

In a personal letter, Professor Rüger says that the Committee followed traditional Jewish interpretation, and he quoted two rabbis, Rashi and Ibn Ezra (eleventh and twelfth centuries).

The German Common Language Bible (1982) followed this lead, translating: "Whoever obeys God, his conduct helps others to live. Whoever is intelligent and experienced wins people for himself." In a footnote it says that the verse is difficult to interpret, and the literal translation of the MT follows: line *b* is translated "and a wise person takes people[’s lives]." Similarly the French common language Bible (1982) has "by his wisdom a man persuades others."

The Brazilian Committee decided to follow this interpretation of the MT, but I should say that we did so with considerable misgivings. As it now stands line *b* reads: "whoever increases the number of friends is wise." As in so many other instances, this may be the most pardonable of all failures to understand and translate the MT as we have it today. Selah.

ROBERT G. BRATCHER

## BOOK REVIEWS

Glassman, Eugene H.: **The Translation Debate. What makes a Bible translation good?** Downers Grove, Illinois, USA: InterVarsity Press 1981. 132 pp., \$4.25. ISBN 0-87784-467-4.

Books and articles on translation often give the impression that their authors look at the subject in a very abstract way. They would certainly argue differently if they had had much regular experience in translation! In the case of Glassman's book, on the contrary, the reader quickly realizes that he is dealing with someone who knows the subject from inside. In fact, the author spent many years in Pakistan, Afghanistan and Iran, where his work put him in direct touch with concrete problems of Bible translation (for example in Urdu). He now works in Hong Kong as a UBS translation advisor.

The book's central thesis is clear. The author wishes to show that the traditional opposition between translation and paraphrase is really based on inadequate understanding of the factors involved. He himself has come to the conclusion that the question is not "one of either/or" but "rather one of both/and" (22). There is an inevitable element of paraphrase in any translation; that is, certain formal modifications must be made if the content of a message is to be faithfully transferred from one language to another. Of course this does not mean that any paraphrase is legitimate: paraphrase which introduces into the receptor text information which is not in the original must be avoided (see 96f.) The author begins his discussion of this subject by defining what is meant by "translate, interpret, paraphrase." Next, he gives examples of ways in which the biblical writers themselves quote and translate texts. The following chapter describes two main currents in Bible translation, namely "Form-Oriented Translation" and "Content-Oriented Translation". The author then outlines the part played by missionaries in the development of translation theory, and he ends his work by giving a number of "guidelines" to help the

translator in his work. In passing, he does not fail to denounce a number of prejudices, for example about so-called "primitive" languages (70, cf. 90).

It may be said that there is nothing very new in this, compared with what has been taught for many years in translators' seminars. Yet this publication is noteworthy in several respects: **1.** What many readers of TBT know is far from being known or accepted in many of our church circles, and a nail has to be hammered again and again before it is driven in! **2.** The book is easy to read, so it can be recommended without hesitation to people who want information on this matter. It is without technical jargon, and full of examples. **3.** It is good to have quotations from the best authors in support of the argument as it develops (in one or two cases, there are prophetic quotations from a book which has not yet been published!)

The specialist, for his part, will note certain rather hasty statements. For example, the harsh judgement on the Septuagint as "a stiff, formal translation" (75) requires serious modification in the light of a series of recent studies. The author should be told that discoveries made at Ebla in upper Syria have shown that translation was already a necessary activity in about B.C. 2500 (not only in B.C. 2000, in the time of Hammurabi). The present reviewer was surprised to note the absence of French from the list of the main European languages of the past (69)! But these few remarks do not detract from the value of this book which will be read with profit for the reasons stated above.

JEAN-CLAUDE MARGOT

Aryeh Newman: **Mapping Translation Equivalence** (Contrastive Analysis Series no. 8). Leuven: Acco. 1980. 144 pp.

This is a very important book for Bible translators, not only because of its theoretical aim (to make more explicit the intuitive concept of translation equivalence with the help of contemporary linguistics and in the light of actual translation performances), but also because of its practical examples, nearly all taken from the Hebrew Bible.

So on pp. 52ff. the rendering of Exodus 1.7 is thoroughly discussed, especially the translation of the Hebrew adverbial adjunct intensifier *bi-me'od me'od* which either qualifies the last verb only or all four verbs in the sentence (if source criticism is taken seriously, by the way, the intensifier can only qualify one verb). The RSV translation (But the descendants of Israel were fruitful and increased greatly; they multiplied and grew exceedingly strong;) is rejected since it does not formally match the Hebrew and since it does not render the associative meaning of the original. It seems at least to be an overstatement when the author qualifies the translation by Buber and Rosenzweig of this text as dynamic equivalent. One should, however, agree with him that their renderings (or non renderings) of the sentence initial *waw* in Hebrew reflect a concern of functional equivalence translation. One should also agree that focus on formal match should not be confused with literal translation. The rendering the author himself proposes (certainly the Israelites teemed, swarmed, multiplied, grew and grew) presents through its doubling of the verb a closer equivalence to the Hebrew.