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Journal of Translation
ISSN 1558-7282 (online)
https://siljot.org

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Journal of Translation 5 (1), 2009: 63–84.
https://doi.org/10.54395/JOT-E4E29

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The Cultural Factor in Bible Translation Forty Years Later: A Personal Perspective from Zambia

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Abstract

I was first made aware of the crucial cultural factor in Bible translation during a three-week TAPOT workshop led by Eugene Nida at Makerere University (Kampala, Uganda) in 1969.[1] After benefitting then from five years of apprenticeship training under another one of the old masters, Jacob A. Loewen, my official United Bible Societies consultancy work in Zambia began on June 23, 1977. Ten years later I felt confident enough to put down some of my thoughts on the subject of *The Cultural Factor in Bible Translation* in the UBS Monograph (#2) title of that name. However, that book had a very narrow theoretical and contextual focus; it certainly did not deal with everything that needed to be said about "the cultural factor" as it relates to the production of a given Bible translation in a specific language and social setting. Older now, and hopefully somewhat wiser, in the present paper I revisit this topic from a much broader point of view. I therefore briefly explore the importance of the *cultural factor* when producing—that is, planning, organizing and managing, training staff for, composing, supplementing, evaluating and revising, publishing (in the wider sense), and promoting—a translation of the Scriptures today. It will be possible only to touch upon each of these essential aspects of the overall process in this article, which is further biased by my limited ethnic and experiential background. But I hope to raise some relevant issues and stimulate discussion by colleagues who work in a much different cultural environment within the translation fellowship.[2]

1. Introduction: What *is* the "cultural factor"?

Perhaps it would be helpful to begin with a short discussion of the key notion of *culture*, which, unfortunately, "is one of those pesky, paradoxical concepts that everyone knows what it means as long as they don't have to define it" (Schultz 2009:23). In 1987 I made the following attempt, defining "culture" as a people's "design for living—for thinking as well as doing," or more explicitly, the sum total of their "system of beliefs and patterns of behavior which are learned in society, whether by formal instruction or by simple imitation, and passed on from one generation to the next" (Wendland 1987a:5). The well-known cultural anthropologist Clifford Geertz would rule out the overt, visible aspects of culture, namely, those "complexes of concrete behavior patterns—customs, usages, traditions, habit clusters" that tend to popularly define the concept, in favor of "a set of control mechanisms—plans, recipes, rules, instructions (what computer engineers call 'programs')—for the governing of behavior" (1973:44). But why not include these explicit manifestations as vital parts of, and contributors to, the manifold, ever-changing "webs of significance" (Geertz *ibid.*:5) that constitute a given culture, or its components, at any given point in time? And time itself is a significant factor, for diverse cultural "meanings and patterns are negotiated, contested,

[1] A similar translator training workshop was held later that same year in Maroua, Cameroon (Bessong and Kenmogne 2007:364). To be sure, "forty years" is undoubtedly more important in UBS translation history than mine, for this year marks the fortieth anniversary of the E.J. Brill publication of *The Theory and Practice of Translation* (TAPOT) by Eugene A. Nida and Charles R. Taber (1969).

[2] I want to acknowledge several helpful comments by Philip Noss in response to the first draft of this paper. In addition, several articles in *A History of Bible Translation*, which he edited (2007), were valuable sources of information concerning the various topics that I explore in the present essay.

and constantly yet subtly in flux" (Schultz 2009:23) from the perspective of the governing worldview of people who live in a given social setting.[3] The following then might serve for our working definition:

> Culture is then a complex, dynamic system of patterns of action and interactions that a loosely bound group of people share in a particular environment. Culture is [also] a system of symbols and their meanings are shared by a group of people that allows them to interpret experience. (Schultz 2009:23)

But I am no anthropologist, and this is not a paper about culture *per se*. Rather, I wish to explore in a practical way the relevance of certain culturally-related issues for Bible translating, the entire production process from beginning to end—not just the completion of an electronic translated text in the target language (TL), which is the focus of most of our Scripture-applied sociocultural studies (including my own of 1987a). Before one can deal effectively with this "cultural factor" in the translation process, a considerable amount of personal preparation is necessary. The amount of time and effort required for this will of course vary according to the circumstances, *e.g.*, whether we are talking about a mother-tongue speaker of the TL or an expatriate consultant; which stage of the overall process is being dealt with; whether the focus of attention lies in the SL or the TL; which aspect of the task is being undertaken—translating, reviewing, testing, project management or promotion, publishing, and so forth. In any case, each and every person involved in a Bible translation project will at some point or another, to a greater or lesser degree, confront the cultural factor and have to deal with it in a satisfactory manner, appropriate to the particular situation. In my original monograph, I emphasized this in relation to the translators themselves and a "cultural conditioning of the translators" (1987a:193):

> *This is* a process whereby the translator becomes accustomed to the various types of non-equivalence that may occur, and at the same time sensitizes him/*her*self to the main cultural correspondences and contrasts as they appear in a comparison of the source and the receptor settings. Recognition, then, is the first vital step towards a solution, since many of these difficulties lie beneath the surface of the normal form-meaning problems of message *exchange* (as dealt with in most manuals on translation).[4]

However, in the present study I would like to widen the focus of consideration to suggest ways in which the cultural factor influences or impacts upon the various phases of Scripture production as a whole, including the post-translation engagement stage.[5]

I will conclude this introduction by outlining some of the key aspects of my own experience-based cultural conditioning over the years. This was indeed a progressive training process, full of ups and downs (especially in the early years), and as the saying goes, "the Lord is not finished with me yet" also in this ongoing area of socio-relational education. I have lived and worked in Zambia (Northern Rhodesia) and have been a student of Scripture for most of my life, but I still encounter on a daily basis those culturally-related surprises with regard to the biblical text and/or my adopted African locale that continue to make life interesting and challenging as well. But what sort of cultural training program did I undertake (and am still engaged in)? The following is a summary that you may compare with your own strategy of contextualized education: [6]

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[3] Charles Kraft defines worldview as "the totality of the culturally structured images and assumptions (including value and commitment or allegiance assumptions) in terms of which a people both perceive and respond to reality" (2008:12). The complex notion of worldview may be factored into a set of basic assumptions and values pertaining to macro-issues such as origin, reality, humanity, meaning, morality, spirituality, and destiny, or more dynamically into a number of interacting, mutually influencing variables, depending on the culture concerned, *e.g.*, causality, classification, time, space, self-others, and relationship (van Steenbergen 2007:38). A worldview, or macro-"cognitive environment," naturally influences, in some respects even predetermines a people's way of life and value system. These features must be carefully analyzed by translators in a comparative manner with respect to both the source (biblical) and the target cultures in order to "bring out clearly where the differences between the cultures are at a conceptual level. The analysis will then show which encyclopedic information is relevant for the reader in order to have access to the full semantic contents of the text" (*ibid.*:39).

[4] Slight modifications of the original quote are in *italics*.

[5] As Sánchez-Cetina states (2007:405), "In other words, buying a Bible is not enough. How do we make people 'fall in love' with the Bible: read it, study it, and allow it to transform their lives?"

[6] For a much more detailed, insightful, informative, and entertaining story of the "contextualized education" of a UBS translation consultant, see the autobiography of my predecessor in Zambia as well as one of my mentors, Jacob Loewen: "The very title [Educating Tiger] calls attention to the fact that the people, to whom I thought I was being sent

- Apprenticeship training with Jake Loewen, whose various insightful anthropological writings and words of advice helped to sensitize and tune me in to the cultural factor and its importance for Bible translation.[7]
- Various culture-discerning courses and workshops over the years with both SIL and also UBS translation agencies; thus my training and professional development was UBS-based but also SIL-shaped, for the better I believe.[8]
- The stream of writings relating to culture, language, and translation that flowed from UBS and SIL scholars in major publications as well as in the periodic journals *Practical Anthropology*, *The Bible Translator*, and *Notes on Translation*.[9]
- Teaching and learning at the Lusaka Lutheran Seminary for over 40 years, where my students and Zambian teaching colleagues gave me some indispensable insights into the local Bantu languages and cultures, which I very much needed in order to communicate more effectively, non-verbally (in behavior) as well as verbally.[10]
- Gradually absorbing the Chewa language and culture through diverse field studies, literature on the subject, local scholars and experts, student language assistants, pastoral work in many different urban and rural congregations, and all that goes into researching and writing a dissertation, along with ancillary pieces.[11]
- Interacting with many different Bible translation teams and committees together with staff of the Lusaka Translation Centre (UBS/Bible Society of Zambia); though serving as project consultant in terms of translation strategy and related issues, I was often very much the novice and learner when

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to bring God's truth, had a lot of God's truth to teach me" (2000a:4). I found this revelation to be very true in my own learning experience as well—along with another observation by "Jake": "I marvel at divine wisdom, at how much truth God was able to get across in books of the Bible to culturally bound and prejudiced individuals" (2000b:255).

[7] This training included serving as Loewen's "guinea pig" by working through the various exercises connected with several pre-final drafts of his UBS training manual, the *Practice of Translation* (POT). We would meet regularly to discuss and problem-solve the different sorts of difficulties that I was encountering during the course, and this process not only educated me but it also led to a number of revisions in his workbook. I would also accompany Jake to some of the projects that he was supervising in Zambia (and beyond) and participated in many of his workshops. Eugene Nida was also a great help and source of encouragement over the years—inviting me to a number of his workshops in Africa, taking the time to critique many of my early writings, and even inviting me on several occasions to his home to work on special projects. This type of personalized training was most beneficial to me and could perhaps be put into practice to a greater degree when developing new translation consultants for the United Bible Societies/national Bible Society.

