
Honouring David Clark

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We are pleased to offer this special edition of *The Bible Translator* as a tribute to our friend and colleague, Dr. David Clark, who turned 80 last year. David is, among many other things, one of the most prolific authors in this history of this journal, with 50 articles and reviews to his name, over a period of 43 years. He is also a consultant, an advisor, a mentor, and a friend, a man of great erudition, precision, warmth, and humour. Now his colleagues have put together these papers in his honour. We hope that David will find them interesting, rewarding, and challenging—and that he might even respond to them with yet more of his classic scholarship!

After studying classics and divinity at Cambridge, David wrote his Ph.D. thesis through SOAS (the School of Oriental and African Studies) at the University of London, based on field research on Ekpeye, a previously undescribed language in Nigeria. His description of his year of field research in his book, *Babes in the Jungle*, is not only informative but a study of his characteristic precision and dry wit. For over thirty years, from 1971, he devoted his very considerable talents to supporting Bible translation projects as a translation consultant of the United Bible Societies (UBS). He and his family (wife Glenys, a medical doctor, and daughters Helen, Rachel, and Debbie) lived variously in Thailand (1971–1975 and 1985–1991), Papua New Guinea (1975–1981), India (1981–1985), and the UK (1991–). Following his official retirement in 2002, he continued to serve language projects in the former Soviet Union, through the Institute for Bible Translation for a further seven years. During his career he supported Bible translation in over fifty languages throughout the Pacific, Southeast Asia, South Asia, Central, Northern, and Eastern Europe.

There is a caricature of the “old school” UBS translation consultant which is popular in some circles: a rather authoritarian outsider scholar, enforcing his will on local translation teams, acting as a gatekeeper for Bible Society policies. Nothing could be further from the truth as exemplified by David Clark. He has always taken great effort to familiarize himself with local situations, and to respect the uniqueness and beauty of local

languages and the contextual wisdom of translation teams, all the while humbly offering insights and critiques from the perspective of his expertise in the Hebrew and Greek, or linguistics, or discourse structure. And these insights, together with the real-language applications which he discovered in the course of his consulting, have been distilled in his many writings in this journal—profound and clear, concise and scholarly, and above all, beneficial for other translators and consultants. His writings for *The Bible Translator* have covered a wide range of the journal's focal interests, including both Old and New Testament studies (many of which involved discourse structure analysis), linguistics, and translation theory. Some of these focus on the biblical text itself, but many of them are richly illustrated and supported by real-world examples taken from David's time spent with translation teams. He has also contributed a number of reviews of commentaries, handbooks, and other publications of interest to translators. His 50 articles have appeared in 45 issues of the journal, in 27 years of the 47-year span of his writing. He has also contributed to UBS Handbooks and published in a range of other scholarly locations. (See the list of selected publications at the end of this issue.)

I first met David Clark in Thailand in the mid-1980s. I had begun doing exegetical checking on the Urak Lawoi translation, and we met at a consultant checking session in Phuket—the first of many we shared. I learnt from him how to listen to the cadences of a language you didn't know, how to read between the lines and question the translation with the right blend of incisive attention to the original languages and respect for the genius of the host language. These were the days before Paratext, before laptop computers even, and as well as his Greek text and commentaries, David's main armament was his notebook. Into it would go every exegetical puzzle, every illuminating insight from the target translation, every unanswered question. He would never brush us off with an answer of which he was unsure. The question would go into the notebook, with a note about which of his colleagues might have the best answer, and with the promise (always fulfilled) of writing back with further insight when he had access to his library, or had heard back from his colleagues. And out of the notebook, as I was to learn, would come papers for *The Bible Translator*—treasures sparkling with wit and wisdom, grounded always in the real world of local languages, models that I still use to teach translators and translation officers how to write a paper which will benefit other translators. Over time, David became not only my model but my mentor, as he encouraged me to write up my own insights for *TBT*, and recruited me as a UBS honorary translation advisor, bequeathing me several of his projects in Thailand to look after, and giving me strong and practical impetus into further study.

But David has always been more than a professional translation consultant. He and Glenys are true servants of God who became family friends with us and with many others he spent time with. When he was on a checking visit to the Urak Lawoi project, David liked to attend the Sunday night services in the village—under coconut trees, or on an open-sided veranda—and valued the fellowship with the tribal believers. He was present and involved when a boatload of fishermen, who had been arrested over the border in Myanmar, arrived home at long last, but without one Christian man, the host of the church, who had died. I will never forget the occasion when we asked him to share something from the Scriptures with the small group of believers, and he opened Revelation 21.24–27 “the kings of the earth will bring their glory into [the holy city]. . . . people will bring into it the glory and honour of the nations.” Looking round at the scantily clad circle of subsistence fisherfolk he asked, “What glory and honour do you have to bring? It is your unique language by which you honour God in a way no one else on earth can.” On another occasion, after he had been consulting in northern Europe, he tried to tell the Urak Lawoi about the reindeer herders he had visited inside the Arctic Circle, where the sun never set in summer. The disbelieving looks on the faces of the tropical fishing people, he said, were identical to the disbelieving looks on the faces of the reindeer herders when he had tried to tell them about people living in a place where you needed almost no clothing and lived in open-sided houses under coconut trees.

