

together with French and Spanish common language translations, Moffatt and J. B. Phillips. "But", Arndt and Gingrich go on, "this meaning is found nowhere else. 'Aparabatos' rather has the sense 'permanent, unchangeable'." This is in fact the meaning chosen by RSV ("permanently"), NEB ("perpetual"), the Jerusalem Bible (" . . . can never lose his priesthood"), Knox ("unchanging"), and also the German CLT.

The idea of a priestly succession is unnecessary, both in Hebrews' quotations of Ps 110.4, and in Hebrews' own description of the priestly work of Christ, in 7.24. Christ, for Hebrews, is a priest, or high priest, "just like Melchizedek", who "can never lose his priesthood".

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THE TRANSLATION OF LUKE 11.5-13

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Introduction

This section comes within a slightly longer passage where Jesus gives teaching about prayer in response to a request from one of the disciples (verse 1). Verses 2 to 4 of the passage contain the Lord's prayer, which will not be considered here because the kind of comments we would make about it can be found on page 97 of *Translators' Notes on Literacy Selections*, Part 2. (Eugene A. Nida, UBS, 1974.) There the form of the Lord's prayer found in Matthew's gospel is dealt with.

Verses 5-13, immediately following the Lord's prayer, contain further teaching on prayer. Verses 5-8 record an illustration given by Jesus about perseverance in prayer. Verses 9 to 13 seem to consist of a commentary on the illustration, as well as more teaching based on a comparison between the response of an earthly father to his son's request and that of God the heavenly Father to requests from his earthly sons. Some of this material, the illustration about the midnight visit of the friend, is found only in Luke's gospel. The rest of it, with some significant difference of detail, is found in Matthew 7.7-11.

Because the RSV is widely used by translators as their basic source text, we shall refer to it in this discussion. Although RSV follows the Greek text fairly closely, its English form creates certain problems, particularly for a translator who does not speak English as his first language. It is with this kind of translator in mind that these notes have been written. Many of the points to be discussed have actually arisen during work among translators in the South Pacific. Translation Consultants in other areas have no doubt come across the same kinds of problems.

Verse 5

"*And he said to them, . . .*" Although Jesus is the speaker, he is not actually named, either here or in the preceding verses of the chapter. Following closely the Greek's preference for the pronoun rather than the proper name, RSV

has "he" for Jesus a total of 11 times in the chapter, and the title "Lord" once (verse 39), but the proper name "Jesus" does not occur. In many languages, if this pattern is followed in translation, the reader will think it most odd. In the opening of verse 5, it would overcome all ambiguity if Jesus is actually named.

But even if the verse now begins, "And Jesus said to them, . . ." this is not sufficient. TEV is surely right in identifying "them" as "the disciples". Although only one of the disciples had asked Jesus about prayer (verse 1), the response is directed to all of them. But something more is still needed. What Jesus is about to say in the section beginning at verse 5 is clearly a continuation of teaching about prayer. This is brought out well by Phillips with, "Then he added", and even better by the Living Bible (LB) with "Then, teaching them more about prayer, he added this illustration".

This use of "illustration" by LB is interesting because this is clearly what verses 5 to 8 contain, an illustration about perseverance in prayer. The passage is often wrongly called "The Parable of the friend who asked for help at night", but it is not a parable at all. In view of this, a good translation might begin verse 5 with "Then Jesus illustrated his teaching on prayer in this way . . ."

"Which of you who has a friend . . ." Verses 5 and 6 are in the form of rhetorical questions. In languages where such a literary form is not common, it should be avoided. It is interesting that most modern English translations avoid it. TEV, Jerusalem Bible (JB), NEB and LB have "Suppose . . .", and Phillips has "If . . .".

"at midnight". In English this term usually means exactly at 12 o'clock, but the Greek can have the less precise meaning of "in the middle of the night". In many languages there is no special term for midnight, but a more general term has to be used. In Fijian, for instance, the term "e na lomalomoma ni bogi" could refer to any time between 10 p.m. and 2 a.m. The phrase "in the middle of the night" used by JB, Phillips, and NEB is perfectly adequate. The "midnight" of TEV, LB and RSV seems unnecessarily precise.

"Friend, lend me three loaves". This was probably the amount of bread normally offered to one person at a meal. The loaves would have been much smaller than those normally used today, probably the size of buns. Also, what is being referred to is just ordinary food, not anything extraordinary. In some languages, a literal translation of "three loaves" might give the impression that a fairly large quantity of a special kind of food was being requested. Such a false emphasis might have to be avoided by a general expression such as "some bread" or "some food".

Verse 6

"for a friend of mine". The use of the word "friend" to refer to another person other than "the friend" already mentioned in verse 5 might be confusing for some readers. This problem could be overcome by the use of "guest" or

“visitor”, or better still “unexpected guest” or “unexpected visitor”, seeing that in the story the host is completely unprepared. NEB’s “has turned up at my house” carries this element of surprise well.

Verse 7

“and he will answer from within”. The supposed situation should be re-emphasized here. TEV rightly has “And suppose your friend should answer from inside?” It might even be better to add “also” after “suppose” to clearly suggest a continuation of the illustration.

“Do not bother me; the door is now shut, and my children are with me in bed”. Translated literally into some languages, this could suggest two odd things. Firstly, it might suggest that the man and his children all slept together in one bed, like sardines in a tin. And secondly, because the man’s wife is not mentioned, it may be taken that he was a widower, or that his wife slept in another bed apart from him and the children! Even TEV with “my children and I are in bed” does not solve the question about the wife; nor does NEB with “my children and I have gone to bed”. A rendering such as “My family and I are all in bed” would overcome the problem.

