arrangement. A lot more work would be required to arrive at careful, consistent and defensible decisions.

Church reactions

It seems probable that church reactions would vary according to the degree of bilingualism in the community. It should be noted that even in monolingual English language churches, some foreign phrases such as *magnificat*, *te deum*, and *kyrie eleison* are known where a liturgy is in use. And biblical scholars, who are usually less monolingual than the average churchgoer, do not hesitate to use foreign expressions like *Heilsgeschichte*, *Sitz im Leben*, and *Hauptbriefe* in their discussions. In eastern Orthodox services, the liturgy is in Old Church Slavonic, but the sermon, and sometimes the scripture readings, are in Russian, Bulgarian and so on. I have also attended a Baptist service much of which was in Russian, but with some of the hymns and sermons in Ukrainian. However, I have a feeling that even where bilingualism is common, there is likely to be a hesitant or even hostile reaction to the idea of a macaronic translation of the Bible. This surely is not because it is absurd, but simply because it is new and different. Perhaps an audio presentation of macaronic scripture would be less controversial than a printed text.

The whole notion of macaronic translation is intriguing. It may open up a large can of worms, but at least they are very succulent worms, and challenge us to think about issues in the interpretation of the Bible that a traditional monolingual translation sweeps under the carpet. Perhaps this article will serve as a catalyst for such a debate.

REVIEWS

Mukonyora, I.J.L. Cox, and F. Verstraelen (eds): **Rewriting the Bible—the Real Issues.** Gweru, Zimbabwe: Mambo Press 1993. 309 pp, ISBN 0 86922 538 3.

Rewriting the Bible is an extremely lively and controversial book which owes its origin to a seminal paper presented at the University of Zimbabwe on April 6, 1991 by Rev. Canaan Banana, one of its Honorary Professors. Rev. Banana is a leading churchman and controversial theologian, a s well as a highly respected statesman and political figure in his country. The main thesis of his paper, "The Case for a New Bible," which forms the basis and starting point for all discussions in this book, is that the Bible suffers from what he considers to be its particularism and exclusivism or its Jewish ethnocentrism. Hence the need to liberate the Bible from narrow ethnocentrism, from its being used to justify oppressive regimes, systems or ideologies aimed against those of dissimilar ethnicity, gender, economic class, religion, etc. Banana's main concern is that many of the voices of the world's oppressed and dispossessed peoples, which are also "voices of God's revelation, inspired by God's Spirit," are "not reflected in the Bible, directly testifying to God's presence in their lives, in their time" (21). Banana's punchline is in the form of a question and answer: "Has God's revelation finished? Is it not possible that there is more that needs to be added to as well as subtracted from the Bible as we know it today to make it relevant to our times and people?" The answer is as follows: "I had called for a re-writing of the Bible. This would include revision and editing what is already there, but would also involve adding that which is not included. It is not a new task that I am calling for, not really. I see that a re-written Bible, one

that is more universal, embracing the rich plurality of human experience in response to God, would be a more authentic and relevant document in today's world" (30).

The responses that follow Rev. Banana's presentation share his concern to make the Bible relevant amidst the world's diversity and pluralism. None however supports the bold and controversial proposal to rewrite the Bible. Martin Lehmann-Habeck responds by arguing that the Bible itself is the outcome of "an ongoing process of rewriting the story," a process intended "to adapt faith traditions to new experiences in changing historical and cultural conditions" (57). He argues that even though the Bible is historically conditioned or bound in space and time, "the religious communities of Judaism and the Christian Church set an end to the process by establishing a canon of writings which was to be normative for them and hence unchangeable. From there on any effort was to be reinterpretation rather than revision" (57). The question then is how to justify or establish the claims about the "exclusive truth and the universal normativity of the Bible in matters of religion." In the final analysis, he holds that these claims are not tenable or sustainable in the light of today's problem situation.

Roger Anderson takes up the discussion by arguing that what really is at issue is the question of the Canon. He suggests that Rev. Banana's call for a rewriting of the Bible, "the closed canon of the church and synagogue" (69), would lead to chaos and confusion. In fact he says, it would "open a Pandora's Box...bringing to the fore a fierce and divisive atmosphere in the community of faith, possibly worse than that which already exists." The resulting text, Anderson claims "would have no meaning either as a religious document or as a historical one" (69). The thrust of his argument is: Keep the canon as it is, closed. Deal with Banana's concerns at the level of hermeneutics and application.