[8] My first SIL language and culture training was derived from a three-month beginner's course at Horsleys Green, UK, during the summer of 1972, which was enriched by lectures from a constellation of SIL's leading lights at the time: Kenneth Pike, John Bendor-Samuel, John and Kathleen Callow, Robert Longacre, Joseph Grimes, Stephen Levinsohn, Anthony Naden, Sarah Gudschinsky, and Katherine Barnwell. Even CameronTownsend made a cameo appearance that year. In this connection, I wonder if more of such inter-agency cross training might not be very beneficial for our consultants and translators as well. I certainly value having had this opportunity.

[9] One wonders whether some of the sharpest critics of Nida and meaning-oriented approaches to Bible translation (*e.g.*, Gentzler 1993 and Venuti 1995) have actually read the full range of Nida's (let alone other UBS/SIL scholars') writings that reveal his keen cultural awareness and sociological sensitivity in relation to communicating the diverse texts of Scripture (*e.g.*, Nida 1954, 1960, 1968), despite his use of the infamous "conduit metaphor" (Wilt, ed. 2003:7-8, 34-40). However, for such socio-politically motivated critics it is the alleged "evangelical" (proselytizing) and/or "de-culturizing" nature of Christianity itself which seems to be the problem that beclouds the objectivity of their assessment.

[10] My long-time (40 years) colleague, Rev. Salimo Hachibamba, stands out in this regard. As later principal of the seminary, coordinator of the Tonga Bible (now Study Bible) project, and manuscript coordinator for the Bible Society of Zambia for over a decade, he freely offered helpful advice as well as constructive criticism regarding the various culture-related information that I happened to be processing for different writing endeavors. We recently collaborated on a collection of these essays (Wendland and Hachibamba 2007). A succession of gifted seminary students has assisted me in transcribing and translating masses of Chewa/Nyanja language materials, including village folktales, radio narratives, drama-plays, talk-shows, and sermons, as well as various taped interviews. This was also a great learning experience for me as we worked through these different texts together, with the former teacher-learner roles now reversed.

[11] This dissertation, completed some 30 years ago, is entitled, *Stylistic Form and Communicative Function in the Nyanja Radio Narratives of Julius Chongo* (U of Wisconsin, 1979; *cf.* Wendland 2004a).

it came to understanding and being able to convey culturally-embedded concepts from the Scriptures in the local Bantu languages, especially when dealing with key biblical terms and technical vocabulary.

- Learning about cultural matters by forcing myself to research and write about particularly complex topics and equally challenging vernacular genres of oral and written literature, *e.g.*, local idioms, ideophones, and figurative language; proverbial lore and lyric poetry; taboos and customs pertaining to the basic cycle of rural as well as changing urban life; witchcraft, divination, and other aspects of traditional ancestral religion in the matrilineal Bantu belt of south-central Africa.
- Growing up in and later establishing a family in Zambia (Northern Rhodesia), thus being continually exposed to and challenged by an indigenous worldview, historical and social tradition, ethnic ethos, government, and life-style that were quite foreign to the Western culture that I was born in and initially raised in.[12]

As suggested above, the subtitle of my 1987 monograph was something of a misnomer: "A study of communicating the Word of God in a central African cultural context." Thus, the first six chapters of the book tended to be rather too text-oriented, that is, with respect to the cultural factor as it relates to biblical writings and their re-presentation in a Bantu language and social setting. Chapters seven (careful translation testing) and eight (translator training) widened the scope to a degree, but not nearly enough, particularly in relation to the initial and final stages of production, *i.e.*, project preparation and community engagement. Hopefully I can satisfactorily confront my omissions in the current presentation, though certainly not as an exposition of how to do it, but rather as a stimulus for thought and discussion regarding a variety of selected (certainly not all!) issues that need to be taken into specifically cultural consideration as a Scripture translation program is being locally planned and implemented.

My treatment is developed largely along the lines of an informal, critical comparative overview.[13] I will selectively comment on how I saw things being done *then*, when I first investigated the cultural factor during the TAPOT years leading up to 1987, as distinct from *now*, in a post-missionary translation age (Bessong and Kenmogne 2007; Sánchez-Cetina 2007) when the stylistic options have multiplied and Western consultants are very much in the minority in comparison with the age of Nida. My study is also more suggestive and anecdotal than it is substantial and informative with respect to either the theory or the practice of Bible translation. This brief survey is quite personalized then and very much localized in terms of cultural setting (south-central Africa) as well as perspective (largely my own),[14] but hopefully it will still be of interest and at least some value as a case study with which others might compare their own diverse translation experiences as generated in different UBS world regions.

Thus, the crucial cultural component can work for or against desired (or pre-scheduled!) progress in each of eight arbitrarily isolated aspects of Scripture production. I will venture a few suggestions for improvement—for facilitating or refining the overall translation process—periodically during the course of my reflections, but for the most part I leave any implications or possible applications of what I have written to those who may be interested and care to respond. What I have posited as the essential stages of the

[12] Unfortunately, due to my original naïve ethnocentrism and cultural ignorance, much of my more informal learning experiences had to take place by trial and blunder—with far too much of the latter! But thanks to the gracious and accommodating character of my Zambian host culture, most of my social errors and offenses were not held against me as I gradually learned from them how to recognize what acceptable speech and behavior is and how to manifest it.

[13] I do not apply this quality of informality and possible personal bias with respect to the opinions of the various scholars whom I periodically cite along the way in order to provide a wider frame of reference for the discussion at hand.

[14] These limitations must always be kept in mind in the following presentation. As far as the generalization goes, my observations are based for the most part on the two translations that I was most closely involved with (Tonga in Zambia and Chewa in Malawi—first as the team exegete, later as project consultant), and to a lesser extent on projects that I supervised with less intensity for a shorter period of time. I also wanted to avoid having to repeatedly mention "south-central Africa" (*i.e.*, embracing the three nations that once constituted the old Central African Federation (CAF), *i.e.*, Malawi [Nyasaland], Zambia [Northern Rhodesia], and Zimbabwe [Southern Rhodesia]) in subsequent sections. Thus, the situation and experiences that I refer to may be quite different from those encountered in other UBS world regions, even in Africa itself. This might occasion some interesting comparative comments in the ensuing discussion.

production process are considered roughly in their sequential temporal order, though there is, of course, a lot of overlapping between and among them: planning, organizing and managing, training, composing, supplementing, evaluating and revising, publishing (in the wider multi-media sense), and promoting (popularizing).

2. Planning

Planning for a Bible translation today is quite different from what it was in the time of TAPOT (ca. 1966-1986).[15] In those days, most projects were largely Bible-society (UBS) motivated and driven, that is, in the person of the regional translation consultant, who was normally a Westerner (often an American/Canadian, British, or Dutch male). The primary goal was to get meaning-based, mother-tongue implemented "common-language" or "popular-language" (for the difference, see Wonderly 1968:41-46) versions in all of the major languages of the continent and the world (later specified as those having a million or more speakers). The principal churches working in a given language community would be asked to participate, of course, but usually very little was expected of them in terms of support, other than to supply translators and reviewers for the project and perhaps also an office where the translation team could regularly meet. Planning in terms of establishing a fixed schedule for completion was virtually non-existent—"for as long as it takes" was the implicit understanding. This lack of control could perhaps be excused since the only basis for comparison was usually a missionary version of the preceding generation—an enterprise that likewise tended to drag on for years due to the part-time nature of the work.

In short, then, though the general goal was clear and quite specific—namely, to produce a common-language Bible—the planning for the various projects was not. Rather, these preparations varied a lot, depending on which churches and mission agencies were involved, how much they were prepared to contribute, and how soon they could identify and release national personnel (usually pastors or teachers) for the work. Nowadays, the cultural factor is a much more integral part of project planning and development. This especially the case where the frame of reference for the translation is clearly and comprehensively delineated to begin with (*cf.* Wilt and Wendland 2008:145-149) and refined in the light of the insights to be derived from Nord's functional *Skopostheorie* (1997; *cf.* de Vries 2008) and Sperber and Wilson's Relevance Theory (1986; *cf.* Gutt 1992). Thus, a translation project can be organized most efficiently and effectively by clearly setting forth, at the outset, its principal communicative goal(s) (*Skopos*) in view of what has been determined by research to be the most "relevant" (psychologically enriching/rewarding) in terms of the prevailing cultural context and primary setting of use, including the society's basic cognitive assumptions as well as social norms, conventions, expectations, and values.[16] Indeed, "[t]his *culture-*

[15] 1986 was the year that de Waard and Nida's *From One Language to Another: Functional Equivalence in Bible Translating* (FOLTA) was published, in an era when the *functional* approach began to be taken much more seriously in secular circles following the German *Skopostheorie* school (*cf.* Nord 1997:6), as well as in the theory and practice of Bible translation (*cf.* my initial attempt in 1987, in an effort to make some practical application of my dissertation research). "In terms of *Skopostheorie*, equivalence may be one possible aim when translating," where "equivalence" is defined as "[a] relationship of equal communicative value or function between a source and a target text or, on lower ranks, between words, phrases, sentences, syntactic structures *etc.* of a source and target language…" (Nord 1997:138). However, according to this theory, there is a definite priority: "Taking a 'skopos-oriented' approach to translation means that translators choose their translation strategies according to the purpose or function that the translated text is intended to fulfill for the target audience" (Nord 2006:43).

