlke takes a close look at some of the prevailing attitudes toward translation as may be seen among some European scholars. He argues that the purposes and aims of the translator will determine in a large way the kind of translation he will produce. This article, originally intended for a German audience, appeared under the title "Die Bibel in der Welt" in the Yearbook of the German Bible Societies, 1970, *and has been translated into English for readers of* The Bible Translator. *(Editor)*

Anyone who has carefully followed the figures issued by the Bible Societies will certainly have noticed the steep increase in the number of languages in which there are now portions of the Bible. The figure was about 850 in 1930, and more than 1,400 at the end of 1969. At present scholars are translating books of the Bible into about 800 languages.

If anyone thinks that this refers only to languages of the so-called "Third World", he is making a very great mistake. An enquiry into the position of Bible translating in Europe has shown that 139 new translations or revisions of the Bible or part of the Bible have been begun or published in 36 European

languages since 1960. The figure of 139 cannot be said to be complete as it includes only projects which have been made public.

The contrast with the position in the Third World is striking. While there most languages have only one translation which may not even include the whole New Testament, in most European languages there are a number of translations. In English and German one might say there are too many, because no one can be absolutely familiar with them all.

Another difference is the people's reaction to a new publication. When a first translation is published in Africa, Asia or Latin America, the people are overjoyed to have God's Word in their own language at last. In Europe reactions to a new translation or revision range from enthusiastic acceptance to downright condemnation.

Behind these well-known facts are wide-ranging questions which the present article will consider.

"Cultured Languages" and "Primitive Languages"

These two concepts are put in inverted commas because they reflect widely held opinions which are questionable, to say the least. Unfortunately, one is constantly meeting this extremely short-sighted distinction which is maintained against all that scholars can say. As a result of their steadily increasing technical development, the peoples of Europe have the idea that culture is measured only by material progress. But is it true to say "the more machines, the higher one's culture"? Even as we ask this question, we know that it is wrong. But, without our realizing it, this mistaken view still colours our thinking. The general opinion is that it is a sign of primitiveness if a language has no word for certain things or concepts. So people imagine that "primitive languages" have a poor vocabulary; and that that is why it is so difficult to translate the Bible into them. Or, that if some grammatical forms are missing, then the language must be inferior. In fact, people making a detailed study of "primitive languages" are constantly surprised at the almost inexhaustible wealth of forms and ways of expressing oneself. These languages are by no means poor, and they are just as flexible as any European language.

Luther had never heard of cars, refrigerators or vacuum cleaners. Does that mean his language was primitive? A four-year-old child living in a city can easily distinguish a dozen makes of cars, and learns more of our technical society as he grows older. But for many city children words like "cow" and "sheep" have no real meaning: how much less have "corn" and "sickle" and so on which appear so often in the Bible. There are practically no illiterates in our country now. Everyone can read. But, in contrast to former times and other continents, few take the trouble to read attentively; they prefer the much easier way of letting themselves be informed by pictures and sounds. If people do not exercise and extend their reading ability, they will go back to the level of a twelve-year-old. One may deplore the limited vocabulary of *Bild*, but the fact remains that this newspaper has the highest circulation in West Germany, and is the only one seen by many. A new "primitive language" is growing up in a "cultured language" area, far poorer than the so-called "primitive languages".

This brings us to a particular problem for Bible translating in Europe. Let us try to illustrate it by putting two extreme points of view.

> The first is: the German language comprises everything written or spoken by Germans everywhere, at any time, and in every area of life. The second is: only what is understood by all Germans today can count as German.

If the first statement is right, then the Bible translator can draw from an inexhaustible reservoir. Statisticians estimate that there are about 600,000 German words. (English is thought to have more than a million words.) No dictionary, however comprehensive, reaches anything like this amount. But if the second statement is right, then one should choose *Bild* or some similar publication as one's model. That two such different statements can be made should warn us against making sweeping judgments.

Literary Tradition

Behind the first statement lies the awareness of a centuries-old literary tradition among the European languages. This tradition cannot be set aside. It is mainly responsible for the development of what we now call the national languages of Europe. In many cases it was the translation of the Bible which was the deciding factor: what Luther's work meant for the uniting of the various German dialects is well known. A glance at any dictionary of quotations shows how many expressions from Luther's Bible have passed into everyday German speech. Of the Bible translations in Europe which still have an influence, nineteen were completed before the end of the 17th century. The others were made during the next two hundred years. Anyone embarking on a translation of the whole Bible or of any part of it in Europe today must realize that his work will be measured by the standard of his illustrious predecessors.

