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Review of: A History of Bible Translation, Edited by Philip A. Noss

Freddy Boswell

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Book Review

A History of Bible Translation

Edited by Philip A. Noss
Rome: Edizioni di storia e letteratura. 2007. Pp. xx +521. Paper $60.00. ISBN 978-8884983732.

Reviewed by Freddy Boswell
SIL International Executive Director

Commissioned by the Eugene A. Nida Institute for Biblical Scholarship, a scholarly division of the American Bible Society, this overview of the history and practice of Bible translation is a landmark publication, enormously rewarding for present and future scholars. With the breadth of expertise and research shepherded by editor Philip Noss, it is inconceivable that even the most seasoned Bible translation scholar and practitioner would not learn significant amounts of information, or even be challenged in new ways to consider previously held facts, trends, or figures of history. This book will enrich the reader who delights in the subject.

The book's twelve contributing authors cover four major areas of study, each divided into various sections: 1) an in-depth review of history, covering the period from the Septuagint to the present day; 2) epistemology and theory; 3) methodology; and 4) present day translation practice.

Chapter 1, Noss's helpful introduction and overview to the volume, sums up well many of the high points of the volume, and provides a quick reference for finding one's way through the history.

As described in the various sections of this review, it is noted that there is some unevenness of depth and scope of treatment of the various subjects within the volume.

Section I: History from the Septuagint to the Vernaculars

Chapter 2: Introduction (29-57), by Manuel Jinbachian.

J's basic introduction covers four periods of Bible translation:

1. From 532 BCE until 700 CE.
2. The era of the Islamic empires, 700–1500 CE.
3. The Renaissance and the Reformation period, sixteenth to eighteenth centuries.
4. The Modern era, covering the nineteenth century to the present.

J discusses three categories of early Bible translations:

1. Primary translations, done directly from the original languages.
2. The secondary translations, mainly done from the Septuagint. These included the Armenian, Coptic, Persian and Arabic translations.
3. Tertiary translations, such as Georgian, which include those done from a secondary translation.

After overview of the topic featuring quotations from early translators, the author makes the statement, "The Bible is not a single book, written in one language, during a short period of time in history. The Bible is an entire library, written during a period of many centuries" (34). He summarizes the history of translation as moving from word-for-word translation to sense-for-sense rendering, what has commonly been called "meaning-based translation."

J then gives the major translations found in each of the four periods:

For the period *532 BCE until 700 CE*, he highlights the Targumim (extemporaneous oral paraphrases) and the Septuagint, providing some excellent background material.

For *the era of the Islamic empires, 700 –1500 CE*, he describes various prominent translations, including the Arabic translations. He points out that there were no written Arabic translations of the Bible before the rise of Islam. He tracks the history of the Slavonic translation and the Persian translation and contrasts the more ancient Persian with the rise of the modern Persian translations.

He does not spend much time on the third period, *the Renaissance and Reformation*, pointing to the excellent work of Paul Ellingworth found later in the volume. Jinbachian has very little other information to add on this time period, although he does mention how many people think that Luther was the first to translate the Bible into German. Ellingworth, however, points out that there were 18 editions of the Bible in German which had appeared before Luther's translation was printed. He mentions the first complete English Bible published by Coverdale in Germany in 1535 and the first Spanish Bible in 1793, which was more than 250 years after Luther's Bible.

In the fourth period, *the Modern Era*, the author points out that between 1800 and 1885 the Bible was translated and published in more than 60 languages all over the world. He also points to other authors in this volume who describe this development, such as Mojola who covers the Bible translations in Africa, and Soesilo who chronicles the history of Bible translation in the Asia-Pacific and Americas regions.

In his conclusion J writes, "We would be surprised to find out that often the Bible translation has helped the particular nation to survive and continue its existence even under the most difficult circumstances" (57). This is in response to the question: "What is the benefit of the translation to a particular people or nation that had the translation?"

J points out that in North Africa the Bible was not translated into the local languages, recounting how Latin was used but not translated into the languages of the indigenous people. Then when the Roman Empire declined and no translations of the Bible had been completed, Christianity eventually died out in North Africa. As a result of the seventh century Arab occupation, the local inhabitants embraced Islam. Thus, in giving his overview of the history of translation he points to the importance of indigenous people having access to translation in their own language.

