

THE UNCERTAIN FUTURE OF FRENCH EVANGELICALISM:
CONSIDERING THE IMPACT OF CHANGES
IN THE TRANSLATION POLICIES
OF THE UNITED BIBLE SOCIETY

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The title of this paper derives from the following rational progression:

- The only authority in the Evangelical church is the Bible;
- The lifeblood of the Evangelical church is thus the clear communication of doctrine in, with, and by the Bible
- It follows that a linguistically-accurate (and thus theologically-sound) translation of Scripture is essential to the Evangelical church, in order to allow for the clear communication of doctrine
- Conversely, a linguistically-inaccurate (and theologically-biased) translation may in fact hinder the clear communication of biblical doctrine, and thus be a detriment to the Evangelical church.
- The new International Bible Society French translation, *Bible du Semeur*, does not seem to be a linguistically-transparent or theologically-unbiased translation.

Hence, the title reads “The Uncertain Future of French Evangelicalism.” While the future of Christ’s church in France is quite secure in His plan for salvation history, yet because of the importance of the written word of God, the undermining of the theology in the text, conversely undermines the theology of the Evangelical Church. My contention is that the French translation, known as “la Bible du Semeur,” is a theologically-biased translation which is not helpful to worldwide French Evangelicalism. While this statement is very forceful, my research of 18 French editions of the Bible bears this statement out.¹ The goal of my paper is to express the results of my research even-handedly and clearly.

¹These will be referred to by short title and date of publication. The arrangement is by date of publication for the 17 Protestant translations:

- (1) *French Version Darby*, 1885 (Bibleworks 5);
- (2) *Le Nouveau Testament de Notre Seigneur Jesus-Christ*. Version de Jean Frédéric Ostervald [1744], Révisée par Ch. L. Frossard (Paris: Société Biblique Française, 1886) (Ostervald was based on the David Martin version [1696], which itself was based on the Reformation’s Pierre Robert Olivétan version [1535]);
- (3) *Louis Segond*, 1910 (Bibleworks 5);
- (4) *Le Nouveau Testament de Notre Seigneur Jésus-Christ*, Version Synodale, revision 1926 (New York, Londre: Société Biblique, 1944; Société Biblique de France) (“Le travail d’Ostervald fut de nouveau révisé partiellement par les sociétés bibliques en 1868 et 1887. Nous l’appelons la Bible synodale et elle fut encore révisée en 1910” [*Histoire du Livre Saint en France*, from: <http://perso.wanadoo.fr/hlybk/bible/france.htm>; accessed 2 February 2005; Internet], 8).

The seed thought for this paper began last summer in France, when I was on a mission trip to Marseilles. About four days into the two-week trip, I left my French Bible in the hotel lobby. The next day it was not to be found. After several days of searching I determined that it was lost. In the meantime, I began to use another Bible in my devotions and in my street evangelism. I became quite disappointed in what I found. Some Gospel verses had lost their Gospel meaning, and my devotions in First Peter no longer seemed to teach justification by faith alone. The Bible I lost was the 1979 *Segond Révisée Genève* (GEN), published by the Maison de la Bible, Geneva. The replacement Bible was the 1999 *Bible du Semeur* (SEM), published by the International Bible Society, Colorado Springs, Colorado, U.S.A. This paper in its essence is a theological comparison of these two texts, dealing primarily with the predecessor of the 1999 version, the 1992 SEM, as it

(5) *La Sainte Bible, qui comprend ancien et nouveau testament traduits sur les textes originaux Hébreu et Grec par Louis Segond*, Nouvelle édition revue (Genève: Maison de la Bible, 1948);

(6) *La Sainte Bible, traduite d'après les textes originaux Hébreu et Grec par Louis Segond*, édition revue (Paris, Bruxelles: Alliance Biblique Universelle, 1961);

(7) *Le Nouveau Testament*, traduction de Louis Segond, Nouvelle Révision avec glossaire (Paris: Société Biblique Française, 1962);