Language teaching in schools cares for our literary heritage and keeps it alive in people's minds. It would be irresponsible for schools to neglect this important task. Our generation with its belief in progress needs to be reminded that people of long ago thought and felt as human beings and expressed opinions in which we can recognize ourselves. Our culture does not float unattached in the air of the present, but stands firmly on the basis of earlier centuries, And as our language is a part of this culture, it too rests on the past.

But the fixing of language in written form does not merely preserve and regulate it. Literature develops its own forms which go beyond the forms of the spoken language. Sentences are usually more complicated, with subordinate rather than coordinate clauses. Information is given in a much more condensed way than in speech with its looser forms. Another thing which must not be overlooked is that there are no exact written equivalents for intonations in speaking. Many texts are misunderstood because they are read with the wrong intonation and emphasis. Reading well is an art which needs teaching and practice. But that is too much to expect of most readers.

For greater clarity, the written language must try to make the intonation plain by an unequivocal choice and order of words.

This brings us to a further problem for Bible translation in Europe. The translator cannot disregard the tradition of translation and the literature of his own language. But the translation is intended for readers who have forgotten most of what they learned at school, and who are not prepared to take a lot of trouble to understand.

Misconception of the Nature of "Language"

Before we turn to the second statement we have to consider another misconception. Everyone knows that languages have a history of their own. Everyone knows too that languages develop and change—this is caused by a variety of influences both from within and without. One has only to think of the changes in the meaning of words which are revealed by all language study. From the linguistic point of view, it is interesting to follow the changes of meaning in many of our words, but that must not lead us to the wrong assumption that the present meaning of a word is identical with its past history. In Luther's time the word *selig* meant "well-intentioned, good, happy, blessed, beneficial". It was a natural choice to translate the Greek word *makarios*. Today it is used only in connection with the dead, people in love, and drunks. Any attempt to give it back its original meaning is bound to fail because language goes on and not back.

Inevitably language students will hear all sorts of overtones which are missed by ordinary people. Expressions which have long since disappeared from current speech are still alive to lovers of literature. But every attempt to give new life to words which have disappeared is sure to fail, and is like trying to revive a mummy. Studying the history of a word can provide good material for illustrations, but is useless for communication.

The statement that the German language includes everything spoken and written by Germans is true only with this reservation: for the vast majority of Germans, much of the traditional wealth of our vocabulary has disappeared and is therefore not understood or at best is misunderstood. For this reason it cannot be used for effective communication. And what is said of German goes also for all other languages.

Languages Within a Language

Under this title we will consider the second statement, namely, that only what is understood by all Germans today can count as German. Influenced as we are by literary tradition, all our feelings rise up against this limitation which automatically shuts out all dialects as un-German.

In this instance "dialects" does not mean only geographical dialects; in every language, even when it has become fixed, there is a whole series of specialized languages with a life of their own. First of all we must distinguish three main levels of language. At the lowest level is vulgar language which is more or less mastered by everyone but cannot be used in all circumstances. At the highest level is specialized professional language which is understood only if certain conditions have been fulfilled. In between is the central area

of common language in which about 90 per cent of spoken communication takes place.

In both vulgar and professional language there are clear subdivisions caused by professional and social groupings. Vulgar language and its specialized forms, such as thieves' cant and young people's slang, are unsuitable for general use and so have no place in a Bible translation. The same is true for many forms of the intimate speech used between lovers and close friends. Some years ago a Swedish clergyman's attempt to translate the New Testament into the sort of language used by his young people was received enthusiastically by his colleagues. But those for whom it was intended rejected it with the words: "That's the way we speak. But we don't expect the Bible to speak like us."

