

emphasize that, when they have finished, God begins. Their power is temporal. His is eternal.

There is no need to assume that God has done any killing. The usage of the New Testament is against it. The verb *apokteino*, I kill, occurs 74 times, and never once is God the subject, except indirectly in Rev. 2:23 and 19:21. The verb *apollumi*, which is used in the sense of "I destroy" as well as in other senses, also never has God as its subject, except in the imagery of the two parables in Matt. 21:41 and 22:7. Further it should be noted that in Matt. 10:28, which is the passage parallel to Luke 12:5, Matthew omits Luke's phrase and speaks only of God's eternal destruction of "soul" and body. There would seem to be no passage in the New Testament with direct reference to God physically killing anybody.

In the light of all this, the Translators' Translation would appear to have a good case for translating "Fear God, who after *the* killing" (referred to in the previous verse) "has the power to throw into hell-fire". It has a brief expository note on page 448, but this detailed study is here presented in the hope that it may be useful for translators to have the point more fully developed.

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#### A Further Note on Psalm 7:4

Robert Bratcher, in TBT 23:241-242 (1972), ably discusses the interpretation of Psalm 7:4, presenting four possible solutions. There is a fifth solution, that seems to me more satisfactory.

The Hebrew structure of verses 3-5 is three *if* clauses followed by a series of result clauses:

Jehovah my God,  
if I have done this,  
if there is iniquity in my hands,  
if I have betrayed my friend and spared my  
enemy without cause,  
let a foe persecute my soul, . . .

The solutions discussed by Bratcher take this as a series of three (four?) accusations against David, of which he is declaring himself innocent. Alternatively, this could be viewed as just a single accusation in which David has been charged with a perfidious betrayal, helping his foes and harming his friends. The three *if* clauses are then seen as all stating the same accusation but stating it progressively more specifically (a not unexpected literary device).

This view, taking the whole of verse 4 as a single statement, fits better the structure of the Hebrew, where it is a single *if* clause. It also fits better with Scriptural morals, considering as self-evident the reprehensibility of treacherous betrayal.

The question of *reiqim* "in vain, without cause" should also be mentioned. The word normally means "in vain, without effect", but contextually that is very difficult here, and translators almost unanimously take it here to mean "without cause". Bratcher's solutions (1) and (2) refer it to the previous noun "my enemy without cause"; solutions (3) and (4) refer it to the preceding

clause “without cause sparing my enemy” (with variations in the wording). The solution proposed here refers it to the whole verse “without cause betraying my friend and helping my enemy”.

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### John 3:16

*(A new common language translation into Croatian is just getting under way. Only a few chapters of the Gospel of John have been presented to the Editorial Committee. Already there are several places where the proposed translation departs significantly from most others, including modern dynamic equivalent translations. This note is a discussion of a well-known text in which the rendering proposed for the new Croatian translation departs from both TEV and Die Gute Nachricht. Since the translation is still in the beginning stages the draft text is still subject to change. Reader response to this note is therefore invited and welcome.)*

John 3:16, “the most beloved verse of the Bible”, is a particularly difficult verse to translate dynamically. In any language this verse always “sounds better” in the old familiar form we know by memory. In this case we must avoid the question: Which rendering “sounds” best? and rather ask: Which rendering lets us “hear” the meaning of the text best? There are two small grammatical details which have significant influence on the meaning of the verse. Most translations fail to let us “hear” the meaning of these details.

First is the use of the aorist tense for the verb “love” (*ēgapēsen*). In John this form of the verb is used for a particular action completed in the past at a particular time. (See John 13:1, 34; 15:9, 12 and Jn. 4:10f., 19. This form is also used for man’s “decision” for evil, John 3:19.) Here love is not thought of as an attitude but as an *act*!

The second detail is the particularly Johannine use of the conjunction *hina*. This conjunction, which outside of John usually expresses purpose or result, is often used in John to explain or define something. (See John 4:34; 6:29, 39, 40; 15:8, 13.) In this case it refers back to the phrase “God loved” (understood as an act) and defines it more closely as God’s giving His only son. The relationship is more one of *content* than of cause and effect. (See John 15:13 and Jn. 3:16.) In an attempt to give expression to these details the following rendering has been proposed for the Croatian common language translation:

Da, kakvo veliko djelo ljubavi je Bog  
učinio za čovječanstvo kad je dao svog  
jebinog Sina . . .

Translated back into English this would read:

Yes, what a great work of love God did for  
mankind when he gave His only Son . . .

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*It is hoped that brief notes like those above will be a regular feature of the Practical series of The Bible Translator. The contribution of such notes as well as longer articles will be welcomed.—Editor.*