(8) *La Sainte Bible, qui comprend ancien et nouveau testament traduits sur les textes originaux Hébreu et Grec par Louis Segond*, Nouvelle édition revue. (Genève: Maison de la Bible, 1968);

(9) *La Bible traduite d'après les textes originaux hébreu et Grec par Louis Segond*, Édition revue (Société Biblique Belge, 1973);

(10) *Parole Vivante, La Bible (Nouveau Testament) transcrite pour notre temps: Synthèse des meilleurs versions actuelles, par Alfred Kuen* (Braine-l'Alleud, Belgique: Editeurs de Littérature Biblique, a.s.b.l., 1976);

(11) *La Sainte Bible traduite d'après les textes originaux hébreu et Grec*, dites "La Colombe." Nouvelle Version Segond Révisée, Première Édition (Alliance Biblique Universelle, 1978; Traduction Société Biblique Française, 1978);

(12) *Nouvelle édition Genève* (Genève: Maison de la Bible, 1979; Bibleworks 5);

(13) *La Sainte Bible qui comprend l'ancien et le nouveau testament traduits des textes originaux par J. N. Darby*, Nouvelle édition (Ottawa, Ontario: "Le Messager Chétien," 1985; Valence, France: Bibles et publications Chrétiennes, copyright 1985);

(14) *Traduction Oecuménique de la Bible* (TOB), 1988. Bibleworks 5;

(15) *La Bible du Semeur traduite en français d'après les textes originaux hébreu et Grec* (Colorado Springs: International Bible Society, 1992; Nogent-sur-Marne: Association Biblique Internationale, 1992);

(16) *Bible Français Courant* [1997] (Bibleworks 5);

(17) *La Bible du Semeur traduite en français d'après les textes originaux hébreu et Grec*, Version révisée 2000 (Colorado Springs: International Bible Society, 1992, 1999);

(18) *Bible de Jérusalem*, n.d. [1955, 1973] (Bibleworks 5).

drastically altered French Protestant translation history. The 1999 SEM contains only slight variations from the 1992 SEM in the passages that I studied.

This paper has taken me on a voyage I did not expect. I have studied the history of French Protestant Bible translations going back to 1535, contemporary translation theory with a special focus on Eugene Nida of the United Bible Society, ecumenical relationships or lack thereof in the translation of the Bible, and the text of the Bible with an emphasis on 1 Peter. The many explanatory footnotes help provide brevity and allow for further study. My thesis is that the 1992 SEM is a prime example of the danger of combining dynamic equivalent translation with ecumenical naiveté of theological agendas. First, we will examine the ecclesial *sitz im leben* of the Bible Societies, with an emphasis on the policies published by the 1968 Joint Committee of the United Bible Society (UBS) and the Secretariat for Promoting Christian Unity (SPCU), with the approval of Paul VI.² Second, we will overview the translation *sitz im leben*, with an emphasis on the impact of Eugene Nida of the UBS and dynamic equivalent translation. Third, I will compare translations of key texts in the Bible, focusing especially on 1 Peter. Last we will consider some conclusions based on this research.

Why this focus on French translations? The French language provides a distinct history of translation quite different than the Protestant-dominated English-speaking world. This paper may assist missionaries to France as they note the plethora of French translations. It may also be that lessons learned from these French translations may prepare the English-speaking world for similar scenarios. I will make an effort to translate the salient French quotes for an English audience in order to make this paper both entertaining and informative. We begin with a look at the ecclesial situation.

²Paul VI (16 April 1969) (*Osservatore Romano* [17 April 1969], 1).

ECCLESIAL *SITZ IM LEBEN*

While a spirit of forgiveness may urge Protestants to put past abuses, persecution, and genocide because of the word of God behind them, ignoring the past is not only dangerous, but it is foolish. In this section, we will note the Roman church's subjugation of the text, the remarkable change-of-heart before and during the pontificate of Pius XII (1939-1958), and then move to guidelines for interconfessional cooperation worked out by a group of UBS and Catholic scholars: "These [guidelines] were jointly published by SPCU and the UBS Executive Committee on Pentecost, June 2, 1968."³ The change-of-heart in Rome and subsequent years have had a marked influence on the translation of Scripture, especially it would seem in France.