“I cannot get up and give you anything”. “Anything” here (see also TEV and Phillips) refers to the three loaves which had been requested. In many languages these may have to be repeated, or a term like “any food” may have to be used. Alternatively, a rendering like “I just can’t help you this time” (LB) conveys the feel of the situation well.

Verse 8

“I tell you”. This is a means of connecting the first half of the illustration in which the problem is stated, and the second half in which it is resolved. At this point, the reader is left wondering what is going to happen next. To increase this expectancy, TEV put “Well, what then?” before “I tell you”. Although this is understood easily by the average English reader, it can be difficult for someone who speaks English as a second language. In one case in the South Pacific, for instance, a translator took it to mean “And so what?” with the result that in his language it ended up by conveying the idea of Jesus telling his listeners that there was little point to the story! If a connective is needed, it may be better to have something like “Well, what do you think would happen then?”

“though he will not get up and give him anything because he is his friend”. There is a strange change in the pronouns here, for the narrative began with “Which of *you* who has a friend will go to him . . .” The second person should be kept, as in TEV and LB.

“yet because of his importunity he will rise and give him whatever he needs”. The same remark about pronouns applies here. “His” and “he” refer to two different participants, and this should be made clear. But there is another

problem in "because of your importunity". In which way is the friend importunate, meaning persistent in asking? The story describes him as asking only once! TEV tries to solve this problem with "because you are not ashamed to keep on asking" and JB with "persistence will be enough to make him get up and give his friend all he wants". But neither of these is fully satisfactory in view of the fact that the illustration itself gives no indication of "persistence" or that the midnight visitor kept on asking. The solution of LB is better: "But I'll tell you this—though he won't do it as a friend, if you keep knocking long enough, he will get up and give you anything you want." Another rendering might be "if you keep on asking, he will get up . . ."

Verses 9 and 10

"*And I tell you*". The words that follow are based on the preceding illustration and are meant to teach that perseverance in prayer is always rewarded. The connective "And I tell you" in RSV is hardly strong enough. TEV with "And so I say to you" shows the logical connection much better, as also do NEB, JB and Phillips. LB is also good, with "And so it is with prayer—". Here it is made clear that what follows is the teaching to be drawn from the illustration.

"*Ask, and it will be given you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you*". Although the simple imperatives "ask", "seek", and "knock" are adequate (so NEB, JB, Phillips), it would seem that, in view of the teaching about persistence in prayer, a better rendering in this passage would be "keep on asking", "keep on seeking", and "keep on knocking" (so LB and Barclay). Further in some languages the person being asked and the thing being asked for would have to be indicated. So this sentence may have to be restructured into something like this: "Keep on making your requests to God. Never give up, never stop knocking at his door. Then he will grant your requests."

Verse 10

"*For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened*". In view of the remarks just made, it might be necessary to restructure this verse also. For example: "For God always answers those who persevere in making their requests to him."

Verse 11

"*What father among you, if his son asks for a fish, will instead of a fish give a serpent. . . ?*" What was said in relation to verses 5 and 6 also applies here. In languages where rhetorical questions are not used or are unusual, another construction will have to be employed. Or it may be possible to retain the question form and follow it by an answer such as "Not one of you would!" or "No father would do such a thing!" It is interesting that LB puts in brackets after verses 11 and 12 (both of which it leaves in question form) "Of course not!"

Verse 12

What has just been said in relation to verse 11 applies equally here. As regards "fish", "serpent", "egg", and "scorpion", it is possible that certain adjust-

ments will have to be made for situations where, for instance, snakes are considered quite edible and where there are no scorpions. Rather than do an injustice to the biblical culture, however, it may be better to use a general term such as "a poisonous insect" in place of "scorpion". In fact, it may be necessary to restructure verses 11 and 12 in such a general fashion as: "Those of you who are fathers—when your children are hungry and ask for food, do you give them something harmful to eat like a poisonous insect? Of course you don't!"

Verse 13

"If you, then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will the heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!" Once more, the rhetorical question form may have to be replaced by one more suited to the language in which the translation is being made. TEV does this in part by dividing the verse into two separate sentences, the first of which it puts in statement form: "As bad as you are, you know how to give good things to your children." It keeps the rhetorical form, however, for the second sentence: "How much more, then, the Father in heaven will give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!" Another possibility would be to treat the verse as one sentence and render it as: "So if you earthly fathers, who are evil, know how to give good things to your children who ask you, the heavenly Father knows much more how to give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him."

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SEX-ORIENTED LANGUAGE IN TEV PROVERBS

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All translators of the Bible know that their work will only last for a time. Changes in language are taking place constantly, and we know that this means our work is already becoming out of date from the time of its publication. It is only a matter of time before it becomes obsolete. Usually these changes are slow and barely noticeable, but sometimes change can come so suddenly that the translators can feel the linguistic ground shifting beneath their feet.

While the work on the TEV Old Testament was going on, the committee began to sense this happening, in the linguistic tremors generated by the women's liberation movement. In this regard, the TEV Bible has appeared at an unfortunate time in the history of the language. It is now clear that some changes will take place in accepted English usage in regard to the way persons are referred to, but it is not yet clear what these changes will be. The translators were put in the unenviable position of translating into an English of today which is feeling the influence of an unpredictable English of tomorrow.

The TEV committee first began to notice the seriousness of the situation after the publication of Proverbs in 1972. As the male chauvinist who had been responsible for the first draft of this book, I thought it would be useful