Chapter 3: The First Versions: The Septuagint, the Targums, and the Latin (59-89), by David G. Burke.

This chapter by David Burke of the American Bible Society was one of the most enlightening and educational for me, as I had never studied this material in any depth. B gives an excellent overview of the origins and meanings of the term "Septuagint." More significantly, the importance of the use of the Septuagint in the church is underscored by his statement that "it has remained true over many centuries the Bible has been most commonly read in translation. In the synagogue it was read in Hebrew (but then followed in a softer voice to keep the distinction clear) by a translation into a language people could understand such as Greek or Aramaic" (60).

B goes into some detail on the history of the name of the Septuagint, noting the term does mean seventy. Various scholars cite 72 translators, though B notes that there is much speculation on the accuracy of the historical reports, which he details. Technically the term Septuagint should only be applied to the Greek text of the Torah rather than to the other books of the Hebrew text. B gives other historical background, and discusses the character of the Septuagint as a translation.

Along with the various translation techniques employed, B notes the wider impact of the LXX (and various revisions) beyond the Jews. The hexapla, a six-column edition of the scriptural books, enabled easy comparison between the Hebrew and several Greek texts. In a similar vein B describes both Palestinian and non-Palestinian targums, and the various translation techniques used in their production.

Before B moves from the history of the Latin text, he highlights the work of its translator, St. Jerome. B comments that Jerome's translation must be considered an immeasurable *tour de force*, both translationally and literarily. His Latin translation became the dominant Bible text throughout the Western church and deeply influenced various Reformation-era vernacular translations in Europe. Not only that, but his various assemblage of "wording, concepts and phrases" has influenced subsequent translation efforts throughout the centuries.

Chapter 4: Secondary Versions: Arabic to Old Slavonic (91-103), by Erroll Rhodes.

Rhodes points out in this chapter that the translations of the East have been often regarded as secondary versions and receive less attention among western scholars. But Rhodes is very careful to describe the importance of the history of some of these translations, such as Armenian, Georgian, Gothic, Ethiopian and Old Church Slavonic. He starts with a discussion of the Arabic and takes it through history describing with some detail those who undertook the translation of these texts through the centuries. The reader may be surprised to know, for example, that it is estimated that there are more than 4,500 manuscripts of the Old Testament and about 10,000 of the New Testament in a variety of Slavic dialects dating from the eleventh to the seventeenth century. R is careful to point out the names of those who have been involved in translation and the scholars who have taken on these texts in scholarly study. As in the other chapters in this volume, R's research is extensive and well documented.

Chapter 5: From Martin Luther to the English Revised Version (105-139), by Paul Ellingworth.

Paul Ellingworth continues in Chapter 5 with an equally impressive overview of the history of translation by describing the period from Martin Luther to the English Revised Version. He describes this as the 12-generation period from the year 1517 to 1885 dividing that up into four different periods:

1. 1517 to 1600, up to the Edict of Nantes in 1598 and the commissioning of the King James or the Authorized Version in 1604.
2. The entire seventeenth century, which marks the end of the early Modern period.
3. The eighteenth century, covering the time up to the founding of the British and Foreign Bible Society in 1804.
4. The final period, from 1804 to 1885, going all the way to the publication of the English Revised Version Bible.

E then describes in some detail each of these periods, including various kinds of pressure that Bible translation was put under in terms of cultural, linguistic, political, religious and technological considerations. He describes in some detail various dates, ideas and personages involved in each of these areas of study.

Readers interested in major European translations will find a wealth of information here that perhaps they have never seen or studied before. E, as consistently done by other scholars in this volume, has pulled together an amazing range of information. Again, as the reader surveys this landscape, one is absolutely awestruck at the breadth of translation that has taken place and the number of different people over the centuries who have been involved. One cannot read through this section of the *History* volume without being stunned at the amount of effort that has been put into translating the Bible through the centuries. As E describes each of the periods in this particular chapter he does more than just list or mark the references but also interacts with some of the common knowledge of these particular translations, and amplifies where necessary.