Persecution because of the word of God began in the 12th and 13th Centuries as revival movements from within the church sought to restore the Roman church to the New Testament (NT) model. While some internal revival movements had a certain impact (e.g. Cluny, Erasmus, and Jansenism), Rome anathematized and persecuted to the point of genocide the evangelistic movements in Southern France. Hence the Albigenses (*les Albigeois*), the Waldenses (*les Vaudois*), and later the Lollards (in England) all came under condemnation from Rome. Simultaneously the Lower Orders were encouraging lifestyle evangelism (Franciscans) and Christian stoicism (Dominicans)—the latter providing Rome with its most ardent inquisitors.⁴ Aquinas, himself a Dominican of that era, provided Rome with a system of theology whereby salvation came *not* by the word

³Thomas F. Stransky, C.S.B. and John B. Sheerin, C.S.B., "Guiding Principles for Interconfessional Cooperation in Translating the Bible," *Doing the Truth in Charity*, Ecumenical Documents 1 (New York: Paulist, 1982), 159.

⁴Hence the Dominicans were called *Domini Canes* (dogs of the Lord): "Mais les Dominicains ou frères prêcheurs se distinguent, surtout au début, par un désir plus âpre de combattre l'hérésie. Ils se glorifiaient d'être les 'chiens du Seigneur: *Domini canes*'" (Jules-Marcel Nicole, *Précis d'histoire de l'Église* [Nogent-sur-Marne, France: Éditions de l'institut Biblique, 1982], 108).

proclaimed, *but* by the sacraments rightly dispensed and received. Into this wild mix of theology and practice, the translation and propagation of the Bible was repeatedly condemned by Rome:⁵

- 1179: Alexander III prohibited the preaching of the Waldenses, who quoted from the Bible in the vulgar tongue.
- 1184, Lucius III condemned anyone who loved the Bible or taught doctrines contrary to the Catholic church to excommunication and punishment by the secular powers of Roman Emperor Frederick I, normally to be burned at the stake.
- 1199: Innocent III prohibited the translation of the Psalms, the Gospels, and the epistles of Paul into French, as well as prohibited the gatherings in Metz, France, as they were guilty of studying the Scriptures. Cistercian monks burned all Bible translations that they found in the Metz diocese.⁶
- 1211: by order of Innocent III, Bishop Bertram of Metz organized a crusade against all of those who read the Bible in the vulgar language (French) and burned them and their Bibles.
- 1215: the first three canons of the Fourth Lateran council condemned the heretics (Waldenses) who preached the Gospel under their own authority, or “without authorization.”⁷
- 1229: the Council of Toulouse prohibited lay persons from having the Old and New Testaments, other than a Psalter, a breviary, or the hours of the blessed Virgin, and especially

⁵Unless otherwise noted, quotes are from *Histoire du Livre Saint en France*.

⁶“Notre vénérable frère nous a fait savoir que dans le diocèse de Metz une multitude de laïques et de femmes, entraînés par un désir immodéré de connaître les Écritures, ont fait traduire en français les Évangiles, les épîtres de saint Paul, les Psaumes, les moralités sur Job, et plusieurs autres livres, dans le but coupable et insensé de se réunir, hommes et femmes, en secrets conciliabules, dans lesquels ils ne craignent pas de se prêcher les uns aux autres. Ils vont même jusqu’à mépriser ceux qui refusent de se joindre à eux et les regardent comme des étrangers. Réprimandés à ce sujet par les prêtres de la paroisse, ils leur ont résisté en face (*ipsi eis in faciem restiterunt*), cherchant à prouver par des raisons tirées de l’Écriture qu’on ne devait pas défendre cet exercice. Il a été sagement décrété dans la loi divine que toute bête qui toucherait à la montagne sainte devait être lapidée. Ceux qui ne voudront pas obéir spontanément apprendront à se soumettre malgré eux (Innocent III, *Epistolae Innocenti III*, [Rome: Pontifical Library II], Epit 141, T. II, 432 ; ed. Baluze)” (Daniel Lortsch, *Histoire de la Bible en France* [accessed: 5 March 2005; from: http://www.bibliquest.org/Lortsch/Lortsch-Histoire_Bible_France-1.htm; Internet], 1:22).