David always took our family out for a meal in a nice restaurant—and on one memorable occasion taught my daughter how to play “hangman” on a paper serviette. David and Glenys opened their home in Bangkok to us on numerous occasions—most significantly when my mother, who was visiting us in Thailand, broke her leg and had an extended stay in hospital. David and Glenys could never be sure, when they got up in the morning, which member of my family would be off ward duty and bunked down in their apartment.

When I was admitted, on David’s recommendation, to the collegial proceedings of the community of UBS translation consultants in Asia Pacific (ASPRESOT, for those who remember it), I discovered that David was a permanent member of the “resolutions committee,” who kept track of the decisions made in discussions over a couple of days, and presented them for approval. Wide-ranging discussions were neatly and concisely summarized, but every year there were several resolutions that had the august company in stitches of laughter. Often these had starting points in the actual discussion, perhaps on a disputed or contentious issue, but they soon departed from the highway of serious concern and took to the by-ways of parody, satire, or the absurd.

The scholars who have contributed to this collection of articles in honour of David Clark represent many periods of his long career and the places he worked. The topics they treat here cover a wide selection of David's special interests. Some deal with theoretical aspects of translation and the communities that produce them. **Stanley Porter** investigates at what level of language translation takes place and suggests that it necessarily spans many levels of linguistic structure. **Philip Towner** draws attention back from the current preoccupation with product and speed to the human side, which focuses on the process and the community which engages in the task. **Philip Noss** examines the role of successive generations of the Gbaya community in shaping the nature and function of Bible translation. **Graham Ogden** argues that Bible translations must look something like study Bibles if they are to allow readers to engage with the text in a way that has regard for both original and contemporary contexts of understanding. This has an interesting historical parallel as discussed by **Heidemarie Salevsky**, who shows that the process of producing *targumim*, exemplified in Nehemiah 8, involved not only translation but the provision of explanation and context. Two other writers also treat historical examples of Bible translation. **Kenneth Thomas** examines the work of a Muslim translator of the Gospels into Persian, finding his textual work exemplary while his notes raise more questions for the Christian translator. **Lourens de Vries** describes how Isaac Newton's natural philosophy indirectly influenced early Dutch work in Malay linguistics and Bible translation by a chain of influence through Lambert ten Kate and George Hendrik Werndly. Other papers focus on textual, literary, and discourse aspects of the translation task. **Andrei Desnitsky** examines the way metaphors are handled in languages of the former Soviet Union and argues they are best translated as scenarios. **Alexey Somov** looks in some detail at the image of the dove at Jesus' baptism against the background of early Jewish literature, and suggests the original comparison is to the Spirit's mode of descent rather than physical form. **Erwin Komen** focuses on the ambiguities involved in translating "Babylon"—as a city, a nation of people, a country, or a metonym. **Lénart de Regt** gives careful attention to biblical instances where a messenger repeats the message entrusted to him in a slightly different form, and pleads that the differences be understood for their narrative function. **Ernst Wendland** offers a discourse analysis of Micah in which he describes his methodology and advocates for its advantages to the translator. Yet other papers relate to the training of translators and translation officers. **Bob Bascom and Fausto Liriano** ask whether it is profitable for translation consultants to keep, and to share with others, lists of key passages to check. **Norm Mundhenk** returns to the topic of implicit information in biblical texts, and whether and how it should be reflected in

translation. And finally, **Carl Gross** takes a critical but sympathetic look at the new Tyndale House Greek New Testament, particularly from the point of view of its usefulness to translators.

There are many others who wished to participate in this expression of appreciation for the work of David Clark, but who for one reason or another were unable to have a paper in this collection. These include Danny Arichea, Simon Crisp, Paul Ellingworth, Krijn van der Jagt, Manuel Jinbachian, Rob Koops, Seppo Sipilä, Daud Soesilo, and Phil Stine.

The editors would like to thank Marijke de Lang, Lénart de Regt, Phil Stine, and Andy Warren-Rothlin for their assistance in seeing this special issue to press. The entire editorial and management team of *The Bible Translator* join in honouring David Clark for his services to Bible translation, and wishing him many more years of productive and healthy life. (And some more papers, please, David!)

Stephen Pattemore
Editor