[16] "*Skopoi*, together with culture-specific conventions recognized by a given language community, are now seen as an important framework within which what readers expect of a translation is to be determined, making it incumbent on the translator to be loyal to the target audience by telling them why and how their expectations are defied when they are…" (Hatim 2001:183)—yet at the same time also "loyal" to the source text in the sense that "the target-text purpose should be compatible with the original author's intentions" (Nord 1997:125). "[T]he translator deals with a source text produced under a set of source-culture conditions for a source-culture audience. What is said and how it is said are determined by the author's communicative purposes and his or her assessment of the situation for which the message is intended. The translation will be used in a different situation determined by a different set of target-culture conditions. It may be different with regard to time and place…, sometimes with regard to medium…, and definitely with regard to the addressed audience (*e.g.*, their general and cultural knowledge, sociocultural background, value systems and world view)" (Nord 2006:44). All such variables must be investigated during the project planning stage.

affirming aspect of today's translation is another of the new trends affecting the field of Bible translation, both from a theoretical and a practical viewpoint" (Zogbo 2007:344, italics added).[17]

It is one thing to *intend* this emphasis upon cultural sensitivity with regard to translation project planning; however, it is a much greater challenge to actually *implement* such a motivation in a significant way. To begin with, the project planners must face the daunting task of thoroughly educating the TL constituency—the leaders, at least, of a representative sample of participating or interested groups—with regard to the various translation options available. Such instruction would enable the community (or their leaders at least) to arrive at a more informed and defensible decision as to the particular type of version that would be best for the constituency as a whole in view of the various human, material, and financial resources that they have in hand (or have pledged to commit to the project). This overview and prior assessment would include a study of the principal dialects involved, the degree of literacy in the community, their socioeconomic levels, major inter-denominational relations (*e.g.*, among Protestant, Catholic, Orthodox, and/or "Evangelical" church bodies), the status of Christianity (vis-à-vis other religions), the history and relative availability of translations in the language, and so forth. How to fund and carry out the necessary culturally-sensitive (socially inclusive, non-offensive) pre-project research and audience-sampling will be one of the first major decisions that the initial planning committee will have to decide.

An initial overall strategizing exercise of this nature (if it is even considered and embarked upon in the first place) has been made considerably more difficult nowadays in view of the precise time schedules and deadlines required (if some external UBS-related funding is requested), especially for cultures that traditionally do not practice, or put much stock in, long-term forecasting with regard to the future. Not only must the exact audience-desired Scripture product be determined in advance,[18] but the timetable for completing the production process also needs to be specified in percentage-measurable detail. This presents a real challenge in a region that has been characterized by unpredictability, political turmoil and radical socioeconomic change (*e.g.*, Zimbabwe), further complicated by alien cultural influence from the East as well as the West.

3. Organizing (Managing)

As in the case of project planning, so also in the TAPOT age of the late 1960s through the early 1980s, most "common language" Bible translation programs were organized and managed by Western expatriate missionaries. The translators, except for the exegete (who was supposed to be familiar with the biblical languages), were all national mother-tongue speakers, as were the majority of reviewers and the members of any local support committees, but most of the real administration was still missionary-governed.[19] That included the chief-in-charge, the UBS translation consultant (or HTA), who directly or indirectly controlled the project budget and finances. The degree of cultural-awareness and sensitivity that was manifested in the context of a given project thus depended very much on the expats concerned, and this naturally varied from one language community and denomination to another (with Catholic priests tending to be more perceptive and responsive in this area than Protestant missionaries).

The situation has gradually changed over the years, that is, from expatriate-organized and dominated projects to those that are much more, if not exclusively, national-controlled and community-based. Nowadays, "projects belong to the community of speakers, to the churches they represent, and to those for whom the translation is intended" (Zogbo 2007:340). In Zambia, this fundamental change in orientation included a rigorous program of de-centralization whereby the translation projects were regionalized, being

[17] In her excellent overview, Lynell Zogbo comes to the following conclusion with regard to current translation practice: "Translation agencies are [therefore] *free* – free to choose what their priorities are, who their audience is, what their goals should be, what form the Scripture should take, and how these Scripture messages should be conveyed" (2007:350, original italics).

[18] "Dwindling funds from the West means local productions must 'pay their own way'. … Bible societies respond to needs as expressed by communities. They produce New Testaments, Bibles, and other Scripture products because they know they will be sold and used" (Zogbo 2007:347).

[19] For a detailed report of some case-studies that document a similar situation in Cameroon, see Bessong and Kenmogne 2007:353-355). South-central Africa too had its own "missionary age" (ca. the first half of the twentieth century) when the primary translators were also expatriate missionaries (*ibid.*:357).

directly governed and managed by locally elected administrative committees, instead of by the UBS translation consultant and/or the General Secretary of the national Bible Society as in the early years. In this way the community (in practice, a recognized urban center for the language and culture concerned) took direct ownership of the translation. Through their elected administrative committee they were responsible not only for financially and materially supporting the translation team (including office space and housing), but they also set their salaries and conditions of service in keeping with local socioeconomic standards (as distinct from conditions prevailing in the capital city, Lusaka). In addition, they had to see to it that their translators performed adequately on a daily as well as annual basis and, on the other hand, that they were assisted in a culturally-appropriate manner during cases of personal emergency (*e.g.*, a sickness or death in the family) and when settling issues pertaining to retirement.

Perhaps all these responsibilities constituted too much management and oversight to expect from part-time volunteers, especially in view of past Bible Society practice, where virtually the entire budget was externally supplied and the project was administered from a distant Bible House and the office of the translation consultant. Therefore, during this period of self-rule, almost all the projects struggled organizationally, for example, to keep a minimum number of capable volunteers actively involved and to adequately support essential aspects of the work financially. Consequently, moves are underway to centralize the system again in terms of management control at the national Bible House, though (in Zambia) the translation teams will still be left to operate in their home regional centers, where they will be closer to the people whom they are serving and the language of translation. This move towards greater program uniformity *could be* a step in the right direction—for better efficiency, accountability, supervision, *etc.*—but then again, maybe not. We will just have to wait and see how this plan actually turns out in practice.

A final note regarding the influence of culture on project organization: After the age of expatriate domination, there was sort of a backlash (at times initiated by the translation consultant!), and foreign missionaries were deliberately excluded or not encouraged to participate in local translation programs. This development did not turn out very well, generally speaking (and again, speaking from the restricted perspective of Zambia). Most missionaries who lived through the nation's struggle for independence (in the early 1960s), or who entered the country later, recognized that they were no longer in charge and now had to serve consistently in a supporting role. Thus, those who were committed to the cause of Bible translation still had an important contribution to make, for example: as technical advisers with respect to computer-related, exegetical, and even particular TL issues (concerning which they may have conducted specialized scholarly research), as sub-committee organizers (*e.g.*, for the purposes of draft review, fund-raising, or translation promotion and distribution), as travel or venue facilitators (*e.g.*, using personal vehicles or office facilities), and as impartial respondents when sensitive or controversial matters pertaining to dialect, sub-ethnic diversity, translation testing, and program strategy were being discussed (*cf.* Wendland 1987a:200-203).[20]

4. Training

As soon as a Bible translation project has been sufficiently planned and organized for business with a comprehensive action plan (*Brief*),[21] it needs to see to the training of its personnel, starting with the nuclear

[20] Thus a foreign adviser (or resource person) is often "able to function as a catalyst to add another perspective to the understanding of a text, especially when a problem is encountered, or to stimulate a new approach to overcome some 'sticking point' in procedure. … The expatriate may be able to shed some light upon a certain aspect of the situation which the national did not recognize or consider sufficiently. … A Chewa proverb sums up this potential expatriate role in a typically colorful way: *mlendo ndi amene ayenda ndi kalumo kakuthwa* 'a stranger is one who travels about with a sharp razor'. … Similarly, an outsider often comes to a domestic or legal [or indeed, a translational] dispute with a fresh outlook so that he is able to lend a new insight which may well bring about a resolution of the matter" (Wendland 1987a:201).

[21] A translation *Brief* (from *Skopostheorie*, *cf.* section 1) is a particular project's terms of reference or set of organizational guidelines; it specifies the type of translation to be produced and its principal goal(s) (*Skopos*), the project's administrative structure, staff qualifications, proposed annual budget, completion schedule, and so forth (*cf.* Nord 1997:27-31; Wendland 2004b:291-293).

translation team. To begin with, the primary translators must be identified and selected, a process that is usually carried out by the translation consultant (together with translation center staff, if available)[22] in consultation with the project's supporting churches. In the past, the culturally appropriate procedure would be for the main denominations to select some distinguished and usually elderly (pre- or post-retirement) priest, clergyman, or teacher (occasionally, a lay-leader) from among their ranks and "donate" him (never a "her"!) to the project for the duration.[23] This way of doing things of course led to various problems, with which we are all no doubt familiar and which therefore do not require a rehearsal here. I understand that in some countries of Africa, recognized and proven scholars are being seconded to projects, the major ones at least. However, in the region where I am working, this does not happen, and the translation teams must make do with whoever happens to be available and willing to work at the relatively low salaries that the Bible Society is able to afford. This normally necessitates an initial "selection workshop" where a group of potential candidates (proposed by the different supporting churches) are taught and tested for a week or so in order to identify those who are seemingly best equipped to cope with the task. In a face-saving move then, the persons who are not selected are asked to organize and coordinate review teams in the locations where they live.

Then the training of the translators (and periodically also reviewers) must begin. In days gone by, such training used to be carried out by longer (3-4 week) workshops once or twice a year. This is no longer the practice—for several reasons: (a) the difficulty of procuring a suitable, including economical, venue for this length of time, and (b) experience that tended to indicate that translators often reached the point of diminishing returns after an intensive course lasting a week or so. Thus, the longer basic training workshops were given up in favor of a larger number of shorter sessions over the year, combined with the strategy of encouraging the translators themselves to take the initiative in their local communities by teaching what they had just recently learned to those reviewers (as well as other interested parties) who happened to live near by.