⁷“Un deuxième point sur lequel je voudrais attirer l’attention, c’est qu’il faut absolument séparer les vaudois des cathares. Les vaudois de la haute époque ne sont pas de hérétiques, mais des schismatiques, même pas d’ailleurs: ils sont simplement désobéissants. Ils souhaitent rester dans l’Église mais ne veulent pas obéir à l’interdiction de prêcher sans autorisation. Pour eux, la règle c’est l’exemple évangélique . . .” (Jean Duvernoy, Round Table Discussion, Jacques Dalarun, chair, in *Évangile et évangélisme (XIIe-XIIIe siècle)*, Cahiers de Fanjeaux 34 [Toulouse, France: Éditions Privat, 1999], 235).

not in the vulgar language.⁸ Those guilty of owning a Bible were to have their homes destroyed and to be pursued into the woods. Those giving them shelter were to be punished.⁹

- 1234: Council of Tarracon, prohibited any from owning books of the Old or New Testaments, and if anyone owned them, that they were to turn them over, within eight days of the promulgation of the decree, to the local Bishop, that they be burned, which if they did not do, being clergy or layperson, they were to be held suspect of heresy until they had been washed of all suspicion.¹⁰
- 1246: the 36th Canon of the Council of Beziars, France, prohibited ownership of any heretical books, whether in Latin or French.¹¹
- 1408: “Council of Oxford forbids translations of the Scriptures into the vernacular unless and until they were fully approved by Church authority; sparked by the Wycliffite Bible.”¹²
- 1559: Paul IV ordered a series of Latin Bibles among *Biblia prohibita* (prohibited books), as well as *all* vulgar translations outside of the permission of the Holy Office.
- 1564: Pius IV explained, “Experience proves that if we allow the indiscriminate reading of the Bible in a vulgar tongue, it will occasion boldness on the part of man more evil than good.”
- 1590: Sixtus V reaffirmed that no one could read the Bible in vulgar tongue without special permission from the Apostolic Seat.
- 1664: Alexander VII included all Bibles in vulgar language as prohibited books.
- 1836: Gregory XVI reminded Catholics that the fourth rule of Pius IV’s 1564 *Index* was still in effect.
- 1864: Pius IX, *Syllabus of Errors*, IV, “Socialism, Communism, Secret Societies, Biblical Societies, Clerico-Liberal Societies: Pests of this kind are frequently reprobated in the severest terms in the Encyclical *Qui pluribus*, Nov. 9, 1846; Allocution *Quibus quantisque*,

⁸“Nous prohibons aussi qu’on permette aux laïcs d’avoir ces livres de l’Ancien Testament et du Nouveau Testament, à moins que quelqu’un ne désire par dévotion posséder un psautier ou un bréviaire pour le Service divin, ou les heures de la bienheureuse Vierge. Mais nous leur défendons très expressément (*arctissime*) d’avoir en langue vulgaire même les livres ci-dessus” (*Histoire du Livre Saint en France*, 2).

⁹“On détruira entièrement jusqu’aux maisons, aux plus humbles abris et même aux retraites souterraines des hommes convaincus de posséder les Écritures. On les poursuivra jusque dans les forêts et les antres de la terre. On punira sévèrement même quiconque leur donnera asile” (Lortsch, 1:23).

¹⁰“Nous avons arrêté que personne ne doit posséder les livres de l’Ancien et du Nouveau Testament en langue romane, et si quelqu’un les possède, qu’il les livre, dans les huit jours après la promulgation de ce décret, à l’évêque du lieu, pour qu’ils soient brûlés, faute de quoi, qu’il soit clerc ou laïque, il sera tenu pour suspect d’hérésie jusqu’à ce qu’il se soit lavé de tout soupçon” (ibid.).

