The last two lines are also parallel and synonymous, with **refuge** and **stronghold** having almost the same components of meaning and expressing the same concept. Both of them are metaphors of God's protection. GNB has combined the two into a single verb "He will **defend** his people." Similarly the two synonymous and parallel noun phrases "the people of Israel" and "his people" are combined to "his people" by GNB.

JACOB A. LOEWEN

A NEW LOOK AT SECTION HEADINGS IN WEST AFRICAN TRANSLATIONS

Dr. Jacob Loewen is a recently retired UBS Translations consultant resident in Canada

"My tribespeople, do not cause your brother to fall into sin. I repeat, do not cause your brother to fall into sin. This is the word that God is asking you to hear today. Let it bite your ears well, because it is so important that the blackness of its letters surpasses that of all the words before and after it."

The village preacher, a man who had only recently learnt to read, had just read his text as the last part of Rom 14.12, which reads "everyone of us, then, will have to give an account of himself to God. **Do not cause your brother to fall into sin."** He then proceeded to give a stirring message. If you consult an English, French, or German common language translation, you will find that the "black letter" portion is really the section heading for Rom 14.12–23. While the African preacher's message was not at odds with the teaching of the Scriptures, this experience points out an important shortcoming of the present section headings in many African Bibles. We all agree, of course, that the newly literate pastor failed to recognize the "black print" as the bold-face section heading for the following section: but there is more to it than this, and it is this *more* that is the concern of this article, namely that our current pattern of section headings often lacks the particular markers for titles or headings that are required in our languages. As a result section headings are often being read, and even more often being understood, as part of the text itself.

The development of our current section headings

When we look back over the past twenty years we find that we have made tremendous progress in regard to moving translators from translating literally the nominal title forms that characterize English and French section headings, and to express these headings in full simple sentence statements. For instance *the transfiguration* (Mt 17.1) has become "Jesus changes his appearance completely". There is no question that such full-sentence section headings help the reader to understand their meaning more easily, something which the traditional form seldom did. But in making the section heading a sentence which can easily be understood we have introduced a new problem for many of the hearers and readers, namely that the easily understood sentence is now felt to be part of the text, because the sentence lacks the necessary markers of a title in the African language.

Traditional English Section Headings

A quick check on English (or French) section headings shows that one of the main markers of titles is the use of nouns to refer to actions or events, for instance, *Baptism and Temptation* (Mt 3.1 RSV), *Baptism of Jesus* (Mt 3.17 GNB), *Teaching about Adultery* (Mt 5.27 GNB), *True Discipleship* (Mt 16.21 GNB), *Arrest and Trial* (Mt 26.36 RSV). In constructing such expressions, most of the participants, namely the subjects and objects, are lost. This procedure helps to keep the section headings short.

Other English section headings often only use names of people or places or objects, for instance, *Purse, Bag, and Sword* (Lk 22.35 GNB), *Free Men and Slaves* (Jn 8.31 GNB), *Philip and an Ethiopian* (Acts 8.29 RSV), *In Cyprus* (Acts 13.4 GNB), *From Troas to Miletus* (Acts 20.13 TEV), *In the Grainfield* (Mk 2.23 RSV).

Some English section headings quote a part of the following passage, like *More than Conquerors* (Rom 87.31 RSV), *Fight the Good Fight* (2 Tim 6.11 RSV), *No one is Righteous* (Rom 3.9 GNB).

Other section headings are marked by the words "the question about": *The Question about Fasting* (Mt 9.14), *The Question about Rising from the Dead* (Mk 12.18), *The Question about the Messiah* (Mk 12.35).