Early training methods were heavily based on the materials presented in TAPOT and POT, the former more for the theory of Bible translation, the latter for the practice. Katharine Barnwell's basic course (3rd ed., 1994) also proved helpful in the formative stages to introduce translators with relatively little education to the essential principles of the craft. In later years and particularly with more experienced teams, I found that a text-centered comparative approach, which focused primarily on a single book of the Bible (a "one book workshop"; *cf.* Wendland 2000), seemed to work out more effectively than topically oriented, analytical courses (*e.g.*, on figurative language, rhetorical questions, or parallelism), especially when training translators who were not able to access the original text, or even an interlinear version. Equally important is the method or manner of training, and here again trial-and-error coupled with experience over the years has helped me to improve (I would not say "perfect") my teaching technique through *traditional* strategies of instruction such as these: interactive, dialogic exchange; a preference for a contextualized, inductive method; focusing on communal, group-oriented tasks; and the frequent comparative use of translation models (whether good or poor) from related languages (*cf.* Wendland 2006). Such a culture-sensitive pedagogy may be complemented of course by modern methods and tools of instruction, like the Bible Lands video series of DVD presentations.[24]

Translator training is an ongoing process, and the question arises: how can this be provided most efficiently in view of considerations such as, the intensive nature of translation work, the continual short- and long-term deadlines to meet, and the need for the translators to operate very closely together as a team, to the extent possible.[25] Thus, when one member of the typical three-person team takes a leave of absence for a

[22] National translation staff positions at the Bible Society of Zambia, for example, include a media officer, a manuscript examiner, and a translation program coordinator.

[23] To explain: I used the term "donate" rather than "second" because the church bodies concerned never really supported their selections to the team, except perhaps for allowing them to live in a church house. Such financing was considered to be the responsibility of the foreign-sustained national Bible Society. There were very few female clergy or lay-leaders, either available or actually proposed in those days.

[24] Prepared by Krijn van der Jagt and Ray Pritz.

[25] For an overview of various institutional facilities for training translators in Africa, see Bessong and Kenmogne 2007:364-366; for further details, see *The Bible Translator* 56:2/2005 and 57:2/2006).

year or two in order to pursue a graduate degree, the work will inevitably suffer in the short term—hopefully to be compensated for when the team member returns, now much wiser and more competent.[26] Such lengthy absences can seriously affect the psychological as well as practical cohesiveness of the team, especially in culture areas where the essential qualities of trust, respect, and mutual cooperation must be developed over time while the members are engaged in a communal enterprise that works for the common good of the community at large.

It is much better, in my opinion, to begin if at all possible with translators who have already attained the required level of education,[27] if not also some translating experience, than to hope that they will somehow accomplish this during their tour-of-duty. In any case, whether educationally upgrading or shoring up those concerned, periodic short (2-3 week) sessions, including intensive refresher courses in the biblical languages for those who have at least been exposed to them, seem to be more effective than less frequent extended workshops, and certainly better than long leaves for graduate work.[28]

Several recently published or updated translator training manuals and instructional guides are now available (from UBS as well as SIL sources),[29] either in final or trial versions, although these will undoubtedly need to be adapted or reworked, perhaps considerably so, by the translation consultant on hand. Pedagogical materials of this nature will probably also need to be translated and culturally contextualized in order to develop a progressive, setting-specific, on-the-job training program, which in some cases is the only option in view of the human resources that projects are sometimes forced start out with. The question is: should such projects even be allowed to begin at all under less-than-ideal conditions, no matter how urgently the local community pleads for a translation in their language? Put crassly, should it rather be a case of first "put up or shut up"? Thus, if MT translators with the requisite qualifications are not provided (if they are indeed available), the project must simply be put on hold until they materialize.

5. Composing

This stage pertains to the heart of the sequence of production, namely, the actual formulation of a Bible translation, that is, the activity of representing, or recreating, in a certain TL the diverse texts of Scripture that have been recorded in another language (and cultural orientation), whether the original Hebrew and Greek source language (SL) or a medial language (ML):[30] To what degree does the cultural factor apply then also to translation practice? A contextualized manner of pedagogy, including intensive MT research, mentioned above in connection with translator training, is naturally relevant during the composition stage too, for the two processes overlap considerably. Translators must be progressively educated while they are at work so that they might continue to grow in their capacity to express the biblical text accurately as well

[26] Unfortunately, the ideal is not usually realized, at least not in my experience. Thus, translators who leave a project to pursue studies at the MTh level (I have never taught a student who was studying for a doctorate in translation) normally do not last very long upon their return. Either their churches recall them for teaching duties at some theological college, or they find that the national Bible Society is unable to support them financially at a scale commensurate with their higher academic status. This is the case whether or not they happen to go overseas or remain in Africa for their graduate studies (*cf.* Zogbo 2007:339). Contrast, for example, the apparent admirable situation in Kenya (Bessong and Kenmogne 2007:360).

[27] In Africa, the ideal minimum standards have been set as follows: *translator*—a university/ college/seminary first degree in theology or biblical studies; *exegete*—in addition to the qualifications of a translator, having basic competence in one biblical language or another (or both) (*cf.* Zogbo 2007:339). Of course, in countries or areas where translators cannot be found (or hired) with this level of education then a given project's translation job commission (*Brief*) will necessarily have to be notched down in this respect.

[28] Short courses for several teams at once (OT or NT) also serve an important sociocultural function by allowing translators from different areas to bond with and bolster one another through the mutual sharing of their various experiences and challenges, thus creating a community of fellow Christians engaged in a common mission that focuses on the very Word which also motivates and sustains them. The establishment of a more-or-less permanent, well-provisioned training center in the region (*e.g.*, southern Africa; *cf.* Sánchez-Cetina 2007:406) would make longer, one-month courses possible, while not impairing a team's overall progress during the year (as selective, more extended extractions tend to do).

[29] See, for example, Harriet Hill 2006; Harriet Hill and Margaret Hill 2008.

[30] Thus, rendering the TL text immediately from the SL is a *direct* translation; rendering the TL text mediately from some base text in a ML, *e.g.*, English/French/Spanish/*etc.*, is an *indirect* translation.

as idiomatically in their mother-tongue and appropriately within its sociocultural setting. Hopefully, they will get ever better at the task of interlingual communication as training exercises are extended from the elementary to increasingly advanced levels of competence.

In addition to conducting a culturally appropriate method of ongoing instruction, one that capitalizes on linguistic resources that are rare if extant at all in European languages,[31] the team must also be guided into developing a corresponding set of translation procedures that are both efficient and effective in terms of the quantity and quality of work that is completed. However, that is more easily said than done. There is often a big gap between the stages of planning, administering, and training and implementing these in the form of a productive, actively engaged translation team. This would be a trio (or quartet) that operates together in differentiated unity, with each member carrying out her/his respective roles and responsibilities in a cooperative, complementary manner, putting aside all petty jealousies and individual egos for the good of the project and target language community as a whole.

The older, communal method of getting this compositional job done was probably the most culturally sensitive and apposite. However, it was also rather inefficient and time-consuming. Thus, the three-person translation team (with or without an expat SL exegete and/or coordinator) would usually draft the text by hand around the table together. Mimeographed copies would be circulated for checking by reviewers, and then they would all meet for a week or two at a time in order to read through and discuss the translation as a joint committee, making the agreed-upon corrections as they went along—typically moving very slowly and tediously through the text verse by verse. Sometimes only a portion of a chapter could be completed in an entire day as everyone had an opportunity to make a comment and contribute to the discussion, whether that happened to be the verse at hand or some related issue that came up. There is no doubt that this was the culturally appropriate thing to do, but it left many projects with an span of 30-50 years necessary to complete the whole Bible—and more, if the Deuterocanonical books were included, though the latter, involving mainly Catholic and Anglican participants, took relatively less time since the compositional process was not nearly as complicated.

Then, even as now (in Zambia), virtually none of the national translators were equipped to refer to the biblical languages when carrying out their work. Therefore, oral exegetical arguments based on the original text were not very effective (unless supported by one of the few UBS Handbooks available at the time) since the team could not really appreciate the points being made by a translation consultant or exegete. On the other hand, the biblical "experts" did not want to be put into a position in which they would regularly have to influence an argument or impose their view through what might be seen as power tactics, by referring to a source document that nobody else could access. Thus the so-called "*base-models*" approach was implemented whereby translators were taught to first examine the RSV to give them an idea of the "form" of the biblical text and then the TEV to suggest its "meaning" in English.[32] At times other versions like the REB, CEV, or the JB were consulted, but by and large these two prevailed, the RSV and the TEV (later GNB). However, this translation method did not usually work out very well in practice, for several reasons. Experience gradually revealed that mediocre or poorly educated translators were not sufficiently

[31] The ubiquitous *ideophone* comes immediately to mind here—a complete dramatized, often high-sensory predication in a word (or two). When employed with sufficient explanation (for the TL audience), contextual appropriateness, and a sensitivity for the oral-aural dynamics of a given passage of Scripture, the use of ideophones may "make it possible to produce lively and expressive texts, reflecting the target language and enhancing precision and naturalness in translation" (Bessong and Kenmogne 2007:376). In addition to ideophones, other non-English (such as French or Portuguese) linguistic features are available in African languages, such as Chewa, *e.g.*, an elaborate demonstrative/deictic referential system, a more complex and precise verbal structure, much greater flexibility in word order generally, plus a concordial agreement scheme that enhances the possibility of rhythmic utterances and euphony or phonological play. These stylistic devices may be used both to match the functional dynamics of the biblical text, and at times also to creatively, yet contextually express its implicit meaning, that is, where the SL text is under differentiated in comparison with the linguistic demands of the TL, *e.g.*, the tense-aspect system of Hebrew verbs.

