

employed by the local cultures. However, with the translation into poetry of biblical passages, and the consequent establishment of a new indigenous hymnody, not only will the church have an effective evangelistic tool, but worship in the churches will be enriched.

Long ago a young shepherd plucked out tunes on a *harp*, while sitting under the stars on a Judean hillside—songs which later became the core of Jewish temple worship. It may be that the plucking of *sitar* strings by a young Cambodian will result in a new and vital era in the worship and adoration of God in Cambodian churches.

K. I. LOGACHEV

THE LENINGRAD BIBLE GROUP

Prof. Logachev is scientific co-ordinator at the Leningrad Orthodox Theological Academy and is engaged in research into the development of the Greek language from New Testament times onwards. His article "The Problem of the Relationship of the Greek Text of the Bible to the Church Slavonic and Russian Text" appeared in the last issue of Technical Papers. The present report was requested by the United Bible Societies, and was prepared with the approval of His Eminence Nikodim, Metropolitan of Leningrad and Novgorod.

The Leningrad Bible Group, the full title of which is "The Group for Study of the History and Problems of Slavonic and Russian Bible Translations", was organised at the Leningrad Theological Academy in 1969.

This event did not mark a radically new departure in the activity of Russian theological academies. Its main goal was rather to continue some of the work already done in the Leningrad (formerly Petrograd/St. Petersburg) Theological Academy in the past.

For example, in the nineteenth century the Academy worked on Russian Bible translations by order of the Holy Synod. Some professors of the Academy also undertook research into textual problems of the Slavonic and Greek Bible. Of particular importance was the activity of the Russian Bible Commission, or Commission for a scientific edition of the Slavonic Bible, organized at the Petrograd Theological Academy by order of the Holy Synod in 1915. This Commission was never dissolved by church authority: its activity came to an end in the late 1920s because of the death of the majority of the members. The main purpose of setting up the Leningrad Bible Group was thus to continue some of the work begun by the Russian Bible Commission.

The Leningrad Bible Group was set up with the blessing of His Eminence Nikodim, Metropolitan of Leningrad and Novgorod¹, who always assists the Group. The Group, in turn, seeks His Eminence's guidance, and informs

¹ Metropolitan Nikodim is mag. theol., Permanent Member of the Holy Synod of the Moscow Patriarchate and President of the Commission on Questions of Christian Unity and Inter-church Relations of the Holy Synod, and also trustee and supervisor of the Leningrad Theological Academy.

him of its work, especially where it involves questions of principle affecting the basic direction of its research.

One of the Group's projects concerns the study of Old Slavonic Bible translations. The Group's activity in this area builds on foundations laid by the Bible Commission. The Group has completed a study of the archives of the Bible Commission, discovered in 1971, and the most interesting material found in them will be published soon.² One of the most interesting discoveries made by the Group in these archives is a collection of material for a full list of Slavonic Bible manuscripts.

The Group is now beginning to prepare some Old Slavonic Bible texts for publication.

The members of the Bible Commission have repeatedly stated that fruitful study of Slavonic Bible translation is impossible without studying the Greek original. This principle has been fully accepted by the Bible Group and has directed the interest of the Group to textual criticism of the Greek Bible. The Group has found that the solution of many problems concerning the relation of the Slavonic translation and the Greek original is hindered by the absence of systematic collation of the oldest Slavonic Bible manuscripts with the Greek text. The Group is now collating the oldest Slavonic New Testament texts (already published) with critical editions of the Greek New Testament. It hopes that the results of such a collation can influence and assist New Testament textual critics in their assessment of the Slavonic translation of the New Testament.³

The Bible Commission studied not only Slavonic, but also Russian Bible translation. In particular, the Bible Commission based its conclusions on the necessity of radical improvement of the language of the latter. The Bible Group continues the work begun by the Bible Commission and pays great attention to the problems of Russian Bible translation, giving priority to the problems of Russian New Testament translation.

The Group has made a textual and linguistic evaluation of the main Russian New Testament translation. The Group's conclusions may be summarized as follows. The Russian translation of the New Testament made at the beginning of the nineteenth century was planned as to accompany the Slavonic text, but does not exactly correspond to it. The Russian translation used the *Textus Receptus*, which deviates from the Slavonic text in a number of places. There is reason to believe that modern western translations (German, French) were also used. In the 1860s a rather slight revision of this Russian translation was made, including for example a slight correction in the textual basis of the *Textus Receptus*, and the replacement of some semi-Slavonic words and expressions by their Russian synonyms or of some Russian words by their semi-Slavonic counterparts. The resulting Russian text is known inaccurately as the "Synodal Translation". Its language must be considered archaic even for the middle of the nineteenth century.

² Information on these archives is contained in an article by Prof. Logachev published in the *Journal of the Moscow Patriarchate*, 1974, No. 2, pp. 79f.

³ This translation is so far almost ignored by New Testament textual critics. [The UBS Greek NT (2nd edition, 1968) includes "occasional citations" (p. xxx, cf. p. xxvi) of Slavonic, but the Bibliography includes no monograph on the subject (ed.)].

