was understood by David as a real historical event, as shown by his emotional response to the story (verses 5-6). In such cases, the translator should be careful to mark these parables as historical events rather than as non-historical accounts. On the other hand, parables which are told as non-historical events should be marked as such, and not as historical events. For example, many translations have not marked Luke 16 as a parable, and this has led to many people regarding the passage as a real historical account.

If there are no formal markers in the language which distinguish between historical and non-historical events, then an explanation can be included in the translation to mark parables. For example, in Luke 16, the section could begin with the statement, "Then Jesus told another parable; he said," or some such similar formula.

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Mount Seir

In an earlier edition of the TEV New Testament it was decided that the word "miracle" was not the appropriate level of language for the TEV, and should be changed to "mighty works" or some such expression. However, when the changes were made, it was forgotten that the word occurred not only in the Gospels and Acts, but also in Revelation. As a result, an edition appeared in which Jesus was "only" doing "mighty works" but the powers of evil in Revelation were performing "miracles". This of course provided good ammunition for those trying to prove that the translators of the TEV were trying to dishonor Christ in some way, but in fact it was simply a failure to make sure that a change was carefully applied to every relevant passage. So far as I can tell, the word "miracle" has been reinstated into all parts of the New Testament, and the problem no longer exists. But it still stands as a warning to us to be very careful in carrying out systematic changes in our translations.

Unfortunately, examples of similar problems can still be found in the Good News Bible (TEV), and no doubt in many other translations as well. In the Hebrew Old Testament "Mount Seir" is often used to refer to the country of Edom (see Gen 36.9 and Dt 2.4-5). Although occasionally the GNB translators have used "the mountains of Seir" in contexts where it will be clear to the reader that it refers to the land of Edom (Jg 5.4 and Ezek 35.15), they felt that it was usually clearer to translate "Seir" by "Edom", and this is probably a valid decision for a translation like the GNB.

There are a few places (Gen 36.20-21 and 1 Chr 1.38) where Seir, although connected with Edom, clearly refers to a person, and in these places the GNB translates as "Seir". However, there is also at least one place where "mount Seir" cannot possibly refer to Edom. Joshua 15 describes the borders of the territory assigned to the tribe of Judah. Verse 5 begins to describe the northern border, beginning in the northeast, and proceeding westwards past Jerusalem (verse 8) and on to "mount Seir" in verse 10. The context makes clear that this is a mountain only a few miles west of Jerusalem, certainly not anywhere near the country of Edom. Yet many, if not all, of the current editions of the Good News Bible tell us that "the hill country of Edom" is to be found there between Kiriath Jearim (verse 9) and Beth Shemesh (verse 10). Some printings of the British edition do in fact have "the hill country of Seir" in this verse, so it is obvious that someone saw the problem at some point in the history of the GNB text. On the other hand, when the Translator's Handbook on Joshua was prepared, the edition with "Edom" was used, and somehow the authors failed to note the difficulty, telling us that "the hill country of Edom, as elsewhere in TEV, translates 'Mount Seir'." Obviously the next editions of the GNB and the Joshua Handbook will have to correct this slip, but in the meantime it can serve us again as an effective (if rather embarrassing) example of this trap into which it is all too easy for all translators and editors of the text (and even writers of Handbooks) to fall.

NORM MUNDHENK

The translation of *shekel*

In Hebrew, the word *shekel* refers basically to a weight. Although usually used when referring to the weight of gold or silver or some other metal, it also refers to the weight of food (Ezek 4.10), cassia (Ex 30.24), and Absalom's hair (2 Sam 14.26).

In the Good News Bible, a decision was apparently made to translate the term as a weight except when the context shows that it is being used as the equivalent of money, to pay for something. In cases like this, "fifty shekels" is translated as "fifty pieces of silver" or "fifty silver coins". There is in fact a problem here, since it can be seriously questioned whether anything that might be called a coin or a piece of silver of the size of a shekel was in use during the Old Testament period. It might well be best to use weight equivalents to translate "shekel" in all passages. But if we grant the validity of the distinction the GNB is