

Tireless Translators Preparing New Versions of Holy Bible

The Holy Bible has been translated into at least 1,181 languages and dialects, and 300 new translations are under way.

The way of a translator is hard, but present-day linguists probably face lesser hazards than their predecessors, the National Geographic Society says.

St. Jerome, who wrote the enduring Latin Vulgate Bible in the 5th century, was vilified by traditionalists. He gave as good as he got, calling his critics "two-legged asses." William Tyndale, who translated the Bible into everyday English.

Even the revered King James Version was attacked when it appeared in 1611. "I had rather be rent in pieces with wild horses than any such translation by my consent should be uttered upon poor churches," a noted scholar wrote. "The new edition crosseth me, I require it to be burnt!"

Clarity Over Poetry

Some 240 years later, the King James Version was defended with equal fervor when the Revised Standard Version was published in the United States. The RSV and Great Britain's New English Bible exemplify a trend toward clarity over poetry.

In the King James Version, St. Paul writes to the Corinthians: "Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal." In the New English Bible, published in 1961, the passage becomes: "I may speak in tongues of men or angels, but if I am without love, I am as a sounding gong or a clanging cymbal."

Translators try to clarify archaic terms that are no longer clear. In the New English Bible, scribbles are replaced by lawyers, publicans become tax gatherers, mutton is mutton, and surprisingly, the wise men are transformed into astrologers.

American Roman Catholic scholars are preparing an English version of the Bible, based upon the original Hebrew and Greek and drawing upon recent archeological finds. The Douay Bible, widely used by

English-speaking Catholics since the 17th century, derived from St. Jerome's Vulgate.

The Hebrew University at Tel Aviv, Israel, has undertaken a long-term project to revise the Old Testament, using Dead Sea Scrolls and other precious documents. One of the sources is a thousand-year-old manuscript that was recited in 1948 from a burning synagogue in Syria.

Many of the 1,181 known translations were made by dedicated missionaries to tribal peoples. All or parts of the Scriptures have been translated into such obscure languages as Ojima, a Nigerian dialect; Kechiki, spoken by some Gwatemalans in India; Kumbira, an Indonesian tongue; and Mv Nags, an Assamese dialect.

National Geographic said.

Field translation has its pitfalls. A translator in the Solomon found later that he had rendered the Psalmist's phrase "the wild asses gnaw their thurst" as "the cannibal pigs drink water to rrip hircoughs."

A missionary among the Tarahumara Indians of Mexico tried to obtain the word for "lump" by acting it out. The Indians chorused an expression which the clergyman wrote down, only to learn later that it meant, "What is wrong with you?"

In spite of setbacks, current work goes on in the spirit of the translators of the King James Version, who wrote: "Translation it is that openeth the window to let in the light; that breaketh the shell, that we may eat the kernel; that putteth aside the curtain, that we may look into the most Holy place; that removeth the cover of the veil, that we may come by the water, even as Jacob."

LEAVE FOR CONGO

Dr. and Mrs. W. R. Kingsolver and three children left Sunday to spend six months in the Belgian Congo under the auspices of the Congo Protestant Relief. Dr. Kingsolver will be working in a Methodist hospital. Dr. Lloyd Pregras, his associate will take care of his practice here.

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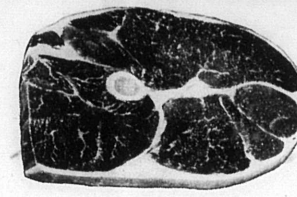
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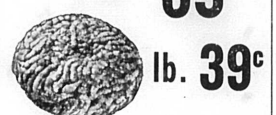
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"Designation of the week of March 17-23 as National Wildlife Week brings to mind many ways in which soil and water conservation activities benefit wildlife," says William F. Threlkeld, Soil Conservation District Director for the Nicholas County Soil Conservation District by the U. S. Soil Conservation Service.

"This is particularly true this year when the theme is 'Chemical Pesticides Are Poison—Handle with Care,'" he adds.

"Because of the recent controversy over the careless use of insecticides, herbicides, and certain kinds of drugs," he continues.

"It is particularly appropriate to point out that the establishment of certain soil and water conservation practices help to control agricultural pests and thus reduce the need for chemicals."

"For instance," Threlkeld goes on, "certain wasps live in the hedgerow plantings that are often a result of farm conservation plans, and feed on tobacco worms in nearby tobacco fields. Praying mantises, which are important predators of grasshoppers, also make their homes here. And the number of insects eaten by the birds that live in these hedgerows is enormous."

"Protecting woodlands and fallow fields from fire prevents the destruction of insect-eating animals such as skunks, shrews, and terrapins, as well as preventing soil erosion," he explains further.

"Greater dependence upon biological control of agricultural pests will probably become increasingly popular as we learn more about it," Threlkeld concludes.

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