[32] However, the ML of English often provoked its own set of problems for translators, especially when (semi-) idiomatic expressions were used—and frequently misunderstood (albeit clearly!). From another perspective in Africa: "The base and model approach still seems useful for contexts like French-speaking Africa, where educational development does not always allow for recruitment of translators capable of applying the three-stage [TAPOT] method in Bible translation from the biblical source text" (Bessong and Kenmogne 2007:379).

equipped to deal with the rather complex reasoning involved in closely comparing two quite different translations (*i.e.*, "foreignized" vs. "domesticated") in an alien language (English) and evaluating the differences in relation to effective communication in their mother-tongue. The result was a more-or-less literal rendition of either the RSV *or* the TEV, depending on the prevailing denominational influence of the translation team and primary reviewers.[33] Thus, Protestant churches generally preferred a more correspondent approach (especially if they had also been the sponsors of an old "missionary version"),[34] while Catholics were considerably more open to, and accepting of a more meaning-oriented rendering.

The situation regarding methodology has progressively changed over the years. Translators are, on average, better educated at the outset and hence more capable of dealing with the various exigencies and complexities of Bible translation.[35] At least one member of each team is now able to manage a computer keyboard and to handle the bare essentials of Paratext 6.[36] It is questionable, however, whether the full text-comparative and evaluative potential of this program can be utilized to a satisfactory degree.[37] On the other hand, working procedures are more diversified so that individual team members and reviewers are organized to focus on or specialize in particular aspects of the compositional process, *e.g.*, initial drafting, exegetical, translational, punctuation and consistency checks, key term recording, target audience research, and so on. Thus, though the relative level of competence in these different areas is limited, the progress rate has been significantly increased.

Furthermore, the overall quality of the translation has, in many cases, been improved through access to an important cross-cultural resource, namely, a fairly well done model version in a fellow Bantu language (*e.g.*, a language of wider communication such as Chewa or Tonga). The team can normally utilize such a linguistically-related text more effectively than one in English to suggest creative renderings that are more natural and at times more accurate as well (since they are not based on a misunderstanding of some English version, whether literal or idiomatic). In some cases, a vernacular version can be used also for *negative* reinforcement—that is, *not* to reproduce in the TL text certain obvious errors or infelicities with regard to exegesis, style, or culture-related implication to be found in the reference translation. It may be that newly developed electronic tools (*e.g.*, Adapt-It), if used with care in certain situations, will further facilitate such inter-lingual, mutually illuminating translation work.[38]

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[33] The translation process in this part of Africa was sometimes hindered by a mechanical per-page procedure of payment for the work accomplished. This method did not encourage much time to be taken for reflection and discussion of controversial issues. The result was generally a translation draft that heavily favored, or even reproduced, the TEV or the RSV. Revised editions of several of these earlier common-language vernacular versions have therefore had to be undertaken relatively soon after their initial publication, sometimes completely redoing large portions of the original.

[34] In most areas of Africa (I believe), as in Latin America, "[l]iteralism is a characteristic of most missionary translations" (Sánchez-Cetina 2007:395).

[35] The technical standard and objective of most central African projects (*e.g.*, excluding revision projects involving older, but still popular FC translations) is well summarized in the words of Stephen Pattemore (2007:263) as follows: "a theoretical framework…based on a pragmatic communication model [*e.g.*, relevance theory], a context-sensitive literary [or oratorical] approach to the text, and a functionalist view of the parameters of translation [*e.g.*, frames of reference]." This ideal goal underlies a team's training exercises and compositional activities as guided by the translation consultant, but it often remains not fully realized in practice due to various limitations that pertain to readily available resources—human, financial, and temporal (in that order).

[36] On the other hand, does the use of this visual electronic tool tend to promote a verse-by-verse manner of composition, with a corresponding neglect of the larger discourse units of the text (due to the small portions of text visible in a given window) and its oral articulation? Obviously, procedures must be applied to counteract or to compensate for this possibility, *e.g.*, printouts of larger text portions for reading aloud. In addition to a lack of full competency in Paratext, the translation personnel in my area of consultancy would not be knowledgeable or proficient enough to make use of the new Libronix Digital Library System (DLS, of Logos Research Systems) being proposed as a new electronic reference tool for Bible translators in Africa (Gerrit van Steenbergen, personal correspondence, 27 May, 2008).

[37] In the area of my supervision, the following ideal (perhaps now a reality for most projects in Africa) has not yet been realized for the work that is currently being done: "Translators can now, in their own work location, produce what appear to be camera-ready copies of their translations… Translators can carry out their own initial computer checks." (Zogbo 2007:340).

[38] As Bessong and Kenmogne observe, any electronically produced draft text prepared from a linguistically-related (and high quality) base translation "must…be examined and corrected to fit the target audience" (2007:371). In some

6. Supplementing

This activity represents a stage in the production process that has developed considerably over the years (in many cases starting from zero) and an aspect in which the cultural factor can really come to the fore to render a great deal of positive influence. Supplementation refers to the different types of *paratextual* aid that are incorporated along with the translated text in order to provide a wider cognitive frame of reference, which is intended to help readers to more correctly understand and interpret the Scripture portion that they happen to be dealing with at the moment (*cf.* Wilt and Wendland 2008:ch. 2). This would include such features as: descriptive and explanatory notes, sectional headings (titles) and introductions, cross-references, a topical index, glossary entries for key terms and technical expressions, illustrations, diagrams, maps, comparative charts, and so forth. Obviously, these items aim to illuminate the biblical text, but they may also be used to relate that portion of Scripture to the total cultural setting of the primary TL constituency, including the people's worldview (above all!) as well as their ethnic, religious, and political history, their major customs and traditions, their ecological and geographical environment, *etc.*[39] Where to draw the line between such a significantly supplemented version and a full "study Bible" is difficult to determine, for it is more a matter of degree than of substance. Thus, the answer will vary, depending on the overall situational context and the primary communication goal (*Skopos*) for which the version is being prepared (*cf.* stage 1, "planning").

In any case, nowadays the provision of such supplementary features is an obligatory feature of any type of Scripture translation, whether more or less literal/idiomatic in nature and for whatever purpose(s) it is intended to accomplish.[40] It is a characteristic of published Bibles that has been gradually growing in popularity as well as importance over the years, but especially in recent times. This is because churches have begun to realize the manifold seriousness of the problem that the prevailing level of "biblical literacy" presents in just about any part of the world nowadays—in rapidly developing "new Christian" countries and regions (*e.g.*, Africa and Asia) as well as in the increasingly "post-Christian" Western world. Thus, it is more often the case than not that a reader of the Bible has very little, if any, background knowledge about the text that he or she is reading (*cf.* Acts 8:30-35), about other key passages (intertexts) that may be related to it, and about the macro-(meta-)narrative (big picture) of the Scriptures as a canonical whole. Such a deficiency of essential information pertains to basic points of fact (*e.g.*, who the Samaritans were and where they lived) as well as to intimate points of cultural and religious detail (*e.g.*, why the Samaritans were so detested and avoided by most Jews). This necessary information may be supplied in various ways, but the target group must first be carefully researched as to their preferences and requisites, for example, to tell about the Samaritans in an introduction to Matthew's gospel alone, in the introduction to each of the four gospels, in a selection of text-based footnotes, in a major illustrated sidebar at Luke 10:25-37, and/or in a single extended back glossary entry.

The various types of supplementation provided in a given translation must also be carefully tested for audience appeal, accessibility, and interpretation (see stage 6 below). This is because some intended "helps" may turn out to do just the opposite, that is, to confuse, deter, or even insult some readers. This is

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cases, needed corrections may also be manifested through this process in the source, or input, text. Such electronic facilitation techniques may be regarded as the exception, rather than the rule; that is, to be normally applied only in exceptional situations where a certain project must begin in a language context where qualified translators are simply not available, for whatever reason.

[39] Such information, indeed more of it, may be supplied extra-textually in the form of instructional booklets that may be used to elaborate upon any number of Bible-related topics or issues that pertain to its understanding and application in a given TL cultural setting, *e.g.*, the Jewish sacrificial or festival system.

[40] It will be a challenge to somehow provide these helps for non-print Scripture products in an unobtrusive manner. This might not be too hard in the case of strictly audio translations, where explanatory notes, for example, might be marked and signaled to listeners by means of aural devices, such as a different speaking voice accompanied by a bell or gong to begin and end the "note." These would have to be explained and perhaps illustrated at the beginning of the presentation. Audio-visual Scripture products may be more difficult to graphically annotate with important background information. On the other hand, a picture or illustration is worth a thousand words, so this supplementary technique might be employed, perhaps as part of an introductory portion, or at convenient intervals during the production, for example, to de-contextualize some modern retelling of a biblical narrative and relate it to its original source through a portrayal of key elements of an Ancient Near East environment (an artist's depiction) or Palestinian topography.

particularly the case with reference to the cultural factor and certain mis-worded facts supplied in notes or wrongly suggested in illustrations (*e.g.*, the eyeless [= soul-less, ghost-like!] Valliton line drawings or offensive hand gestures that persons depicted happen to be making from a local perspective).

In some project settings, the use of supplementary helps may present administrators and the team with a rather hard sell to make, either because influential members of the target constituency have little or no experience with these features (being accustomed to the "no note or comment" era of UBS), or because they (especially influential missionaries) have been warned by their sponsoring denominations against such alleged "doctrinal additions," and in a few instances because of some unfortunate incident that planners or organizers experienced (or heard about) in a prior translation project. As at the beginning of the program (1) and also at its concluding stage (6), a concerted effort may be needed to instruct the intended receptor group with regard to the purpose and potential educative benefit of explanatory notes and other supplements. At the same time, it is necessary to firmly caution the translation team against introducing helps, illustrations for example, that clearly *over*-contextualize (unduly domesticate) the message of Scripture, thus denying, distorting, or deleting important aspects of the Ancient Near Eastern setting and environment or a biblical worldview.

On the other hand, these paratextual aids must also be continually evaluated for accuracy and relevance along the way,[41] just like the translation itself (*cf.* stage 6). Local cultural components do need to be highlighted, where applicable, but they must not be allowed to overshadow or detract from the point and purpose of the original event of communication.