E is excellent at summarizing. For example, in the period of the eighteenth century, he describes how this was not just a period of rapid expansion of the number of languages which received the scripture but actually a period that saw the Catholics producing multi-volume study Bibles for scholarly use and Protestants in the Lutheran and Reformed traditions making the scriptures the foundation of their teaching.

The nineteenth century saw significant expansion of the missionary enterprise and some excellent references for work in the Pacific. Because that is where I have spent a significant portion of my adult life working in translation, I found the recap of work and history in the Pacific quite enlightening. That is one reason that I use the word "contagious" to describe the Bible translation movement as the work spreads from island to island and country to country. This missionary translation effort often resulted in literal, or formal correspondence, translations, a fact which is part of the summary with which E concludes the chapter.

During the 12 generations covered in this overview he shows:

1. How the printing of translation in Western European languages spread.
2. How some Catholic authorities changed in their attitude toward the Scripture from total prohibition to an acceptance under severe restriction and then promoted the Vulgate as a counter to Protestant translations.
3. In the nineteenth century how various Bible Societies came into existence, and how they turned their focus to the immense expansion of translation. Also during this time, there is a significant development of the study of biblical texts with such publications as the Westcott Hort Edition of 1881.

At the conclusion of Chapter 5 one finds sixteen impressive artwork plates from the American Bible Society archives. These plates include:

1. A Hebrew Torah from China, dating around the sixteenth century.
2. A "Book of Hours" in Latin in the fifteenth century.
3. A manuscript page from Wycliffe's Bible, dating to about the year 1440.
4. A cover of the gospels in Armenian.
5. Frontispiece of the Codex Argentus (Gothic gospels translated by Ulfilas).
6. Title page of the first edition of Luther's translation of the Bible into German (1534).
7. An Aztec lectionary in 1532, the first translation in the Americas on record.
8. A Massachusetts Bible of 1663.
9. Portions of the High Wenli Chinese NT of 1910.
10. Psalms in Ethiopic, late eighteenth century.
11. Various pictures of translation teams in action, such as the Chinese Union version team which began work in 1890.
12. A picture of Eugene Nida working with speakers of the Khoisan language of southwest Africa (present-day Namibia).
13. A map of the NT world, taken from a Bible in Latin in 1662.

Chapter 6: Bible Translation in Africa (141-162), by Aloo Osotsi Mojola.

M's chapter on Bible translation in Africa covers the so-called Modern Period, mirroring the context of 19th century Europe. Translation work took place within the context of the "Three C's" of missionary pioneers such as David Livingstone: Christianization, Civilization and Commerce. M comments that "a mastery of the local languages and cultures was needed to facilitate effective communication and implementation of these goals [reflected in the Three C's]." Bible translation was quite useful for achieving this facilitation and implementation.

M gives an overview of translation in Africa starting with Coptic, and then moves to the subject of Ethiopian and Nubian, and then to translations throughout the rest of the continent. He describes the early European period in Africa starting with the Kikongo catechism published in 1548. The first printing of an African language translation during the modern period was Matthew's gospel in Bullom of Sierra Leone in 1816. M offers historical notes on the Yoruba and Hausa translations, along with other translations in Nigerian languages. Yoruba was distinctive in that the principal translator was a mother-tongue speaker. He eventually became a church bishop. This situation is contrasted with Hausa, in that the first translator apparently studied Hausa but never visited the language group. M discusses translation work in Cameroon, noting that the first scripture appeared in 1848, and was produced by a Christian missionary. He moves from there to translations in Southern and East Africa pioneered by Robert Moffat, and then also mentions translations done in various Indian Ocean languages.

M then moves in his essay from presenting a record of progress to actual issues in Bible translations in Africa, including such topics as translation in missionary and incarnational practice. He includes an interesting section on the translation of African deities, noting a range of terms from Allah, to Mungu (the Swahili word for God) to Looah (a northern Tanzanian language deity term). He also describes current inter-confessional cooperation and translation.

While M remarks that the progress made in translating God's word into African languages is "enormous," there is still much to be done. Challenges are abundant, as much of the Bible is accessible to many only through a second language. This chapter is well done, giving the reader a good general introduction to history and to a few of the current issues in African translation work.