¹¹“Vous veillerez entièrement, selon tout ce que vous saurez être juste et légal, à ce que les livres théologiques ne soient pas possédés, même en latin, par des laïques, ni en langue vulgaire par les clercs; vous veillerez à l’application des peines contre les susnommés (*praedictos*) et à tout ce qui concerne l’extirpation de l’hérésie et l’implantation de la foi (Concile de Béziers, canon 36. Année 1246)” (ibid., 23-24).

¹²“Timeline;” from: <http://www.youth2000ny.com/TimeLine03AD.htm>; accessed 25 February 2005; Internet.

April 20, 1849; Encyclical *Noscitis et nobiscum*, Dec. 8, 1849; Allocution *Singulari quadam*, Dec. 9, 1854; Encyclical *Quanto conficiamur*, Aug. 10, 1863.”¹³

- 1897: Pope Leo XIII in his Apostolic Constitution, *Officiorum*, condemned all Bibles and Bible notations not approved by the Apostolic Seat or edited under the guidance of Bishops “Prohibited are all the versions of the Holy Books . . . especially those published by the Bible Societies more than once condemned by the Roman pontiffs.”¹⁴

While this list may seem repetitive and unduly negative, it is a part of history and must not be ignored. However, of interest to this study is the tactical change that took place in Rome prior to or during the pontificate of Pius XII (1939-1958).

The change of attitude was felt in four ways: (1) openness to higher criticism of the Bible, (2) change to a limited inerrancy position, (3) openness to ecumenism, and (4) openness to cooperate with Bible societies. First, Pius XII changed the anti-modernism hermeneutic of Leo XIII¹⁵ to openness to higher criticism in his 1943 encyclical *Divino Afflante Spiritu*.¹⁶ Second, in this same encyclical, Pius XII moved from Leo XIII’s inerrancy position,¹⁷ to a limited inerrancy position on biblical authority.¹⁸ Third, Pius

¹³“The Syllabus, Pope Pius IX,” from <http://www.ewtn.com/library/PAPALDOC/P9SYLL.HTM>; accessed 25 February 2005; Internet.

¹⁴“Le pape Léon XIII, dans sa constitution apostolique ‘Officiorum’, promulgue les règles suivantes relatives à l’emploi des Bibles en langue vulgaire: ‘Toutes les versions en langue indigène, même celles qui sont publiées par des catholiques, sont absolument prohibées, si elles n’ont pas été approuvées par le Siège apostolique, ou éditées sous la surveillance des évêques avec des annotations tirées des Pères de l’Église et d’écrivains doctes et catholiques. (. . .) Sont interdites encore toutes les versions des Saints Livres composées par des écrivains non catholiques quels qu’ils soient, en toute langue vulgaire — et notamment celles qui sont publiées par les Sociétés bibliques que plus d’une fois les pontifes romains condamnerent’” (*Histoire du Livre Saint en France*, 12).

¹⁵“The main point to be attained is that Catholics should not admit the malignant principle of granting more than is due to the opinion of heterodox writers. . . . ‘It is therefore not permitted to any one to interpret the Holy Scriptures in any way contrary to this sense, or even in any way contrary to the universal opinion of the Fathers’” (Leo XIII, *Vigilantiæ*, *The Great Encyclical Letters of Pope Leo XIII*, 539-540).

¹⁶“30. For thus at long last will be brought about the happy and fruitful union between the doctrine and spiritual sweetness of expression of the ancient authors and the greater erudition and maturer knowledge of the modern, having as its result new progress in the never fully explored and inexhaustible field of the Divine Letters. . . . Let the interpreter then, with all care and without neglecting any light derived from recent research, endeavor to determine the peculiar character and circumstances of the sacred writer, the age in which he lived, the sources written or oral to which he had recourse and the forms of expression he employed” (Pius XII, *Divino Afflante Spiritu*, 30 September 1943 [on-line]; accessed 15 July 2001; available from <http://www.ewtn.com/library/ENCYC/P12DIVIN.HTM>; Internet, sections 30, 33).