7. Evaluating and Revising

The need for translation assessment has already been noted above. This must begin at various stages and to different degrees *in media res*, while the text is being drafted, and should not be delayed until the work has been nearly completed. Such evaluation exercises, whether general or specific in nature, have gradually diversified and intensified over the years. They perform several important objectives: to test the quality of the translation with respect to exegetical accuracy and stylistic naturalness; to get receptor feedback regarding certain important but possibly controversial theological terms (*e.g.*, "sin," "law," "grace," "salvation," "holy," "spirit") and culturally-specific expressions (*e.g.*, honorific usage and dialogue registers); and to gradually popularize the translation among the community at large, allowing them to feel that they too are a part of the ongoing Scripture communication process being carried on in their midst.

The last mentioned purpose was sometimes neglected in earlier years, when projects were more centrally administered from Bible House or a certain mission station, and not enough effort was made to get local church leaders and non-traditional Christian denominations involved in the enterprise. Trial book portions of the translations would be published and distributed, but there was not enough systematic follow-up initiated to elicit and analyze reader reactions. Thus, the almost proverbial "response of the receptor" was often limited to the opinions derived from the translation team itself and a small corps of reviewers who would periodically meet to discuss the major issues (see stage 4). It is not surprising, then, that when the whole TL language community was finally exposed to the fully published Bible, they were often disappointed over problems that ranged from relatively minor (but often highly contentious) orthography issues to the particular terms chosen to refer to the deity of Scripture, whether "God," "Lord," or "YHWH."

It is one thing to recognize the need for evaluating a translation, it is quite another to conduct an effective, ongoing, culturally-perceptive procedure for doing this. Otherwise, although a great deal of feedback might be gathered, this raw data may not provide the answers that the team requires, or it may even supply the wrong answers in cases where the research and testing was not carried out in the proper way, either scientifically or sociolinguistically. It is essential, therefore, to develop carefully contextualized programs

[41] This brings up need for multi-tasking, preparing all of these supplementary features *while* the actual translation is being carried out so that they may be carefully chosen or formulated to fit and fulfill the specific informational requirement at particular points in the translation. Waiting to do this until after the entire translation has been completed only increases the difficulty of closely harmonizing them with the biblical text as well as the possibility of error or cultural mismatches—of introducing *unhelpful* helps!

for translation assessment and tests that will ask pertinent questions or examine responses in a socially appropriate manner (*cf*. Hill 2006; Sundersingh 2001: chapters 13, 14, 16; Wendland 2004: chapter 10).

For example, simply requesting in the introduction to a newly published book portion that readers should write down their comments and send them to Bible House will not work out well in central Africa, for many reasons: the time and (even minimal) expense involved; the level of literacy required to prepare such a response; making the appeal too open-ended, such that it will not elicit the information which the team needs to know; the possibility that whatever responses there are may be lost or not catalogued properly at Bible House. This type of exercise is designed for a highly literate culture and thus will not achieve the desired results; if continued, as in the past, it must be complemented by well-designed research projects that aim to probe specific issues and an accurate expression of target audience opinions. In addition, the effective use of the information obtained from translation testing is not always given the priority or expertise (in terms of time and staff qualifications) that it requires. Thus, the data collected needs to be accurately recorded and correctly processed as well as followed up on—that is, in a constant, consistent, systematic, and comprehensive manner.

To be sure, precise personal evaluations of written literature are not very easy to obtain in the still largely oral-aural, group-oriented societies of central Africa. Thus, a written opinion survey can be used only to a limited extent, namely, in the case of a well-educated urban constituency. And even then, people will often prefer to respond orally, rather than in writing—and as part of a communal discussion, rather than in an individual interview session. Furthermore, it is culturally appropriate to "honor" a questioner by giving her/him the answer that s/he wants to hear—and if that cannot be determined, what folks are familiar with from past usage. Therefore, it is difficult to test new expressions that are intended to replace outdated or inadequate older translations (even inaccurate renditions, like the church-defined, but now hallowed term for "grace" in Chewa). The skill of constructive criticism is also hard to teach or encourage among respondents. Thus, "as long as we understand the text, it's OK—even though there is a better way to say it" remains an underlying attitude that must be countered. Similarly, the seemingly minor matters of inconsistencies of usage, multiple spellings, errors of punctuation and format are regarded as being too minor to be concerned with ("Would we like it if others were so picky about our efforts?!"). In order to help answer all of the different questions that need to be asked, several types or categories of reviewers as well as draft testers must be thoroughly trained to begin with and then continually guided as to how to go about their vital exercise of text assessment. Furthermore, the process of evaluation needs to continue after a full Bible has been published, but this often fails for two reasons—one financial (no money budgeted for it), the other culturally-based (as above: "At least we now have God's Word in our language, so why criticize it?").[42]

Much more needs to be said on this subject, but I will conclude my thoughts on translation evaluation with one further observation: All final manuscript-checking and processing used to be carried out in a UBS Regional Centre (Nairobi for Bibles from south-central Africa). A one-person, hard-copy, labor-intensive operation (Jill Smith in the 1960-70s) gradually developed over the years into a rather large team working to process submissions from all over Africa electronically. More recently (in this century), to promote greater efficiency, a gradual decentralization exercise has been taking place to devolve pre-publication editorial work to regional and national centers. This has indeed cut the production time considerably, but now a much greater responsibility lies on the individual teams and translation centers, aided by the indispensable, and increasingly more sophisticated, Paratext program (now version 7), to get high-quality Scripture products ready for publication.

However, the challenge to maintain standards of accuracy and other aspects of quality-control remain; the final product will only be as good as the overall competence of those who have been commissioned to produce it in the field. In this respect, too, the importance of continuous, discriminating personal and product assessment (involving also staff correction, and sometimes even deletion, if necessary) cannot be

[42] Post-publication criticism is generated of course—sometimes quite a lot; but this is usually unofficially offered and often limited to several key terms that certain churches are not happy with, technical issues of orthography ("We don't like how they spelled our language!"), or to matters of format, *e.g.*, poorly chosen illustrations or the use of certain controversial footnotes.

over-estimated. From a historical perspective then, this question may be raised: The UBS used to have designated research officers—specially trained and skilled consultants who could organize effective research programs for the four UBS regions as well as for local societies. Is it time to consider utilizing such interregional specialists again to test our different Scripture products, in the various media, from a more objective perspective—or are all national Bible Societies now expected to conduct such essential qualitative assessment on their own?

8. "Publishing"[43]

The physical appearance of published Scriptures has changed considerably during the years of my pilgrimage in Bible Society work. Most obviously, the covers have become more durable and pliable and are now available in several colors other than black. Open up the Bible, and many more additions are apparent, namely, all of the paratextual supplements that were mentioned above (stage 5)—section headings, introductions, illustrations, footnotes, and so forth. There is one major feature that has remained largely unchanged, however, and that is the standard print format on the page. The font size used in the main body of text may be somewhat larger and clearer now, but little if anything else has changed. Readers are still confronted with the familiar, but rather intimidating twin columns of justified type, which are comparatively difficult to process, especially for new or inexperienced lectors, and particularly when the narrow print columns are frequently broken off at line ends by hyphens (which is necessary for most Bantu agglutinative languages). Some years ago Jannie Louw and I did some research on the subject of format and typography (1993), but nothing ever came of it, other than to provide some illustrative examples for several of my publications. I was told informally by one Bible Society production consultant living close to the typesetters and their financiers: "We know all the arguments against how we are doing it, but it is simply a matter of economics. It simply costs too much to produce non-conformist Bibles." Sociocultural pragmatics has nothing to do with this decision, no matter how difficult it may be for most TL consumers to read the published text; they must learn to make do with what is available and be thankful that they have their Scriptures in print at all![44]

In this electronic, multimedia age, it is necessary to carry out some well-planned and executed market research in order to reveal future trends and potential Scripture products that might supplement the persistent primary desire for printed Bibles, *e.g.*, via the comic or video medium. Many people feel that only the (translated) text in such a visible, hard-copy form is the "authoritative" Word of God, some even regarding English more highly than their local vernacular version. But Africans tend to be very gifted and creative oral performers, whether in song or speech via diverse indigenous genres, and therefore it is important to capitalize on these natural talents in the production of audio and video selections. Normally utilizing presenters relatively close at hand, the *Faith Comes By Hearing* project (*cf.* Bessong and Kenmogne 2007:372-373) does an admirable job of getting the Word out and accessible to many who are not able either to read or to obtain the written text. However, the quality of their productions might be improved if experienced dramatic performers could be employed for the various voices needed (*cf.* Wendland 2005). Naturally, some additional cost might be involved to accomplish this, but where the Scriptures are concerned, overall excellence, too, is a critical issue to consider. The traditional performing arts are a vital and still viable feature of central African cultures (even in many urban areas), so perhaps more could be done to capitalize on this human resource to prepare dynamic, new Bible-based products (perhaps oriented towards a paraphrase or adaptation rather than an exact translation). The aim would be to reach contemporary audiences with attractive, professionally-produced dramatized versions of the Word in

[43] Quote marks appear hear to denote the fact that "publish" is being used in its wider dictionary sense, namely, "to issue (a printed work, *etc.*) to the public, as for sale" (Webster, added italics)—or freely distributed (or subsidized) in order to serve some other communicative purpose of the publishers; in short, publishing in this sense is to communicate publicly via one of the mass media.