Chapter 7: Bible Translation in Asia-Pacific and the Americas (163-181), by Daud Soesilo.

In this chapter, S basically lists the names of translations, the dates and those responsible for doing the translation. He does not interact much with their usefulness but surveys the translations throughout the various countries and regions under inspection. By far, Asia garners the most attention, with barely a page and a half devoted to the Pacific and not much more devoted to pioneer work in the Americas. Obviously, it would be helpful for these sections to be filled out in a subsequent edition of this *History*, as this is a current and major weakness of the volume, and serves to mark the overall global treatment of the *History* as uneven.

Like Mojola, S does take on a few other issues related to translation work in the regions under historical review (though that he does not engage further with the Melanesian or Polynesian Pacific languages or the Americas). He discusses metaphor and simile, and gives particular attention to the translation of divine names. For the latter, he gives an excellent overview of the history of the translation of 'God' into early and subsequent Chinese translations. He also catalogues the translation history of divine names in Korean, Mongolian, Malay and Indonesian. Because of this topic's global importance to modern-day translation theory and practice, readers who are not aware of these particular national language situations will benefit, whatever part of the world may be their focus.

Section II: Epistemology and Theory

After this 181-page synopsis of the historical registry of key names and dates, and useful discussion of significant translation practices related to the various geographical regions under review, the content turns in Section 2 to Epistemology and Theory.

Chapter 8: Introduction: Epistemology and Theory (185-193), by Stefano Arduini.

Arduini helps the reader to identify links in general theories and translation practices, noting the academic discipline of translation studies. He highlights the seminal model and publication in this field, undertaken by James Holmes in 1972. Holmes contrasted descriptive aspects of the discipline with applied aspects. Among the writings of several scholars, Arduini brings many others into the debate, including Bachelard, Popper and Goodman, contrasting their views with those of Holmes. This brief review serves to put the field of Bible translation into a wider context.

A's introductory remarks on translation theory studies and Bible translation give an overview of the chapters written by Anthony Pym and Stephen Pattemore. A also mentions epistemological approaches of Eugene Nida and of Ernst-August Gutt.

Chapter 9: On the Historical Epistemologies of Bible Translating (195-215), by Anthony Pym.

Pym mentions that the Christian epistemologies had to negotiate the kind of meaning available for translations, along with the authorization of translations and retranslations. The questions dealt with issues such as "What is the particular approach and methodology which has been employed and how authoritative is that methodology?"

Pym gives quite an interesting overview of the history of these kinds of debates in his chapter. He even discusses in some length the hierarchical superiority of some languages over others. If the biblical text were divine and those texts were in Hebrew and Greek, then Hebrew and Greek, of course, had to be divine

languages. But if someone else recognized another text, or another language, as sacred, then other languages would have been added to that hierarchy. How could those hierarchically superior languages functionally have scripture translated or expressed in them? How were those particular translations authorized for use in various cultures?

Pym takes a wide view in his brief historical study, and many will be challenged by the results of his reasoning and conclusions.

Chapter 10: Framing Nida: The Relevance of Translation Theory in the United Bible Societies (217-263), by Stephen Pattemore.

Pattemore begins by continuing from where Pym left off. Pym concluded with discussing Eugene Nida and his meaning-based approach to translation. Nida addressed translation as an ethnographic and linguistic science rather than any kind of legal fiction or epistemology of spirit in which one could harken back to Cicero and Schleiermacher.

In this chapter, Pattemore takes up the question: "Is there a theory of translation?" He begins by saying that he's doubtful that there is in fact a theory of translation in the United Bible Societies. He then moves to discussing broadly the place of Bible translation within the field of translation studies and discusses particularly theory as promoted by Nida within UBS starting with his book *Toward a Science of Translating* in 1964.

From there he positions himself in response to various criticisms which have been leveled from outside UBS as UBS has tried to reassess its accepted historical position. He looks at publications that have come from the UBS Triennial Translation workshops and concludes with an excellent overview of Ernst-August Gutt's "relevance-theoretical account of translation."

