

that the new translation in easy-to-read Dutch has indeed a reading age level of 8-12 years and is far easier to understand than the traditional Bible translations or the new common language translation.

Illustrations

A Bible for children should be copiously illustrated. In all modern school books illustrations play a dominant role and a Bible text-book should not be an exceptional case. For preference, the illustrations—in full colour—would be scattered through the text instead of filling whole pages. They should highlight the main theme of the relevant passages and, if possible, give some extra information: pictures and texts should be fully integrated. This should all be done in order to try to overcome the idea many children as well as adults have—that the Bible is a boring book. In vocabulary, style, layout and illustrations, a Bible text-book for children should be in line as much as possible with other modern school-books. Only in its actual content will it reveal the unique character of the Word of God.

BARCLAY M. NEWMAN

TRANSLATING SCRIPTURE FOR EARLY YOUTH

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(The following is a brief discussion of what is involved in translating for children. The author is a member of the translation team in a project producing a translation for English-speaking children in the United States.)

Translating Scripture for children has proved to be a challenging and rewarding experience for the translation team, leading them into a variety of unexpected adventures. In fact, one of the translators humorously outlined the team's schedule as follows:

Weekday afternoons: Sesame Street and Mister Roberts

Saturday mornings: Cartoons

Sunday mornings: Checking with Second Grade Sunday School class

Between times: Conference with school and Sunday School teachers

Spare time: Reading popular children's literature

Other times: Listening to educators

Sometimes: Translating

Always: Reviewing and rewriting

Never: Ending!

Of course, this is exaggerated, but it does illustrate the absolute necessity of knowing the linguistic expectations and capabilities of the intended audience. And the translation team has discovered that the sources listed

above provide some of the best avenues for research into language that children understand and appreciate.

No less important than the translation team itself are the competent and conscientious reviewers who read and comment on the drafts. All of their proposals are given careful consideration by the translators, who incorporate those which they believe will improve either the accuracy or the readability of the text. The team always profits from a reviewer's comments, even when the exact wording of a particular proposal may not be adopted.

A set of "Principles and Procedures" is an absolute necessity for any translation project. It keeps translators on track and prevents many time-consuming discussions. But even before a decision is reached with regard to the principles and procedures (which tell how to get there), the translators must decide where they are going! That is to say, the audience must be defined, which in this instance is particularly difficult to do, as will soon become evident.

The primary audience consists of people between the ages of five and nine. But children of this age come in many different packages and from many different places. Their abilities, experiences, interests, and perspectives differ widely, and yet the goal is to reach as many of them as possible. Fortunately, the audience may be somewhat narrowed down by assuming that most of them will probably be church related with at least some background in traditional biblical vocabulary.

Although children are people (not merely people under construction!), they lack purchasing power, which means that there is also an adult audience to consider. It is assumed that for the most part they will be Christian parents, Sunday School teachers, teachers in Christian schools, and other church-oriented adults. The language which young folks appreciate (not which they produce!) and which some adults assume that they appreciate are not always the same. This is true of artwork as well, which is a basic component of any publication for children. Thus there exists the awesome task of producing a publication that will capture the minds and eyes, not only of youth, but of adults!

The Bible Society hopes that other young people and adults, Christian and non-Christian alike, will also discover this to be a readable and accurate translation and will use it. In particular, this text should be most effective in evangelistic situations, where a translation in present-day English speaks more effectively to both youth and adults than does traditional biblical language.

Basic Principles

The five basic principles that have been adopted are as follows:

- (1) The translation is made directly from what are considered the best Hebrew (for the Old Testament) and Greek (for the New Testament) manuscripts available; it is not an adaptation of any existing translation or translations. In places where the manuscripts differ significantly, the alternative possibility or possibilities are provided in

a note. The same is true where widely accepted scholarly opinions differ regarding the interpretation of the text: as a rule, one meaning is given in the translation itself, with the alternative possibility or possibilities supplied in a note.

- (2) The level of language intended is that which is appreciated by children, not necessarily that which they may normally use themselves. It is extremely important to make the language as exciting as possible and not to talk down to the audience.

No arbitrary vocabulary list has been followed for the choice of words, though careful consideration has been given to every potentially difficult word. Even an apparently simple word such as "call" will be misunderstood by children who are not familiar with its technical meaning in traditional translations. On the other hand, if an unfamiliar word is properly placed in a sentence or paragraph, the context will provide sufficient clues for the reader. Young people enjoy discovering new words, especially when they do not occur too frequently and where their meanings may be figured out with relative ease.

Certain proper names and technical terms have been retained and explained in a word list. For example, Pharisees, Sadducees, and Gentiles, as well as Passover, Pentecost, and Sabbath. Otherwise, the vocabulary generally departs radically from traditional biblical usage.

- (3) When it comes to sentences, the primary concern is naturalness of order and avoidance of structures that are choppy and unnatural. For readers, whether experienced or inexperienced, the real problem is not sentence length but naturalness of order and progression. "In him was life" is short, but the order is awkward and the construction unusual for English speakers. Moreover, in the setting of the Gospel of John the meaning is not "he was always alive", as a reader might conclude after attempting to analyse this odd arrangement of words. But if the connections between clauses are evident, allowing the reader to pause along the way, without having to start over each time, even a lengthy sentence may be easily deciphered by an unskilled reader.
- (4) The fourth principle concerns the way the text appears on the printed page. Paragraphing follows the pattern of present-day publications for children, which means that in this translation paragraphs will occur more frequently than in traditional versions. Each direct quotation is included in a separate paragraph.

Speeches, parables, and letters are placed in block indentions to mark them off from the surrounding text. This makes them easier to identify as separate units and aids the reader's comprehension of their relation to what comes before and after.

In poems and songs the lines are indented, as is customary in present-day publications for children. Frequently the lines are shorter than in traditional translations, so as to avoid run-over lines. This means that often a poem must be divided into more lines than are

usually found in other translations. Occasionally a higher level of language is used in poetic sections than is found elsewhere. Whenever possible, the poetic imagery of the original is retained without interpretation, since young readers generally like to have their imagination challenged.

- (5) As a final principle, the translators have attempted to produce a text that may be read aloud easily. With this objective in mind, close consideration has been given to such matters as breathing, rhythm, sound, and stress.

A most important feature of this translation is the testing it has undergone with children, and the results have been encouraging. Once, after a "checking" session with a Sunday school department, one young boy said to his teacher, "After he gets through looking over the papers, could I have mine back? When the Bible comes out, I want to see if he followed my ideas."

JOHN SANDEFUR

CHECKING THOSE JOTS AND TITLES

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The bane of every translator's life is—after having spent hours and hours on studying the source text, translating into the new language, and testing and revising—having to check the spelling at the last minute before the manuscript goes to the printer!

Those who did this work before the coming of the computer, of course, **really** had a tough time. They had to read every word in the entire manuscript to check the spelling. But the computer has simplified the task immensely.

My first experience at "computer checking" was using what I would call the "word list" approach to jot and tittle checking. The computer went through the entire manuscript and printed out a list of every word that occurred in the translation. Beside each word were the references for the verses in which that word occurred.

I then read every word in the list to check its spelling. When I found a word that was wrongly spelt, I looked up each reference for the word and corrected it in the manuscript. Thus instead of having to read every word in the entire manuscript, I only had to read each word that occurred in the manuscript once, regardless of whether the word occurred only once or 729 times.

I discovered, however, that there are two major problems with computer word list checking. The first is a lack of context to supply meaning. Some misspelt words are wrong regardless of context. An English example would be **spelt**. But other words are only misspelt if the