[44] Such an attitude reflects, in a way, that which was expressed in promotional and documentary materials published during the missionary age, when "[t]he tendency was to highlight the efforts of European and American missionaries in translation, emphasizing how thankful the African people were to have the Bible translated into their mother tongues" (Bessong and Kenmogne 2007:357), whether or not the published version was readily understandable or even legible to the majority of intended TL consumers.

diverse audio-visual formats that might then motivate them to explore other, more text-centered or less "domesticated" publications.[45]

Of course, the requisite targeted research will have to include a careful testing of these new products to ascertain how they actually perform and are received by the public—from the color of a Bible book cover to the sound quality of a cell phone download.[46] The challenge in this respect will be, as noted in stage 6 above, how to obtain *reliable* (as distinct from purely reassuring or respectful) answers from respondents. It may well be that the only accurate way to determine the genuine opinions and preferences of people concerning the "pudding" of published Scriptures (via whatever medium or format) will be in the "eating thereof"—that is, by means of actual sales and distribution figures.

9. Promotion

The concluding observation of the preceding section leads us to this final stage in the Scripture production process: vigorously promoting our publications (*i.e.*, product support) and actively engaging, not only the traditional constituency of the national Bible Society, but also other segments of society (*e.g.*, the leaders and membership of the so-called African Independent Churches; *cf.* Wendland and Hachibamba 2007: Appendix A). Here then we come full circle to the special need that was pointed out in stage 1, namely, educating the TL public regarding the different types of Bible or portion that are available and how or in which setting(s) they might best be used.[47] In this connection, a good model to follow might be an adaptation of the three-volume Spanish language *Descubre la Biblia* (Sánchez-Cetina 2005-6),[48] a text aimed to educate clergy, lay leaders, and Bible students in South America with regard to various technical as well as practical topics relating to the Scriptures—their constitution, interpretation, and contemporary communication. This educational and promotional publication is described as follows:[49]

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[45] Such AV productions could be made available via a variety of modern media: FM radio (stations are springing up all over the sub-region), television, DVD, CD, MP3, even the lowly audio-cassette (which has not yet been driven into extinction in this part of Africa) and, by way of contrast, through the current favorite: rapidly developing cell-phone technology. Regarding the last-mentioned, I recently received a rather obscure email request from a personal "ministry" in South Africa: "I would like to request the electronic bibles for any of the following. Which of the following are permitted to send electronically? [*list of Bibles given*] I am building cell phone Bibles and E-Sword Bible modules for free" (May 8, 2009). Furthermore, "[t]he use of local tradition, the adoption of storytelling and drama still begs for action. Bible societies and other groups should take advantage of the opportunity such products offer, which educate while entertaining the public" (Bessong and Kenmogne 2007:373; *cf.* Sánchez-Cetina 2007:404-405, Wendland 2005).

[46] "Just as Luther saw the printing press as a vehicle to distribute Scripture to the masses, now almost every distributor of mobile apps [*i.e.*, mobile phone applications] is seeing the potential in providing cell-phone users with whatever religious material they may desire. … Religious apps may seem to represent modernity run amok…but they can bring holiness [more immediately] back into our lives where it belongs" (Lisa Miller, "Is that a Bible in your pocket?" – *Newsweek* May 4, 2009; I am indebted to Don Slager for this reference).

[47] Considerable explanation may well be needed, for example, to make clear why the divine name "Yahweh" (the Tetragrammaton, YHWH) was rendered as *Chauta* 'Great [Creator] God of the Bow' in Chewa, rather than the familiar transliterations of the older, missionary-produced Protestant and Catholic Bibles—*i.e.*, *Yehova* and *Yahve* respectively (*cf.* Wendland 1998:115-121). As Bessong and Kenmogne observe (following Loewen): "[A]dopting the local name of God in translating *YHWH* should not be excluded as a solution. Despite [possible] negative connotations associated with a given name, the Bible puts each name in a specific context, and this defines the term and tones down these connotations" (2007:382; *cf.* Sánchez-Cetina 2007:394). In addition to this vital cultural factor, pragmatic considerations often come into play. In the Chewa case just mentioned, for example, the selection of either *Yahve* or *Yehova* would have alienated the other major constituency in this interconfessional project.

[48] An adaptation of the first edition (1998) of this volume was prepared and edited by Roger Omanson under the title *Discover the Bible* (2001). A similar project targeting church leaders in French-speaking Africa, a cooperative effort by UBS and SIL, is currently being prepared for publication later this year (Editions Cle, Yaounde, 2009). As described by one of the four producers of this volume (Michel Kenmogne, in collaboration with Lynell Zogbo, Stephen Coertze and Kathy Watters), "The book is called *L'Eglise et la Traduction de la Bible: Enjeux et Defis pour l'Afrique Francophone.* In English this would be 'The church and Bible translation: Issues and challenges in francophone Africa.' There are several chapters on the need for mother tongue translations, justification, overview of colonialization and how French was kind of 'forced' on people, history of Bible translation from Neh[emiah] to today, procedures and principles of Bible translation, theology and Bible translation. The major thrust is a call to the church to consider Bible translation as a worthy ministry" (L. Zogbo – personal correspondence).

[49] Taken from the online *UBS Catalogue of Scholarly Editions and Other Translation Resources* (2008) <http://intranet.biblesocieties.org/translations/node/110>.

> This is a manual for Biblical studies, dealing with the principles and problems in the translation of the OT and the NT. It also looks at the canon, archeology, and geography of the Bible.…. The second edition is a significant expansion from the one volume of the first edition to three: Volume 1 offers an overview of the Bible and its impact on the life of individuals and communities. Volume 2 has articles on the formation of the Biblical text and the canon of Scriptures; the history, geography and culture of the Biblical world and the contributions of archeology, cultural anthropology, history, and sociology; and biblical interpretation and exegesis. Volume 3 covers principles and problems of translation of the Old and New Testaments; the contributions of linguistics, translation studies and anthropology; and translations and versions of the Bible in Spanish and other languages.

A similar collection of essays—selected, adapted, and contextualized for Africa—could well serve a similar purpose. However, this might be best presented orally, in popular language, as part of a series of seminars or workshops sponsored by the national Bible Society together with any interested religious and secular supporters, including, for example, local theological schools and seminaries as well as government teacher-training colleges and universities. Such a broadly-based communication exercise would not only familiarize the public with the various Scripture products available in different languages, but it would also serve to promote the overall program of the Bible Society, which is normally much in need of constructive public relations. Such public engagement efforts offering the opportunity for open debate and discussion about the multifaceted challenges presented by Bible *translation* (*e.g.*, what type/style of version?), *publication* (*e.g.*, issues of orthography), *distribution* (*e.g.*, how may local churches assist?), and *education* (*e.g.*, regarding levels of general as well as biblical illiteracy) can help lay the foundation for a significant rise in support for the local society, one that is based on increasing awareness, knowledge, and cooperation through ongoing dialogue. Though time-consuming and (perhaps) more expensive to carry out, such public informational forums would be a much more culturally relevant way to do promotional work in an oral-relational society than through Western-style impersonal advertising campaigns in the mass media (*e.g.*, brief "info slots" on radio, TV, or in newspapers).

In this connection, there is a concluding caveat: A major barrier that must be overcome in all of the endeavors of a national Bible Society—from planning to promoting their various Scripture products—involves general public perception and attitude. There is, accordingly, a great need to get away from a colonialist mentality as far as generating financial support goes, where an appeal to foreign donors tends to displace indigenous initiatives.[50] Ways must be devised to give national Christians a hands-on experience of the translation work (*etc.*) that is taking place, either in their own midst or in some related language. New methods of fund-raising should also be explored, ideally through local church communities and support-the-Scriptures guilds or cooperatives. For example, the culturally appropriate way of contributing to a worthy cause—certainly to advance the Word of God—may be indirectly in kind rather than directly in cash; thus, agricultural produce, livestock, handmade crafts, and so forth, are sold by volunteers at the central market and the proceeds then brought in to the national Bible Society treasurer.[51]

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[50] "A strengthening of the shift from expatriate to mother-tongue speakers as the protagonists of Bible translation on the continent, and the concurrent dwindling and indeed drying up of funding from the outside, calls for new and creative ways of financing Bible translation" (Bessong and Kenmogne 2007:385)—and indeed, all of the essential operations of National Bible Societies in Africa.

[51] In a critical review of the recent book *Dead Aid* (Moyo 2009), an unnamed writer in *The Economist* ("Voice of disenchantment," March 12, 2009) argues: "Ms. Moyo is right to argue that the rich world—and Africa—should now focus on other ways of helping poor countries. Ms. Moyo shows how some countries, such as Ghana, have successfully tapped the bond markets for funds. She also has good discussions on the virtues of microfinance, venture capital and liberalizing trade. By concentrating on these three, African governments might well raise more money on their own; some might even lessen their dependency on aid." I am no economist, but perhaps there are some implications here for National Bible Societies; for example, tapping into readily available government funding, NGO (*e.g.*, World Vision), or UNESCO grants for literacy work; making use of local microfinance facilities to create more distribution points/Bible shops within the country; or with regard to "liberalizing trade" (and how about cross-border Scripture publications between neighboring national Bible Societies?). In any case, it would seem essential to do some careful investigative research regarding the potential positive versus negative value of foreign aid for those national Bible Societies that still depend on it to a large extent to keep their overall production program alive and going.