Pattemore has become one of the leading UBS consultants and scholars who is quite engaged with Gutt's theories. Readers will find this chapter an excellent platform from which to engage with Relevance Theory (RT) and its place in translation studies. I personally found this particular chapter to be one of the most helpful in the volume. Pattemore very carefully describes not only the history of these theories and their place, but interacts with them and shows their merit, their development, and areas of improvement, and does so by pointing out various weaknesses.

Interestingly he notes on page 262 that one reason that RT has not been accepted by the UBS except by a small minority is that "this is partly due to a confusion of terminology, partly to a misunderstanding of the level that RT's claims most radically impact. To understand translation within an RT framework would represent a paradigm shift, because RT claims to underwrite all human communication processes and therefore this is something new. And thus this approach appears to be facing the same struggle that many scientific paradigm shifts have in the past." While some have tried to clear up misunderstanding and bring peace, there has been little evidence, he claims, of a meeting of the ways.

I will not take time in this already lengthy review to engage all of Pattemore's points, but simply commend the discussion to the reader as one that is very fair and balanced and one with which all persons interested in Bible translation should engage.

Section III: Methodology of Bible Translation

Chapter 11: Introduction: Methodology of Bible Translation (267-277), by Lourens De Vries.

De Vries gives an overview of the historic types of methodology. I contrast this to the previous section which reviewed various ideas which formed the basis for a particular theory and the way the application of that theory shaped the practices encapsulated in actual methodology.

D takes up the importance of methodology, framing it with the observation, "As soon as Scripture is translated, the intriguing question of the relation with the original arises. Translators of the Holy Writ may expect harsh criticisms by believers who do not find in the translation what they are sure is in the original." He then provides a preview of the chapters which follow in this important section.

Chapter 12: Translation Techniques in the Ancient Bible Translations: Septuagint and Targum (279-305), by Harry Sysling.

The history is taken up by Harry Sysling on translation techniques in the ancient Bible translations, focusing on the Septuagint and the Targums. First of all, looking at the Septuagint, he takes on the question: "What translation models were available for these translators?" Basically, they had no predecessors. Secondly, there is interplay between literal and free renderings in the Septuagint, noting how the translators adopted a literal translation technique. S also mentions the transcription of various Hebrew vowels and their points of consistency and inconsistency. Readers who have not studied the Septuagint will find this quite enlightening as he discusses various forms of exegesis, additions and substitutions, various kinds of stylistic models such as shortening and omissions, and some of the theologically-motivated interpretations in the Septuagint.

S then moves to a discussion of the Aramaic translation of the Bible. Considering particularly the Targums, or the Aramaic paraphrastic translations, he notes the considerable tendency on the part of the translators to amplify the translation. He then distinguishes and describes at some length four types of Targum, such as those that were literal translations of the Hebrew text which included some substitutions.

S then moves on to the use of translation techniques, mentioning the avoidance of anthropomorphism. He contrasts the Septuagint with the Targums in that the former was made for those Jews who no longer understood the Hebrew language, whereas the Aramaic was closely connected with the reading of the Hebrew text in the synagogue and thus reflected rabbinic concepts in exegesis. S says a comparison between the two is not easily done even though it can be said that both tried to make the Hebrew Scriptures intelligible to the ordinary reader who no longer understood the holy language.

Chapter 13: Translation Techniques in Modern Bible Translation (307-334), by Paul Ellingworth.

Ellingworth's second chapter in the volume is on translation techniques in modern Bible translation. E's skilled writing style, his deep scholarly insights, his somewhat engaging wit, and his presentation style make this a very interesting chapter. He employs an array of scholarly footnotes on what one might consider obscure history, but yet they serve the purpose of acknowledging great appreciation for the techniques that have been used and from whence they came.

Alienate or Domesticate?

In this chapter E discusses the common question, "Should we alienate or domesticate?" That is, should we bring the reader to the text or the text to the reader? He exemplifies the difference between the two approaches to translation by contrasting the first Wycliffite translation, with its "foreignizing" approach, with the second Wycliffite translation, with its "naturalizing" approach. E demonstrates that this duality is far more complex than merely "good" vs. "bad" translation practice.

Luther and the Sixteenth Century

E then moves to a discussion of Luther and the sixteenth century with both an overview and a mention of the influence of French translation. He discusses the French scholar, Etienne Dolet, who in 1540 laid down five rules for the translator. Among these were that the translator must know the meaning and subject matter so that the translation will be clear. Dolet also stated that the translator should avoid borrowings from Greek or Latin except in cases of extreme necessity.