The area of professional language is all the more important because it poses difficult questions for Bible translators. Wherever people with like interests come together, specialized turns of speech inevitably develop which are mastered only by initiates. Only people of the same profession or social group can join in. Some words and expressions even become a sign of belonging and enable people to identify each other. Examples of this are expressions like: existence, existential, pure doctrine, Real Presence, decision, resurrection, baptism of the Spirit, etc. The longer such a specialized language is used, the more esoteric it becomes, that is, it becomes less and less intelligible to outsiders. For Bible translating, the specialized vocabulary of theologians and the terminology of the various denominations are cases in point. Because tradition is important to both theologians and churches, their speech retains many expressions and grammatical forms which have disappeared from present-day language. Difficulties arise particularly when expressions are used which do exist in common language but with a different or completely opposite meaning. This may be illustrated by the following example: One of the most important terms of reformed theology is the verb "to justify". It is used to express, especially in translating Paul's epistles, that most positive action of God towards man. The non-specialist, however, will have extreme difficulty in understanding this, for in popular usage the word "justify" conveys several ideas (e.g. "He was justified in doing that," "He is always justifying what he is doing," "He justified his existence"), but none of these ideas have anything to do with what Paul meant by the Greek verb *dikaioō*.

The longer and more intensive the influence a social group has had on the majority, particularly in education, the more strongly this group's vocabulary will influence that of the majority. In the past it was the Churches which did this, now it is ideologies. In all the traditional Bible translations, and in other literature too, we can easily see the Protestant influence in Northern Europe, the Catholic influence in Southern and Western Europe, and the Orthodox influence in the eastern and south-eastern parts of the Continent. The lessening of this influence is, perhaps to some extent unconsciously, one of the reasons why the various confessions are drawing nearer to each other and at last thinking of making a common translation of the Bible. For the translators, and later for readers and critics of their work, this will inevitably mean giving up familiar and well-loved expressions and

indispensable words. The very adjectives used here—familiar, well-loved, indispensable—show that it is less a matter of the meaning of words than of the effective values which have become associated with them in the course of the centuries. Theologians will go on arguing about the content of expressions like "by grace alone" and "filled with grace", but if the ordinary reader grasps anything, it is that the first sounds Lutheran and the second Catholic.

A few years ago a translation of the Bible came out in Yugoslavia which was widely bought despite its high price. Protestants in Croatia were of the opinion that: "From the language point of view, it is very good, but it sounds too Catholic." In Serbia people said: "A good translation, but it is too Croatian." The old Serbian translation had been prepared by two Protestants. At the moment a commission of the Orthodox Church is engaged in revising this Bible. Its main concern is not to change outmoded expressions, although that is much needed, but to bring the text more into line with the usages of the Orthodox Church. With this aim in view, the commission includes two experts in Church Slavonic.

Similar problems have arisen because of the influence of modern ideologies. All those translating the Bible into German today complain bitterly that they cannot use such a wonderful, suitable and meaningful word as *Heil* for the foreseeable future, because it is disqualified by the associations arising from its use during the Third Reich. Translators in the Balkans often say that the language of their Bible needs to be brought up to date, but that the most suitable words are ruled out by Communist use. Every attempt to use them nonetheless would be looked on by the Party as an attack on its ideology, and be misunderstood by readers.

It will be realized that the common language level is being cited again and again as the standard in this article. It is in fact the only level which is both understandable and acceptable to all. It involves no difficulties in the way of specialized vocabulary. Nor need it be felt unsuitable on the grounds that it hurts anyone's feelings. It alone is suitable for communications aimed at everyone because, be it said again, 90 per cent of communications take place in it. So far as general understanding and validity are concerned, the second statement is right.

The Ideal Translation

The question of what constitutes an ideal translation is as old as translating itself. And it has always been a bone of contention. With inimitable irony history has shown from time to time what little sense there is in criticisms of Bible translations. In 384 Jerome was given the task of translating the New Testament into Latin, and got nothing for his trouble but criticisms and protests which lasted to the end of his life. In later centuries his translation was used as the basis for all exegesis in the Catholic Church, and was prized more highly than the Greek text. The English Authorized Version of 1611 was rejected at first. The Pilgrim Fathers would not tolerate a single copy in their homes. Today it is used by traditionalists to discover "modern mistranslations". Is it surprising then that every translation has its supporters

and its opponents, but that none is universally accepted? We might let it go at that and reconcile ourselves to the inevitable, but we prefer to enquire into the reasons for the various standpoints and in this way take some of the sting and senselessness from the long-standing controversy.