10. Conclusion: The *cultural factor* in Bible translation in view of *globalization*

So, what is "globalization"? Wikipedia defines this commonly heard term as follows (italics added):

> Globalization…in its literal sense is the process of transformation of local or regional phenomena into global ones. It can be described as a process by which the people of the world are unified into a single society and function together. This process is a combination of economic, technological, sociocultural and political forces. Globalization is often used to refer to economic globalization, that is, integration of national economies into the international economy through trade, foreign direct investment, capital flows, migration, and the spread of technology.… [A] good part of globalization consists of an enormous variety of micro-processes that begin to denationalize what had been constructed as national—whether policies, capital, political subjectivities, urban spaces, temporal frames, or any other of a variety of dynamics and domains. (from http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Globalization)

The italicized segments above begin to suggest the possible adverse implications for "the cultural factor" if (or undoubtedly, as) the diverse forces of globalization continue to increase in their influence around the world, since few, if any, nations can avoid such impulses. On the other hand, some of these real and potential cultural effects are viewed by secular experts as quite positive in nature, for example:[52]

> The internet breaks down cultural boundaries across the world by enabling easy, near-instantaneous communication between people anywhere in a variety of digital forms and media. The Internet is associated with the process of cultural globalization because it allows interaction and communication between people with very different lifestyles and from very different cultures. Photo sharing websites allow interaction even where language would otherwise be a barrier.…. Culture is defined as patterns of human activity and the symbols that give these activities significance. Culture is what people eat, how they dress, beliefs they hold, and activities they practice. Globalization has joined different cultures and made it into something different. As Erla Zwingle, from the National Geographic article titled "Globalization" states, "When cultures receive outside influences, they ignore some and adopt others, and then almost immediately start to transform them. (*ibid.*)

However, most experts now recognize that world-shrinking globalizing trends and drives towards homogenization can have some significant negative effects as well:

> It is too easy to look at the positive aspects of Globalization and the great benefits that are apparent everywhere, there are also several negative occurrences that can only be the result of or major motivating factors that inspire some corporations to globalize.….
>
> Globalization—the growing integration of economies and societies around the world—has been one of the most hotly-debated topics in international economics over the past few years. Rapid growth and poverty reduction in China, India, and other countries that were poor 20 years ago, has been a positive aspect of globalization. But globalization has also generated significant international opposition over concerns that it has increased inequality and environmental degradation. (*ibid.*)

I am sure that some of us would be able to add a number of other unfavorable and even deleterious or damaging effects to this list, such as the recent stock market clatterings and crashes that resounded around the world due to the interdependent and mutually influential nature of national or private commercial banking systems and investment agencies.

But I would like to focus here on the work in which we are primarily engaged: What does globalization have to do with the United Bible Societies, and with Bible translation in particular? Many readers have a better perspective on this broad subject, so I will not say much about it except to offer a few general remarks that may set the stage for further thought and discussion. Obviously, globalization in the sense of a world-wide fellowship of organizations working according to a common ethos and purpose is what the UBS is all about, as stated on its official website (http://www.biblesociety.org/index.php?id=2):

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[52] In addition to the examples listed below, an endeavor in the field of Bible translation would be a global edition of the *Contemporary English Version* (available on Paratext 7), which was published several years ago by the American Bible Society; this rendition was "globalized," for example, with respect to certain terminology, the replacement of Americanisms, and the use of metric measures (Phil Noss, personal correspondence).

> The United Bible Societies (UBS) is the collective name for our fellowship of 145 individual Bible Societies working in over 200 countries and territories. From wherever and however they operate, Bible Societies all share the mission of placing the Word of God in the hearts and minds of the people they serve.
>
> Bible Societies are not affiliated to any one Christian denomination. They work to serve all Christian churches and develop products and services appropriate to local needs. This includes Scripture distribution to church-goers, literacy programs for those who cannot read, audio products for those who are visually impaired, and Bible-based HIV/AIDS resources for those who are suffering and their caretakers. This work is often conducted through partnerships with other Christian NGOs. Special programs are developed for those with challenges such as women facing abuse, children living without parents and people in prison.
>
> Translating the Bible is at the heart of what we do. Bible Societies are dedicated to faithfully deliver new translations to Christians anywhere who have never had a Bible in their own language. For over 200 years Bible Societies have been providers of, and advocates for, the Bible. The Bible is a story without borders and Bible Societies aim to make its message known, loved and respected everywhere.

These goals have not really changed over the 40 years that I have been privileged to be associated with the UBS in one way or another. Moreover, this paper's concern for a relevant cultural contextualization in keeping with an indigenous worldview as well as setting-specific sociological and situational objectives and requirements is underscored in the preceding manifesto by the special emphasis on translating the Bible, coupled with the desire of constituent societies "to serve all Christian churches and develop products and services appropriate to local needs."

However, one major worry that I have stems from the recent world-wide financial downturn, which has certainly affected the way in which the UBS does—or better, *is able to* do—business. As a result, it seems to me at least (but recall my restricted perspective), that we have tended to become more uniformitarian in our approach—that is, much more program and progress oriented in an effort to "get the job done" as economically as possible in accordance with the more limited resources which are currently available. Now this is not a "bad" thing in some respects; from the translations point of view, our projects must become more efficient and well-managed all along the line of production—from planning, to organizing, training, composing, supplementing, evaluating, testing, publishing, and promoting. The era of the thirty-year Bible translation enterprise is over. (I have, unfortunately, been involved in several of these). But there may be several potential dangers here as well; I briefly mention just two of these:

- First of all, the increased emphasis on the demonstrable (statistical) *quantity* of production (*e.g.*, Bibles published and distribution figures) might tend to detract from a corresponding concern for the relative and more elusive *quality* of our various Scripture products. Thus, the laudable desire to meet goals and to make deadlines may short-circuit or prevent the thorough dialogue necessary to ensure that all the crucial aspects of a given stage are dealt with and sufficiently considered with respect to quality-control on the one hand and creative, resourceful composition on the other. For example, to produce a "natural" or "idiomatic" (let alone a "literary-oratorical") rendering in keeping with the particular genre of biblical literature being translated (especially poetry) requires much time and testing, often more of it than initially scheduled. Quality also concerns the cultural factor and the degree to which a translation can be contextualized, accurately as well as creatively, in view of the background and outlook of its primary audience.[53] Perhaps it will then be left to other translation organizations (or another age) to prepare and publish such translations—ones that vividly reflect the spirit, as well as the letter, of the original text in a *living* vernacular structure and style.

[53] In Africa, for example, such a textual or paratextual methodology would ideally incorporate an "Afrocentric approach" that "seeks to translate the Bible with a clear understanding of the African viewpoint…[thus] open[ing] up new ways for Africans to identify with the message of the Scriptures… [by] bringing to light the long-ignored aspects of the Bible that correspond directly or partially to the African personality and mind set" (Bessong and Kenmogne 2007:381, 380; *cf.* Loba-Mkole 2005).

- Second, the emphasis on standardized *programs* of production might tend to detract from the capacity to properly relate to the *people* involved in them. Again, in the effort to establish and keep to a strict production schedule, the limitation of time may not allow for all the interpersonal interaction and assessment necessary to adequately set up a translation project in the first place, *e.g.*, to enable selectors really get to know prospective translators and their capabilities better before taking them on board as member of what has to function on an everyday basis as a closely-knit production team that is to operate, in turn, as an integral part of a community of Berean-like "receptors" (see Acts 17:11). An inflexible timetable may also clash with quality-control at the end of the process, for instance, by preventing a national Bible Society from being able to fully test certain features of a supposedly completed (stage 5) translation before publishing it. As already noted above, in the oral-relational cultures of Africa, *flexibility* is necessary to budget enough time for a meaningful dialogue to take place, one that will permit such an influential communal venture as a Bible translation to mature progressively in a constructive and harmonious manner.

This electronic, technology-driven, internet age will undoubtedly increase the possibilities for the development and distribution of a new range of Scripture products to cater for more precisely defined consumer groups and situational niches. In addition, perhaps more joint, inter-agency projects will be feasible to increase the potential audience base, thus also lowering the per-unit cost for a given product. Nevertheless, in all these corporate global advances, we must not lose sight of the inherent *individuality*, *creativity*, and *inspiration* that every language, culture, and people embodies and can therefore contribute to the manifold worldwide communication enterprise of the United Bible Societies. It is hoped that the unique perspectives and aspirations, along with the distinctive voices and tones of the less prominent members of this chorus, will not be distorted or drowned out in the mix. In any case, let me close by reaffirming what I wrote on the subject a number of years ago (1987a:206):[54]

> Culture, context, and the receptor constituency—all three are vital elements in the contemporary effort to communicate the ancient texts of Scripture so that their beauty and forcefulness, in addition to their content, can under the transforming power of the Spirit continue to "turn the world upside down" (Ac 17:6).

Μετὰ ταῦτα εἶδον,
καὶ ἰδοὺ ὄχλος πολύς,
ὃν ἀριθμῆσαι αὐτὸν οὐδεὶς ἐδύνατο,
ἐκ παντὸς ἔθνους καὶ φυλῶν καὶ λαῶν καὶ γλωσσῶν
ἑστῶτες ἐνώπιον τοῦ θρόνου
καὶ ἐνώπιον τοῦ ἀρνίου…
καὶ κράζουσιν φωνῇ μεγάλῃ λέγοντες,
Ἡ σωτηρία τῷ θεῷ ἡμῶν
τῷ καθημένῳ ἐπὶ τῷ θρόνῳ καὶ τῷ ἀρνίῳ. (Rev. 7:9-10)

Written in memory of my Father, Ernst H. Wendland (16/06/1916 – 28/05/2009): parish pastor, missionary to Zambia, founder of Lusaka Lutheran Seminary, Professor at Wisconsin Lutheran Seminary, writer.

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[54] To support this observation, let me offer some scholarly support—not from my model, Luther, this time, but from Pope John Paul II: "A good translation is based on three pillars that must simultaneously support the entire work. First, there must be a deep knowledge of the original language and cultural world. Next, there must be a similar good familiarity with the language and cultural context in and for which the text is translated. Lastly, to succeed in the whole work, there must be an adequate mastery of the contents and meaning of what is being translated…. In the interconfessional translation…you have tried to be faithful to the tenor of the original text and at the same time you have tried to make the text understandable for contemporary readers, using words and forms of everyday speech." (Address to the United Bible Societies and the Bible Society of Italy, on the occasion of the twenty-fifth anniversary of the interconfessional Italian New Testament, *L'Osservatore Romano*, December 12, 2001, cited in Wcela 2009:263; my thanks to Margaret Muthwii for sending me a copy of this article).

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