From Descartes to Schleiermacher

E also describes a period "From Descartes to Schleiermacher," noting that the seventeenth century was a time concerned with the "formulation of rationally defensible rules." This was true for both translation and philosophy (hence the reference to Descartes). He examines various types of translation which were being promoted during this time (including metaphrase, paraphrase, and imitation). He takes on four points of Schleiermacher's distinction between foreignizing and naturalizing, and shows why his ideas were slow to penetrate common translation practice.

Missions and Bible Societies

In the Mission Period, E engages with the work of the Bible Societies and the various translation techniques in use. He takes up for discussion one of the historic anchor points of UBS translation, one that is a leading approach among missionaries coming from Bible societies, highlighting translation techniques as espoused in Nida and Taber's TAPOT (*The Theory and Practice of Translation*). The overall question which E seeks to answer in this chapter is: "Is it possible to speak of a methodology of Bible translation, a single, unified collection of methods which can be applied anywhere and at any time?" (334).

Conclusion

The conclusion to this chapter is that certain themes do occur throughout this long period, but there are some themes which are "persistently controversial," namely the distinction between relativizing and naturalizing. Since TAPOT was published in 1969 the translation task has been seen in an ever broader and more complex setting, such that there is actually no universal methodology of translation. In reflection on the purpose for translation, or the *Skopos*, he does say that translation methodology does change according to the purpose for which it is intended.

Section IV: Bible Translation: The Field Today

Chapter 14: Introduction: The Field Today (337-350), by Lynell Zogbo.

In this introduction Z looks at translation in the twenty-first century. She speaks from personal experience of training young translators in francophone West Africa, looking at how the task has been passed from expatriates to those who are indeed speakers of the languages. Formerly missionary communities and translators were in focus; but now the torch has been passed to a new generation such as Latin Americans who have Ph.D. degrees in theology, linguistics and biblical studies. Z says that these faces in Asia and Africa and Latin America are no longer "the exception but the rule."

Z believes that "today's Bible translators are *empowered* as never before" (350) with the training and the tools that are available to them along with the advances that have been made in linguistics and theology. Translation agencies are now free to choose what their priorities are. She states, "It is a time of unprecedented freedom and opportunity" (350).

Chapter 15: Bible Translation in Africa: A Post-Missionary Approach (351-385), by Dieudonné Prosper Aroga Bessong and Michel Kenmogne.

The authors, two excellent African scholars, begin their discussion quoting various theologians and missiologists who predict that the epicenter of the church activity in the future will be in Africa. They ask, "Has Bible translation in Africa mirrored the current trends in ecclesiology? Have Africans really taken ownership of the whole process of Bible translation?"

While affirming the importance of Bible translation B&K also cite the importance of church leadership in taking up the call to enable the task to go forward, mostly during the twentieth century. They cite SIL's work in Cameroon, which began in 1969, noting that there were recent criticisms by local partners in Cameroon of the "white appearance" of this particular organization. This apparently sparked debate on how to better integrate Africans into the task. They mention the proposal of Eugene Nida, who argued that mother-tongue translators in Africa should have a more predominant place, with less influence of missionary translators. They believe that while this proposal was accepted in theory by SIL, SIL has been much slower to actually adopt an implementation plan.

There are a number of factors that have combined to favor the change from missionary-dominated leadership to local Christian authority. One has been the independence of most African colonies which showed a shift in church leadership from expatriate to nationals. There was a fresh missionary drive by para-ecclesiatic organizations in which Africans were installed in leadership in several institutions, and thus became active in Bible translation. An example of that was the Bible Society of Cameroon, founded in 1959 by joint efforts with the British and Foreign Bible Society. In 1968 the declarations of Vatican II encouraged new interest in the Bible among Catholic Christians.