In the twentieth century the Synodal Translation underwent two main revisions. At the beginning of the century K. P. Pobedonostsev, Procurator General (Oberprokuror) of the Holy Synod, harmonized the Synodal Translation with the text and language of the Slavonic New Testament. In the 1950s and 1960s a group of Russian scholars in Paris, headed by Bishop Cassian, harmonized the Synodal Translation with the text of Nestle's edition of the Greek New Testament. The Paris revisers kept the archaic language of the Synodal Translation in most cases and showed a great tendency towards formal literalisms.

Thus not one of the existing Russian translations of the New Testament satisfies three essential criteria: (1) the use of a Greek original, either immediately related to the oldest Slavonic translations of the New Testament or presenting the results of an attempt to re-establish the oldest New Testament text possible; (2) the use of modern literary Russian; (3) the rejection of formal literalisms which distort the meaning of the original.

The Synodal translation is freer from formal literalisms than those of Pobedonostsev and the Paris group, but the language of the Synodal translation is archaic, and its textual basis is the Textus Receptus, which is neither directly related to the oldest Slavonic New Testament translations, nor presents the result of an attempt to re-establish the oldest New Testament text possible. Pobedonostsev's translation is textually closer to the oldest Slavonic New Testament translation than is the Synodal translation, but its language may be considered as semi-Slavonic, not even as archaic Russian. The Paris translation is textually much more interesting than the Synodal translation (the Nestle text summarizes attempts to re-establish the oldest New Testament text possible), but its language and its creators' inclination to formal literalisms cannot be accepted.

The Leningrad Bible Group is convinced that there is no doubt as to the necessity of a new Russian translation of the New Testament.

We mentioned earlier that the Group is studying the problem of the relationship between the oldest Slavonic Bible texts and Greek Bible texts. The result it hopes for is the solution of the question of what Greek original must be used for a new Russian translation of the new Testament. At the same time the Group is translating some New Testament books into modern literary Russian from the Greek text published by the United Bible Societies. A translation of the beginning of John 3 is given below as an example of the preliminary results of a translation made by a member of the Group.

«Был среди фарисеев один человек по имени Никодим, один из иудейских вождей. Он пришел к Иисусу ночью и сказал Ему: «Равви, мы знаем, что Ты – учитель, посланный Богом, потому что никто не может делать тех чудес, которые Ты делаешь, если Бог не с ним.» Иисус сказал ему: «Воистину, говорю тебе, никто не может увидеть Царства Божия, если не родится свыше.» Никодим спросил Его: «Как может человек, будучи уже старым, родиться? Разве он может во второй раз войти в чрево своей матери и родиться (снова)?» Иисус ответил: «Воистину, говорю тебе, никто не может войти в Царство Божие, если не родится от воды и Духа. То, что родилось от тела –

это тело, и то, что родилось от Духа – это Дух. Не удивляйся, что я сказал «Вам нужно родиться свыше.» Дух, как ветер, который дует там, где хочет; ты слышишь его шум, но не знаешь, откуда и куда он дует. То же и с каждым, кто родился от Духа.»

From the beginning of its activity the Group has maintained scientific contacts with the United Bible Societies.⁴ With the assistance of the United Bible Societies the Group has become acquainted with the most recent progress in textual criticism of the Bible and the theory of Bible translation. The Group is ready to continue its collaboration with the United Bible Societies, and hopes that the Societies, on their part, will be able, through their contacts with the Leningrad Bible Group, to understand fully the specific nature of past and present problems of Russian Bible translation and to achieve an accurate understanding of existing Russian Bible translations.

⁴ In particular, the members of the Group have had fruitful consultations with Dr. Eugene A. Nida, members of the UBS Europe regional staff, with the Rev. Esko Rintala of the Finnish Bible Society and most recently with a UBS Vice-President, the Rev. Prof. Matthew Black.

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THE PROBLEMS OF RUSSIAN BIBLE TRANSLATION AT THE BEGINNING OF THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

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In 1956 *The Bible Translator* published (Vol. VII, pp. 98–101) the English translation of some excerpts from an article by A. Osipoff in the *Journal of the Moscow Patriarchate* (Russian edition, 1955, No. II, pp. 55–62). The title of this translation was “More About the Russian Bible”. As was indicated by the translator, Dr. D. A. Lowrie, “The article is largely based on a book, *The Centenary of the Russian Translation of the Bible*, by Prof. I. E. Evseev, St. Petersburg, 1916” and Osipoff, “instead of presenting his own arguments, . . . quotes with approval the book published forty years ago”.

Unfortunately, the way in which Osipoff uses quotations leads to a complete misrepresentation of Evseev's opinion of the so-called “Synodal” Russian Bible translation. The reader of the article and its translation might think that I. E. Evseev was wholly in favour of this translation, but in fact his position was quite different.

I. E. Evseev was the greatest Russian biblical scholar of the late nineteenth-early twentieth century¹. He was the founder, organiser and leader of the

¹ On his life and work, see *Journal of the Moscow Patriarchate* (Russian edition), 1971, No. 12, pp. 64–67; 1972, No. 8, pp. 76–77; 1973, No. 2, pp. 79–80; and 1974, No. 1, pp. 77–79.