Basically, there are two quite different concepts of translation. One is that it should read like an original work. So, the author who has written in a foreign language must be made to speak in the language of the translation; in other words the Greek writer must be made to speak English, or German. This style of translation aims at giving the reader as nearly as possible the same experience as the original hearers had. The other attitude is that a translation should not read like an original work. On the contrary, through the translation it aims to take the reader into the author's world and give him an impression of the strangeness of unfamiliar thinking by a literal translation of the foreign turns of speech. Schleiermacher was one of the great champions of this attitude. To him a translation which made the foreign writer speak like a German was insolent and therefore impermissible.

Schleiermacher is not alone in this attitude. Many others have thought as he did. They point to the unity of thought and speech, of the content and form of a statement. No one denies that there are connections. But to speak of unity goes too far: translating would in that case be quite impossible. No thought uttered by a Frenchman could be exactly expressed in any other language. There are two German translations which aim at this sort of faithfulness to the original. Firstly, there is Buber and Rosenzweig's translation of the Old Testament. Their aim was not to conceal the strangeness of the Hebrew original but to make it manifest. Where the original uses words derived from one particular root, the translation uses derivatives from a single German root. The Hebrew order of words is retained, and wherever possible the sound of the Hebrew words is imitated. This is also true of *Die Heilsbotschaft nach Markus* by Stier. Those who know the original are delighted by such faithfulness. But what impression do these translations make on a reader who knows no Hebrew or Greek? He is certainly made aware of the strangeness of the original text, but does not receive the very strong impression made on its first readers.

This leads on to one of the most important questions about translation: for whom is the end product intended? Both Schleiermacher and the great majority of scholars today write and translate for a relatively small circle of fellow scholars and interested people. Some of their readers know the original so well that they have no need of a translation. The rest are not entirely familar with it, and so are glad to have a version which fills in the gaps in their knowledge. One can learn a lot from translations of this sort if one wishes. But the important question is, was the main aim of the Biblical writers to convey teaching material or to transform men's thoughts and conduct? The great anxiety of many theologians today is that something of the 2,000-year history of the Bible text would be lost in too clear a translation, and that the geographical and cultural distance between contemporary Europe and the Near East of Bible times might thereby be closed. But is the strangeness of it all really shown only in choice of words and syntax? When one translates the New Testament, is it really necessary to resort to profes-

sional language or even "translationese" when the greater part of the original is in common language? Some maintain that common language cannot give the exact shades of meaning, and so must not be used. Those who wish to read and understand the Bible, they say, must familiarize themselves with its language and expressions. A large group of Dutch theologians would like to see the reintroduction of Rabbinical schools where everyone who wished could go and be taught. When scholars can overcome their conscientious objections to translation, then the work must be literal, and of high literary standard, and must eliminate every possible misunderstanding by extensive commentary.

Behind the equating of literalness with exactness is the even commoner mistake that the translator must find a word in the receptor language for each word in the source language. But if there is no corresponding word in the receptor language, that is the end of translating. Linguistic study showed years ago, however, that words are not identical with what they denote, but only point towards it. And further, just as sentences are made up of various components, so word meanings are nearly always combinations of several components. The various semantic elements of a statement can be expressed in several ways. The meaning of *dikaiosunē theou* in Rom. 1:17 can be rendered "God's righteousness", but also "God puts men right with himself". The first translation can be understood only by professionals, the second is couched in ordinary language and can be understood by everybody. From the linguistic point of view, it is perfectly legitimate to translate a single word by a whole sentence. This can of course mean that conceptual agreement between original and translation is lost.

Conceptual agreement is a formal factor. Anyone who wants to retain it starts from the position that a concept is a definable entity. But a dictionary definition of a concept can at best give an approximation of the meaning. Its exact meaning depends not only on the context but also on the level of speech, the style, the speaker, the circumstances, in short on all the relevant components of a communication which cannot be fully measured and defined but which give the communication its strength and colour. All these factors may oblige the translator, despite somewhat similar dictionary definitions, to use different words which are better able to give an equivalent and dynamic reproduction of the communication.

Bible translating in Europe is done almost entirely by theologians. There is good reason for this and it is certainly justified. It involves a danger which should be recognized, however: a good part of translation work is exegesis. Exegesis is the analysis and understanding of a communication. However, the object to be analyzed is not a conversation which they have heard, it is a text, and that means a frozen communication which has become literature. Add to this that Europe has not only a long literary tradition but an even longer philological tradition with its own way of working. For some time there have been attempts to enrich and refine this way of working through insights from other branches of science. Today the exegete does not look only at the text and ask, "What does it say?", but tries to keep all aspects of the communication in mind. Every communication has at least six aspects which should be taken into account: who (1) writes what (2) to whom (3),

with what intention (4), in what circumstances (5), and in what form (6)? Yet in translating, for some obscure reason, practically all these factors except the second (or at the most the sixth) are disregarded. Does the translator forget that his translation is a communication too?

