language has a term of "liberty" that can be used in a way that will reflect both kinds of "release".

Significance for translators

In meaningful translation we constantly strive to make the original communication event become alive for the reader. In many languages the translator can use writing skills to provide such things as moods of optimism or of dread. Thus, for example, in 4.31 it may be good to make a clear change in mood from that of condemnation at the end of the previous verse to one of sudden interest in a new subject—the sound of a woman giving birth. In some languages, notably certain African languages, there are ideophones, that is, sounds which a storyteller makes to embellish the tale with indicators of mood, attitude of participants, sound effects accompanying motion, and so on. If such features are determined to be legitimate for a Bible translation, they can clarify and highlight the way in which these figures effect a change or are themselves changed. In other languages, stylistic features such as choice of terms, sentence construction, or words which reflect significant sounds, accomplish the purpose.

An obvious point for translators to consider will be the retaining of the punch line whenever one is used for highlighting a shift in expectancy. Suggestions have been made in the above discussion, and these are by no means exhaustive.

And since other prophets struggled through ministries in which they had to shock people out of their complacency, translators should be alert to similar occurrences of such shifts in thematic expectancy. Some of them will require great skills for translators who wish to retain the speech effect in an appropriate form in their own language.

JACOB A. LOEWEN

THE TRANSLATION OF HOLY IN MONKOLE: SOLVING A PROBLEM

Dr Jacob Loewen is a recently retired UBS Translation Consultant resident in Canada

"How can you as a foreigner who doesn't even speak our language tell us that our word *kuma* is not good enough to translate **holy** in the expression **Holy Spirit**?" the Monkole translator, a mother-tongue speaker, asked incredulously. He had not been present at the earlier meeting at which the translation consultant had actually made a statement expressing his doubt about the adequacy of the word *kuma*; nevertheless the strength of the translator's feelings about the statement

was very obvious. The rest of this article retraces the steps we took during our work sessions to sort out this problem.

Monkole is a language spoken in and around Kandi in northern Benin by some 50,000 people. Unlike many African languages which have serious difficulty in expressing the word **spirit** in the expression **Holy Spirit**, Monkole has no difficulty there, since it ascribes an inner nonmaterial, but powerful essence called *hunde* to all living things, creatures and plants alike.

Tackling the problem

The guidelines on how to approach problems of this sort given in *The Theory and Practice of Translation* and other translation helps are:

1. To make a careful study of the components of meaning of the expression in the original text.
2. To check how the source text uses the expression, that is, to study the contexts in which it appears, any equivalent expressions that may be used to replace it, and also all the words with which it is frequently associated.
3. To make a careful survey of the resources of the language in which the translation is being made, to become aware of the equivalences and differences between the expressions in the new language and the original language.
4. To choose the closest natural equivalent in the new language on the basis of the available evidence.

I want, however, to propose another step which I feel should come between steps 3 and 4. In my personal experience I have found it a very useful step.

3a. To have the believing community which uses the particular language study the linguistic evidence available and then to earnestly ask God how he would have expressed this concept in terms of the resources of their language, if he had spoken in their language in the first place.

In the Monkole situation we did not follow the suggested order fully. We began with step 3, the new language, since it was in terms of that language that the translator was posing his question. Furthermore, at that time the translators felt quite confident that they fully understood what the original meaning of **holy** was.

Our first step then (step 3 in the earlier list) was to check the area of meaning of the Monkole word *kuma*, glossed "clean, pure, holy" by the translators.

To do this we began to ask for as many natural sentences which contained the word *kuma* as possible from the two translators present. They volunteered the following sentences:

Water in a glass is *kuma* (if there is no dirt in it).
Often when the moon is full it is *kuma*.
When there are no clouds in the sky, the sky is *kuma*.

The light from a lamp or the sun can be *kuma*.
The window (glass) can be *kuma* (when there is no dirt on it).
Washed clothes are usually *kuma* (if they don't have any spots).

When the translators were unable to volunteer any more sentences, the translation consultant began to propose additional ones such as:

Can good food be spoken of as *kuma*? No.
Can good medicine be *kuma*? No.
Can a person's eyes be *kuma*? No.
Is a person himself ever *kuma*? No.
Does God make a person's heart (liver) *kuma* when he saves him?

The latter statement led to a lot of discussion, but finally it was dismissed as church jargon and not as a natural language statement. Eventually two more acceptable sentences emerged:

When a delirious person recovers from his fever his thinking becomes *kuma*.
When a person's word is shown to be true, we can say his word was *kuma*.