The remaining contributions are not as alarmist as Anderson's. But they all appeal to use of critical exegetical and hermeneutical tools in the attempt to make the ancient Hebrew/Greco-Roman text relevant in an inclusive, non-oppressive and liberating way. James Cox, writing from the perspective of history of religions, holds that though the Bible bears witness to "specific, particular apprehensions of the universal sacred reality...this witness should not be used as an instrument for apologetic universalism." For him, rewriting the Bible is not only impossible, but also undesirable from the perspective of the faithful. What is needed is "a new hermeneutics based not on exclusive principles but on a universal recognition of the sacred. Such a hermeneutics is possible and when employed allows the Bible to remain a sacred manifestation in all its resplendent holiness without imposing it on those who rely on other hierophanies to attain knowledge of the universal mystery" (121).

Ephraim Mandivenga compares the Bible and the Qur'an, and argues that despite Qur'anic or Islamic tolerance and even assimilation of certain traditional African beliefs and traditions, the problem of text and interpretation is more complex and difficult for the Qur'an in its exclusive yet universal claim for Arabic and Islam. It is the very antithesis of Rev. Banana's thesis. Frans Verstraelen, who takes a missiological perspective, and Jean Lambert, who explores the various ways in which the Bible is used, both reiterate the point that what is required is a valid and relevant application of a responsible and liberating exegesis and hermeneutics vis-a-vis the historical and cultural context. Lambert's discussion of the four special

corrective lenses of hermeneutics—race, sex, wealth, and culture—is instructive. Isabel Mukonyora, writing from a feminist perspective, argues that re-writing the Bible is not the solution, as it underestimates the role played by history and culture in shaping attitudes, values, and the way in which even the new Bible would be reinterpreted by individuals, groups and communities, depending on their historical situation and context. Mukonyora draws some interesting lessons from the role and place of women in the Maranke and Masowe Vapostore movements of Central Africa.

This is certainly a very stimulating and well-written book. The questions it poses and explores are no doubt perennial. They touch on issues which are not only sensitive but central to our profession: the problem of salvation and soteriology and the question of divine election, the problem concerning the nature of revelation and truth, the problem of Holy and inspired Scriptures and their authority, the problem for the Christian of non-biblical or non-Christian religions. The reader need not agree with the perspectives or view-points represented by the authors of this book; he or she will nevertheless benefit in being made aware of these issues and in being exposed to certain ways of approaching these questions. Grappling with these issues is bound to make one wiser and more sensitive to other horizons and worlds, apart from forcing one to rethink one's confession and faith foundation.

A few typos are apparent, for example, the one where Lamin Sanneh is introduced by Verstraelen as "a native from Gambia." It should perhaps be "a native of Gambia." The former might be interpreted with a negative outcome given the history of colonial discourse! On the whole, this is a worthy effort from the University of Zimbabwe.

ALOO O. MOJOLA

Cimosa, Mario: **Guida allo studio della Bibbia Greca (LXX). Storia A lingua A testi**. Rome: Società Biblica Britannica & Forestiera 1995. 272 pp, ISBN 88 237 8007 1.

Dr. Cimosa is the author of, among other works, an important book that analyzes the terms for prayer that occur in the Greek Pentateuch, Il vocabulario di preghiera nel Pentateuco greco dei LXX (Rome 1985). The present volume forms part of a series of "Guides" to the biblical languages intended for Italian readers, especially those involved in Bible translation.

The author has organized his material in three parts. The first one (13-65) is entitled "Introduzione generale e particolare" and includes chapters on the historical origins of the LXX, the use of the Greek Bible, present issues in the study of the LXX, and short treatments of selected books: the Pentateuch (except for Numbers), 1-2 Esdras, Judith, Tobit, 1-4 Maccabees, Psalms, Odes, Song of Songs, Wisdom, Sirach, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Zechariah, and Daniel. The second part (72-136), devoted to linguistic issues, includes (1) an outline of grammatical features in the LXX, (2) syntactical observations, and (3) lexical discussions of twenty different words. The last part (139-204) consists of selected LXX readings, which include the Greek text, an Italian translation, and a commentary. Three brief appendices plus an extensive classified bibliography, as well as various indexes, conclude the work.