¹⁷“For all the books which the Church receives as sacred and canonical are written wholly and entirely, with all their parts, at the dictation of the Holy Ghost; and in so far as possible that any error can co-exist with inspiration, that inspiration not only is essentially incompatible with error, but excludes and

XII lifted the ban on “pan-Christian” activities of Pius XI,¹⁹ and formed the Unitas Ecumenical Center (“Associazione Unitas”) in 1945,²⁰ building on the work of the Dominican Congar who wrote *Chrétien désunis* in 1937, as well as the *Una Sancta* movement born in Germany in 1938.²¹ Thus Pius XII set in motion the machinery by which the RCC shifted its educational and financial attention towards unity, both in the area of ecumenicity and in the area of biblical research. Later, John XXIII took ecumenism a step farther by founding SPCU and by naming Jan Willebrands

rejects it absolutely and necessarily as it is impossible that God Himself, the Supreme Truth, can utter that which is not true. . . . And the Church holds them as sacred and canonical not only because. . . they contain revelation without error, but because. . . they have God for their Author. . . . It follows that those who maintain that an error is possible in any genuine passage of the sacred writings either pervert the Catholic notion of inspiration or make God the author of error” (Leo XIII, *Providentissimus Deus*, 18 November 1893, in *The Great Encyclical Letters of Pope Leo XIII*, 296-97).

¹⁸“When, subsequently, some Catholic writers, in spite of this solemn definition of Catholic doctrine, by which such divine authority is claimed for the ‘entire books with all their parts’ as to secure freedom from any error whatsoever, ventured to restrict the truth of Sacred Scripture solely to matters of faith and morals, and to regard other matters, whether in the domain of physical science or history, as ‘obiter dicta’ and—as they contended—in no wise connected with faith, Our Predecessor of immortal memory, Leo XIII in the Encyclical Letter *Providentissimus Deus*, published on November 18 in the year 1893, justly and rightly condemned these errors and safe-guarded the studies of the Divine Books by most wise precepts and rules. . . . There is no one who cannot easily perceive that the conditions of biblical studies and their subsidiary sciences have greatly changed within the last fifty years. . . . Hence this special authority . . . is shown . . . to be free from any error whatsoever in matters of faith and morals” (Pius XII, *Divino Afflante Spiritu*, sections 1, 11, 21).

¹⁹“This being so, it is clear that the Apostolic See cannot on any terms take part in their assemblies, nor is it anyway lawful for Catholics either to support or to work for such enterprises; for if they do so they will be giving countenance to a false Christianity, quite alien to the one Church of Christ” (Pius XI, *Mortalium Animos: On Religious Unity*, 6 January 1928, section 8).

²⁰“Associazione Unitas, Via del Corso, 306, I-00186 ROME, ITALY, Tel. (+39) 06 68 90 52, F[ounded]: 1945, A[gency]: Roman Catholic supported, P[eriodical]: *Unitas* [frequency] (4/yr)” (“Centro Pro Unione” [on-line]; accessed 10 July 2001; available from http://www.prounione.urbe.it/dir-dir/e_dir-list_ie.html; Internet).

²¹“Jusque-là les catholiques qui s’étaient consacrés à la construction de l’unité étaient des pionniers isolés, souvent suspectés, voire suspendus dans leur tâche. Ces initiatives personnelles permirent, toutefois, cette ouverture récente. Mentionnons les conversations de Malines (1920-1926), menées à l’initiative de l’abbé Portal et de Lord Halifax, sous la présidence du cardinal Mercier, qui entamèrent le dialogue avec l’Église anglicane. En 1925, Dom Lambert Beaudouin fonda l’abbaye de Chevetogne; en 1926, le dominicain C.J. Dumont créa «Istina». Ces deux institutions, officiellement vouées aux contacts œcuméniques avec l’Orient chrétien, ont joué un rôle important et élargi progressivement leur intérêt à l’ensemble des problèmes œcuméniques. En 1937, un autre dominicain, le père Congar, publia *Chrétien désunis*, ouvrage qui a été pendant vingt ans la charte théologique de l’œcuménisme catholique. En 1939, se créa en Allemagne le mouvement *Una Sancta*. Mais, sauf quelques ouvertures en faveur de l’Orient, les autorités romaines restèrent le plus souvent en retrait sur ces initiatives” (“L’œcuménisme” [on-line]; accessed 10 July 2001; available from http://fr.encyclopedia.yahoo.com/articles/ni/ni_1212_p0.html; Internet).