These last two are obviously figurative extensions of the literal meaning of the word *kuma*.

Next we tried to see if *kuma* could be applied either to a human, an animal, or a plant spirit in nonchurch settings—and all the proposed statements in this area were rejected as "impossible". The translation consultant did not ask the obvious question: If no human, animal or plant spirits can be *kuma*, on what possible basis might God's spirit be *kuma*?

Finally another test was applied. When a glass of apparently clean water has invisible quinine in it that makes the water very bitter, is the water in the glass still *kuma*? The answer is "yes" if it is clear, but the translators now realized that this water was no longer pure.

What emerged from these sentences and the discussion that followed was the fact that the literal meaning of *kuma* is not really "clean, pure", it really is "clear" (unmuddied, unspotted). If surface or visible clarity is not challenged in any way, it can also be said to mean "clean" as with water and clothes for instance. But water may remain *kuma*, "clear", even when it is no longer pure, as in the case of the water with quinine in it.

In regard to the nonliteral meanings of *kuma* in the context of the absence of delirium, it would also mean "clear", that is "rational, no longer mixed up or confused". This obviously is a figurative extension. "Clear" meaning "true" is also an extension, indicating a statement is "not mixed with untruth". It could be seen as approaching the idea of "pure".

Step 2 (step 1 in the earlier list) involved making a componential analysis of Greek *hagios*, (holy) and several other words often felt to be at least partially equivalent to it by translators. The words are: clean, pure, holy, sinless.

	Clean	Pure	Holy	Sinless
A washed man is:	+	n.a.	+	+
The altar in the temple is:	+/−	n.a.	+	n.a.
Catholic baptismal water is:	+/−	−	+	n.a.
Distilled water is:	+	+	+/−	n.a.
A priest* should be:	+/−	n.a.	+	+*
A person dedicated to God should be:	+/−	n.a.	+	+*
An object dedicated to God is:	+/−	+/−	+	n.a.

(n.a. = not applicable)

We note several restrictions: (1) In its literal meaning "pure" cannot be applied to a person, it can only be applied to substances or abstract ideas. (2) Objects or substances cannot be sinless but they can be pure. The asterisk with "priest" and "a person dedicated to God" indicates that ideally they should be sinless but in practice they probably are not. Regarding baptismal water not being pure, generally Catholic baptismal water has salt added. We could list the distinctive components of the four words as follows:

Clean: free from visible dirt
Pure: Unadulterated by another substance
Holy: Dedicated to God or to his service
Sinless: Free from moral fault

Thus persons dedicated to God's service would be marked by two components: (1) they are dedicated to God, and (2) they are expected to be free from sin; while objects dedicated to God obviously are marked only by one component—they are set apart for his service.

Step 3 (step 2 in the earlier list) involved studying the associations and contexts in which the word "holy" is used in the Scriptures. If we study the Greek we find that *hagios* has a verbal form *hagiazo*, a causative listed in the lexicon as meaning "to make holy" or "to pronounce holy". This means that in the physical domain a person is free from ritual impediments, in the moral domain he is blameless, and in the religious domain he is consecrated to God.

The first thing we notice when we look into the Scriptures is the fact that "holy" (*hagios*) is usually used as a polar opposite of the word "unclean". Thus some things are not only unclean in and of themselves, but they **make** unclean, as, for example: "if anyone touches an unclean thing...he has become unclean, he shall be guilty" (Lev 5.2). The same thing can be said in regard to evil spirits which in the New Testament are called either "evil" or "unclean". Evil spirits are not only unclean, but they make unclean. By the same token, that which is holy, is not only something that is holy in and of itself, but close association with such a holy thing makes holy: "for the unbelieving husband is consecrated through his wife, and the unbelieving wife is consecrated through her husband. Otherwise, your children would be unclean, but as it is, they

are holy" (1 Cor 7.14); also "so...the Gentiles may be acceptable and sanctified by the Holy Spirit" (Rom 15.16). When people who were considered unclean and not belonging to God receive the Holy Spirit they became acceptable and "holy".

When we look at words which are often closely associated with "holy" we find the following: consecrated, innocent, blameless, pure, cleansed from sin, separated from sinners, and so on. Some samples of such language are: "might sanctify her (the church), and cleanse her by the washing of water with the word" (Eph 5.26); "you were washed, you were sanctified" (1 Cor 6.11); "present you holy and blameless and irreproachable" (Col 1.22); "a high priest, holy, blameless, unstained, separated from sinners" (Heb 7.26).