This brings us back to the question of the ideal translation. The nature of a translation depends on the way the translator sees his task. If the Bible is a venerable museum piece to him, then he will do his utmost to reproduce it exactly and keep the age and strangeness of the text (as he sees it himself). Because the meaning of the text and the form in which it is presented are his main concern, he will inevitably press the words of his own language into the foreign mould and unhesitatingly do violence to them. If on the other hand the Bible is to him a message of vital importance for people today, then he will do his utmost to convey the fundamental aims of the original writers to his readers. To achieve this, he will have to ask himself: "How can I best express this in my own language with equivalent meaning and strength and in a way which will be generally understood?"

In addition to these two opposing views of Bible translating, two other attitudes which are of importance in Europe must be mentioned. The first is related to literary tradition; it sees the Bible as a piece of classical literature, and would therefore prefer the translation to be a fine piece of literature too. A poet is certainly in a position to fulfil this desire for an aesthetically satisfying translation of the Bible, by drawing on all the resources of his own language, including style and syntax.

The other attitude is related to the historical tradition of various churches. It is well known that varying degrees of importance are attached to the Bible in the life of individual Christians and in church services, and there is no need to enlarge on this. The greater the interest a church has in liturgy and the more strongly individuals cling to their Bibles, the more traditional is the language used, and the less willing people are to have it changed. The demand for an ideal translation is greatest where a church, besides its interest in liturgy and awareness of its history, longs to be able to give the Bible message in contemporary and dynamic style.

What Sort of Translation Do We Need in Europe?

To try and combine all ways of translating and so produce the ideal translation is bound to fail. It could not be done even by a second Luther, although many people in Germany seem to dream of it. Even Luther himself could not do it in his own time.

We shall have to reconcile ourselves to the fact that in languages like ours, with their long literary tradition, various types of Bible translations will exist side by side, simply because readers are asking for them. There is something we must learn in this connection: anyone who judges or criticizes a translation of the Bible should no longer base his opinion on his own conception of the ideal translation. Rather, he should ask whether or not the translator has achieved his aim. Perhaps it is not only experts who should be asked for their opinion, but also the ordinary readers of the Bible, unless they are regarded as inexperienced laymen.

The translation experts working with the United Bible Societies have before them a clear priority which must not be concealed. It has appeared again and again between the lines of this article. The common language translation on the basis of dynamic equivalence seems to us the best for today for the following reasons: the vast majority of the people of Europe feel no urge to read literature and have no link with the churches and their traditional and specialized language. On the other hand, there is widespread and undeniable interest in the Bible. As Christians we are convinced that the Bible not only has a long history but, even today, can move people with a power as vital as when it was written, because God Himself uses it. And we do not think common language too banal and expressionless. Of course it must not level everything out and so become pale and colourless. Probably we have not yet had enough practice to make full use of it.

This article has had to deal with so many basic questions because the chief problem in Bible translating in Europe today does not lie in the major and minor difficulties of the text and its reproduction in another language. It is our traditions which create difficulties for us. Their great importance can bar our way so that we can no longer seek and find the necessary solutions for today. But when we do try to find these solutions, we make a surprising discovery: our questions are no different from those of the "Third World". When the aim is to make the Biblical message intelligible to people today, there are no specifically European problems.

KÁROLY PRÖHLE

SOME THEOLOGICAL PROBLEMS OF BIBLE TRANSLATING (THE HUNGARIAN TRANSLATION)

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Readers of this journal will be interested to know that a very considerable amount of Bible translation work is being done in East Europe. The United Bible Societies will conduct a three-week seminar for East European translators in August 1971. Various consultations have been held in East Europe and the following article is related to a consultation on the revision of the Bible in the Hungarian language which was held in Budapest, Hungary, during November 1970. (*Editor*)

The Interpretation of The Word of God

We undertake the work of Bible translation with the conviction that the Holy Scriptures contain for us the message of God. Our work is but a small fraction of the permanent and untiring human activity which aims at removing the obstacles in the way of understanding by bridging over the difference of language through translation and interpretation. At the same