(Archbishop of Utrecht from 1975-1983) as its Secretary, under the presidency of Cardinal Bea.²² The Vatican II Council and the push for unity toward a common Eucharist in the year 2000 were a part of “the intellectual legacy left by Pius XII.”²³

This change of events left Evangelical workers in Catholic countries puzzled, and caught some Evangelicals by surprise. It was notable that in Berlin 1966, reports from predominantly Roman Catholic countries felt that Vatican II had somehow changed the theology of Catholicism.²⁴ There was also little negativism toward Roman Catholicism at Berlin ‘66, with the exception of several lines in several reports.²⁵ Similarly, it seems that the 1950 “Bravo Billy!” by soon-to-be Archbishop and Cardinal Cushing’s diocesan paper made a marked influence on Billy Graham’s view of Roman Catholicism, which

²²“A Tribute to Johannes Cardinal Willebrands,” from: <http://www.interchurchfamilies.org/journal/2000jul02.shtm>; accessed 25 February 2005; Internet.

²³“The Second Vatican Council is often considered as the beginning of a new era in the life of the church. This is true, but at the same time it is difficult to overlook the fact that the council drew much from the experiences and reflections of the immediate past, especially from the intellectual legacy left by Pius XII. In the history of the church, the ‘old’ and the ‘new’ are always closely interwoven. The ‘new’ grows out of the ‘old,’ and the ‘old’ finds a fuller expression in the ‘new.’ Thus it was for the Second Vatican Council and for the activity of the popes connected with the council, starting with John XXIII, continuing with Paul VI and John Paul I, up to the present pope” (John Paul II, *Tertio Millennio Adviente*, 14 November 1994, section 18).

²⁴“We must also mention the progressive influence of the Second Vatican Council which is penetrating the mentality of a number of Spanish Catholics; this is creating a climate of more respect, understanding and tolerance toward the ‘separated brethren.’ . . . Ecumenism and the newer thinking within Catholicism also affect the position of many sincere Catholics. Several years ago these persons may have felt dissatisfied with their faith and with the church, but now they are discovering new spiritual possibilities within post-Council Catholicism, enough to satisfy them without having to join another Christian group outside the Catholic church” (José M. Martinez, “Spain,” *One Race, One Gospel, One Task: World Congress on Evangelism, Berlin, 1966, Official Reference Volumes: Papers and Reports*, eds. Carl F. H. Henry and W. Stanley Mooneyham [Minneapolis: World Wide, 1967], 1:242, 243).

²⁵“French-speaking Europe has been sprinkled with the blood of martyrs for the Gospel; it still appears to be a mission field almost without fruit” (Jacques Blocher, “French-speaking Europe,” in *One Race, One Gospel, One Task*, 1:250). “Another obstacle to evangelism is the religious oppression of many Roman Catholic priests and the individual influence of many Roman Catholics upon the political administration of the country. There are a few who sympathize with us. . . . we need a united program of social work in order to fight the poverty and miserable conditions of the people, (Here we could co-operate with the Roman Catholics.)” (Augusto A. Esperança, “Portugal,” in *One Race, One Gospel, One Task*, 1:246).

may have followed him for the rest of his ministry!²⁶ However, John Paul II made it clear that *Vatican II had made no changes to the essence of the Roman church!*

The Second Vatican Council wished to be, above all, a council on the Church. Take in your hands the documents of the Council, especially “Lumen Gentium”, study them with loving attention, with the spirit of prayer, to discover what the Spirit wished to say about the Church. In this way you will be able to realize that there is not—as some people claim—a “new church”, different or opposed to the “old church”, but that the Council wished to reveal more clearly the one Church of Jesus Christ, with new aspects, but still the same in its essence.²⁷

Yet in the uncertainty of the post-Vatican II era, some Evangelicals and Evangelical agencies let their guard down, assuming that the Roman Catholic church had changed. Such seems to be the case with the United Bible Society.