Most West African languages can produce very similar noun forms, but since such forms are not used in normal speech or writing as markers of titles, and since they hide the participants which are so important in these languages, they create serious problems for understanding. For example, if *the transfiguration* were translated as "appearance changing", the title would raise some very unbiblical expectations. Again, a heading, *life with the spirit* would definitely suggest an experience with an evil spirit. The confusion caused by such noun forms was noted by early translators; and with the advent of common language translation even English titles in the GNB have moved a long way toward fuller statements. Note, for instance, *Jesus Calls Four Fishermen* (Mt 4.18), *Jesus has pity for the people* (Mt 9.35), *Peter Denies Jesus* (Mt 26.69), *Soldiers make Fun of Jesus* (Mt 27.27). The result has been that more and more section headings in West African translations have been translated as fully under-standable, short but complete simple sentences, such as *Nazareth people reject Jesus* (Mt 13.53), or *Do not cause your brother to fall into sin* (Rom 14.13).

I have to confess that it is only late in my experience as a translation consultant that I have become aware that I am responsible for accurate communication, not only in the text itself, but also in the section headings. Once I became aware of this need and shared it with translation teams, I was surprised how quickly they saw the point and with what efficiency they could create marked title expressions in their own languages.

Some examples of how West African languages mark titles

In presenting these examples we are not making a claim that these models can be applied in other areas, they are merely given as examples of items that have worked in one or more languages. Each translation team will have to study its own language resources in order to discover its own title patterns.

1. **How something happened or came to be.** The heading *healing of a blind man* becomes "how Jesus caused a blind man to see again". This *how* marker immediately rang a bell in my memory for I recalled the many North and South American Indian stories that ended with "that is how/why such and such happened or now is as it is". I also recalled that when I wanted to be told stories I already knew I would ask for a story how "Iguana got to have rings on its tail". Here are some African examples of "how titles":

   How John caused Jesus to enter God-water (Mt 3.13)
   How pity for the people's suffering killed Jesus' liver (Mt 9.32)
   How God cut the palaver that was on our heads (Rom 3.21)
   How Paul became one of God's sent ones (Gal 1.11)

2. **Specific title-marking words like "its word", "its story", "its teaching".** *The feeding of the five thousand* becomes "Jesus feeds five thousand people, its story". Some languages put the marker in the beginning: "The story of Jesus feeding five thousand people". Other examples are:

   When an evil spirit returns to a person, its lesson (Mt 12.43)
   The parable about the man who sowed, its explanation (Mt 13.18)
   Dying and living with Christ, its meaning what? (Col 2.20)
   Mary births Jesus, its story (Mt 1.18)
   About tying up one's mouth, its teaching (Mt 6.16)
   What John's messengers asked, its thing (Mt 11.1)
   Christ-people and clay pots, their comparison (2 Cor 4.11)
   The old ones who lay down on God, their story (Heb 11.1)
   Those who teach lie-words, their life and their end (2 Pet 2.1)
   God's sent ones, their manner (1 Cor 4.1)

3. **Marking words like "concerning", "about", "of", "how/when".**

   Concerning being like salt and like light (Mt 5.13)
   Concerning some who wanted to be Jesus followers (Mt 8.18)
   Concerning whether dead people relive or not (Mt 22.23)
   About why we should not judge others (Mt 7.1)
   About how much Jesus loved the Jerusalem people (Mt 23.37)
   About what happens when a servant is faithful and when he is not faithful (Mt 24.45)
   About who belongs to Jesus' family truly (Mt 12.46)
   About why one should cover his head while praying to God (1 Cor 11.2)
   What Jesus taught about chasing one's wife or leaving one's husband (Mt 19.1)
   What happened when Jesus was before the judges (Mt 26.67)
   What marriage teaches us about sin's power (Rom 7.1)
   What God says about what the evil people do (Rom 1.18)

4. **Headings with an interrogative ending.**

   Jesus used parables when he taught people, why? (Mt 13.10)
   Some things spoil people's insides, which ones? (Mt 15.10)

Paul writes a strong letter to Rome-people, why? (Rom 15.14)
Jesus opens his eyes/comes out of death, yes or no? (1 Cor 15.1)
There are two roads, the law one and the light one, which is better? (Gal 3.1)
The big ones among God's people, what should be their manner? (1 Tim 3.8)

5. Headings marked by "the question of or about"

Some questions about what our ancestors taught us (Mt 15.1)
Some questions about paying taxes to the Rome-chief (Lk 20.19)
Some questions about bachelor women and widows (1 Cor 7.25)

Experiments with these new sections have shown that even rural people without much education immediately recognize the statement as a title or a section heading and not as part of the text.