B&K describe at some length the emergence of Bible societies and national translation organizations such as the Cameroon Association for Bible Translation and Literacy (CABTAL), created in 1989. They also mention the formation of BTL, the Bible Translation and Literacy program in Kenya. These NBTOs, or National Bible Translation Organizations, were initially promoted by SIL and established in many African countries. B&K go on to show that the Forum of Bible Agencies of Cameroon is part of the next generation move towards translation agency cooperation, a move from independent to interdependent Bible agencies. They also describe how Wycliffe Bible Translators Africa partners with the church in Africa in the fulfillment of the Great Commission.

B&K make it very clear that there is a desire to move away from the missionary approach of Bible translation to an approach where local citizens and churches take on greater responsibility and ownership. They then provide an overview of the training of translators and programs in Africa where those have been launched and are successful. They also note various translation materials that are available, along with the study and advance of linguistics, technology and the use of multimedia and literacy.

They discuss various issues in Bible translation, including the corpus or the base text, exegesis (discussing particularly an Afro-centric approach to translation), the growing movement of orality in Bible translation, Bible revisions and study Bibles.

I found this chapter to be particularly engaging; it is quite refreshing to read these African scholars engaging with the translation task in their own continent. It would strengthen subsequent editions of this volume to have scholars from the Pacific, Asia, and Europe engage with the subject matter for their continent and geographical region in the same way as these have done for Africa.

Chapter 16: Word of God, Word of the People: Translating the Bible in Post-missionary Times (387-408), by Edesio Sánchez-Cetina.

The final chapter of the volume is written by UBS consultant Edesio Sánchez-Cetina, who begins by asking, "What is the evangelistic mission of the church?" (387). He describes that mission as something that should be holistic; if it indeed has a holistic focus then that holistic focus should include Bible translation. He writes that UBS is an organization that serves the church and "does not hesitate to commit itself to the missionary perspective" (389) in which the UBS works to make the message of the kingdom of God and God's redemptive purpose for the whole creation available.

The author does not try to review the history of translation in the Americas as that is briefly covered elsewhere in the volume. Instead, he focuses on post-missionary translation of the Bible. He contrasts missionary translations with those that have been done afterwards in non-missionary contexts. Here he mentions the work of Wycliffe and SIL in addition to the Bible Societies and their efforts.

S-C is very careful in this chapter to raise issues of paternalism, believing that many "missionaries" have shown attitudes that "belittle or reject the indigenous person, his or her language and the forms and means he or she uses to communicate" (392). He supports this claim with some very telling anecdotes.

S-C describes particular translations done by missionaries which were produced with an improper spirit and attitude towards the ones with whom they worked. He notes that it is much healthier now to approach this as a task that should be handled by those who live within these countries and speak these languages. He makes the astounding comment (398),

> In almost every example of 'missionary Bible translations', the overriding attitude is one that looks down on others. It is an attitude that denigrates people because they are different. But it is hard to see how this type of translation can serve as the vehicle for any 'incarnation' or present in any real way the notion of full or holistic salvation.

I think it's safe to say that despite the good intention of the author, it is quite an overstatement to believe that every example of missionary Bible translation was done with a non-generous spirit, or was done in some kind of self-serving way. Even though there are some sad records of abuse of Scripture as noted throughout the *History,* to say that almost every example of missionary Bible translation has been produced with a sinful attitude is quite an overstatement. Unfortunately, for me that definitely takes away from the

value of the chapter. Even though the reader will listen very hard to hear the heart of what S-C is saying, I believe overstatements like that do not serve his readers well.

I do not argue at all with his point (408) that "history has shown that a translation achieves better results when the translator is an indigenous person and not a 'missionary'." However, we know that translation work had to start somewhere and the indigenous peoples of many of the places in Latin America were not able to take up this task. They were not skilled. They were not equipped. They were not schooled to take on the task of translating and perhaps did not even share a reason and motivation for doing so. I believe the author must admit that translation in the Americas in the twenty-first century is indeed a task that is not done solely by missionaries but certainly is one that is shared broadly. It is shared by the whole church, and that is one of the points that he is tries to make. While there certainly have been abuses I believe there is still room even in the post-missionary era, if you will, to celebrate the translations and the sacrifices of those who have labored very hard to enable translation in the Americas. S-C's overstatement takes away from that fact.

Conclusion

The book concludes with a 54-page bibliography which all students of translation of the Scripture will find a valuable reference tool.