Claude Levi-Strauss and other anthropologists have pointed out that many societies divide the universe into two domains—the sacred and the common or profane. These people would also see the same in the Scriptures. However as I study the New Testament it seems to me that while the two domains are extremes, there is also a middle ground between them which could be illustrated as follows:

Profane, that which is unclean, demonic and which cannot be sanctified	Common to all, that which can be defiled but can also be sanctified	Holy, that which is divine, wholly separated from sin and cannot sin

"Holy Spirit" as a New Testament expression

Except for two occurrences (Ps 51.11 and Is 63.10-11) the expression "Holy Spirit" is a New Testament one. The Old Testament usually refers to the "Spirit" as "Spirit of God", and in just about one half of the occurrences in the New Testament it is also referred to as the "Spirit of God" (also of the Lord, of Christ, of his son), or just as "Spirit", with "of God" understood. In the rest of the cases it is called "Holy Spirit".

We can, it seems to me, identify two possible pressures in the New Testament for the development of this name. On the one hand, we find that the Hebrew taboo in regard to pronouncing the name of *YHWH* in the New Testament was often also applied to *theos*, (God), (the Greek equivalent of Hebrew *elohim*) which was originally not subject to this taboo: for instance "I have sinned against heaven" (Luke 15.18), "Was the baptism of John, from heaven or from men?" (Mark 11.30), "our Father in heaven" (Mt 6.9). Looked at from this standpoint, the development of the expression **Holy Spirit** could be viewed as a way of avoiding the overuse of God's holy name.

The other pressure seems to come from the fact that people in New Testament times were very conscious of the power of evil spirits which often were also called "unclean spirits". Not only were these spirits evil and unclean, they made people unclean, they defiled them, they cut them off from God. Therefore if the gospel meant deliverance from the

defiling world of evil spirits, there was a need for a counteracting power that would take ordinary people, purify and sanctify them and set them apart for God's service. The **Holy Spirit** became this counterforce. I personally feel that probably both of these pressures have contributed to the development and the frequency of this new name, **Holy Spirit**.

Many languages I know in South America and Africa do not see the semantic universe as having an opposing pair—unclean versus holy. They conceive of the contrast as being between "evil" and "good". However, this evil-good contrast in the context under study usually leaves some ambiguity, because in many cultures the spirits used by tribal healers for good purposes can also be termed "good", but such spirits could hardly be considered to be in the "Holy Spirit" domain. In some cases translators have tried to mark their word for "spirit" with both "good" and "of God". However this usually is not an acceptable solution, because if one says "God's good spirit", it would automatically imply that he also had a bad one.

If we consider the root meaning of "holy" as being "that which inspires awe", for a moment, we are, of course, touching upon a very widespread concept, namely taboo which ascribes intrinsic, strong, magical power to certain objects or events. Linked with these powers are restrictions and prohibitions on how "ordinary" people may relate to these taboo-endowed objects. If restrictions are violated, voluntarily or even involuntarily, the power of the taboo shows itself by punishing the violation. The net result is that people usually fear the taboo-carrying item or event. We frequently meet this dimension of "holy" in the Old Testament; for instance the ark of the covenant was holy, in fact, it was part of the holy of holies. Thus when it was captured and then later returned by the Philistines and the rejoicing people of Israel opened it and looked into it, 70 (some versions say 50,000) of them were killed (1 Sam 7.19). Again, when David tried to move the ark to Jerusalem, the ark was severely jolted on the cart, and when the driver grabbed it to keep it from falling, he was killed (2 Sam 6.6-7).

Steps 4 and 3b. In the light of their findings in the biblical context the translation team now turned their attention back to their own language again to see what other alternatives there were besides *kuma* which they now saw as being inadequate. They noted that their language did have a word for "good", but the limitations of "good" in this connection have already been noted. The following expressions were found: to cause to be or to be without fault, to be given to God wholly, to cause someone to belong to God exclusively, to clean, to cleanse.

The Monkole team is now in the process of looking for possible further expressions and in addition they will be initiating step 3b, by informing the believing community of the problem and of the possible solutions and asking them to ask God how he would have expressed "Holy Spirit" if he had spoken in their language in the first place. How long these last steps are going to take only time will tell.