An additional use for Section Headings

West African translators have found use for section headings, namely to provide information which is essential for the section, but which cannot easily be included in the text itself. Note the following examples:

1. After Jesus had fed the five thousand and the four thousand people, he talked to his disciples about the "leaven of the pharisees" (Mt 16.5, Mk 8.14, Lk 12.1). In the Matthew and Mark accounts the disciples do not understand what Jesus is talking about, in fact, they misunderstood badly. Matthew finishes the account by finally making them aware that he is talking about the teaching of the Pharisees, but Mark ends his story with the disciples still not understanding. In these cases, especially in the case of Mark, we cannot make the meaning clear immediately in the text, because that would destroy the character of the story. But in order to help the reader to understand the "hidden" meaning, we can provide the necessary information in the section heading, "how Jesus compared the thinking/teaching of the Pharisees with leaven work, but the disciples did not understand what he said".

Some translators have also tried to give the same explanation in the text itself, adding to verse 18 "but they did not understand that he was talking about the teaching/thinking of the Pharisees"; but it is much wiser to do this in the section heading.

2. Another section heading that can be used to introduce essential cultural information occurs in connection with Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem on a donkey (Mt 21.1–11, Mk 11.1–11, Lki 19.28–40, Jn 12.12–19). When we read the account of the last days of Jesus in Jerusalem we note that he is eventually accused of having claimed to be the king of the Jews. Nowhere in the text is such a claim made in words; and many people do not realize that Jesus did make this claim *by his actions* when he rode into Jerusalem on a donkey. Traditionally the proud kings of other nations rode horses, but the humble kings of Israel rode donkeys (see Zech 9.9). In this case the essential cultural information can be included in the section heading, "how Jesus rode into Jerusalem on a donkey thereby claiming that he was the Israel-people's king."

3. Another context in which the section heading can be used to give essential information involves the secret message "the abomination of desolation", which is marked as a secret message in the text by the aside—the reader will know what this means—but which many African readers still do not understand as secret language. In this case the section heading can be used to make that fact clear, "how Jesus warned the people by means of a secret sign-word 'the terrible thing that spoils' ". This applies to Mk 13.14–23, Lk 21.20–24, Mt 24.15–28.

NOTES

Some problems encountered in translating the Book of Joel into the Bokyi language

The source of all the problems discussed in these notes is the fact that even though both the ancient Israelites and the Boyki people were and are rural societies living in small villages and farming the surrounding land, their staple foods and farming methods are completely different. Almost all of the staple foods of the Israelites, wheat, barley, grapes, olives and figs are completely unknown in Bokyi. Bokyi people have domestic animals such as sheep, goats, chickens, ducks, a few cows and pigs, but they never feed them or care for them in any way.

The following chart outlines the terms related to agriculture that are found in Joel and are unfamiliar or familiar in Bokyi society. (I used GNB, British edition)

Unfamiliar in Bokyi		*Familiar in Bokyi*
grapes 1.5	— grape vine 1.7 vineyard 1.11 grape wine 1.5 pruning knife 1.10	fruit trees (grape fruit, called "grapes")
olives	— olive tree 1.10 olive oil 2.19 oil press 2.24	fruit trees (cocoa trees) small knife 1.12
figs	— fig tree 1.7	fruit trees (mango and others)
corn (grain) 1.9	— wheat 1.11 barley 1.11 granary 1.17	farms (fields) 2.21 crops 1.11 seeds 1.17
plough 3.10		(hoe) sword 3.10 spear 3.10
pastures 1.10		locusts 1.4