The fourth major shift of Rome was a tactical shift in dealing with the Bible societies. Rather than anathematizing the Bible societies, burning their Bibles and colporters, and hindering their work, now Rome began to “work with” the Bible societies—an amazing turn of events.²⁸ The fruit of that work was the joint publication of translation guidelines by SPCU and UBS in 1968, followed by “the launching of the independent World Catholic Federation for the Biblical Apostolate, ‘which is intended to serve the Bishops in their pastoral responsibilities concerning wider use and knowledge of the Bible.’”²⁹ The outline of the joint guidelines with pertinent quotes follows:

- (I)Technical features:(A) Textual: (1) Common Texts. “Though a critical text must form the basis of any adequate translation, it is recognized that conservative tendencies in both Roman Catholic and Protestant constituencies require that certain passages on the New Testament

²⁶Graham spoke in Boston from December 31, 1949 to January 16, 1950. The “Bravo Billy!” article was written during the crusade. Graham wrote, “Heartening us also was the response of the Roman Catholic Church, especially in light of the fact that the landmark decisions on ecumenism of the Second Vatican Council were still years away” (Billy Graham, *Just As I Am*, 161). Interestingly enough, the progressive Pope Pius XII dropped hints, shortly after Cushing’s wise approach in dealing with Graham, that he would become a Cardinal (“Abp. Cushing to Get Red Hat, Rome Hints,” *Boston Evening Globe*, 14 January 1950, 1, 2).

²⁷John Paul II, “Mexico Ever Faithful,” *Osservatore Romano*, 5 February 1979, 1.

²⁸A first Catholic attempt was the founding of a Bible society in France in 18XX. ...

²⁹Stransky and Sheerin, “Guiding Principles for Interconfessional Cooperation in Translating the Bible,” 159. The citation within the quote is ascribed to Paul VI (16 April 1969) (*Osservatore Romano* [17 April 1969], 1).

found in the Textus Receptus, but no longer supported by the consensus of modern critical judgment, be included in the text of the translation.”³⁰

- (I) Technical Features: (A) Textual: (2) Canon.³¹ “Many Bible Societies are in a position to publish editions of the Bible which contain the Apocrypha or the deuterocanonical texts in certain well defined circumstances. . . . It is recognized that on the one hand an edition of the complete Bible bearing the imprimatur of the Roman Catholic authorities will contain the deuterocanonical texts”³²
- (I) Technical Features: (B) Exegetical: (1) Exegesis. “. . . a common exegetical basis should be established by the adoption of mutually acceptable commentaries and critical studies recommended by the joint commission.”³³
- (I) Technical Features: (B) Exegetical: (2) Annotations or Helps for Readers. In this section is discussed differences in alternative readings, alternative renderings, proper names, plays on words, historical backgrounds, cultural differences, cross references, and section headings. “While reference systems always run the risk of subjectivity and some are outright tedious, nevertheless it has been possible to prepare reference systems of *great usefulness* and scholarly objectivity.”³⁴

In this section, a very interesting point is made which shows that Rome does not want its agenda with the text to be obvious. Rome did not want to “show its cards.” Rather they wanted to keep future generations of Protestant ignorant of areas of disagreement in translation which have separated Protestants from Catholics.³⁵

³⁰Ibid., 160.

³¹Three questions were discussed in France in 1822: (1) What translation(s) should we print (only Protestant or Catholic also; older version [1744 Ostervald] or an updated version)? (2) Should we also print the apocryphal books to accommodate Catholic sensibilities? And (3) Should we distribute the Holy books to Catholics (i.e. work together with them in distribution)? (Daniel Lortsch, *Histoire de la Bible en France* [accessed: 5 March 2005; from: http://www.bibliquest.org/Lortsch/Lortsch-Histoire_Bible_France-3.htm; Internet], 3:11). By 1863 there were four French Protestant Bible societies because of differing responses to these questions, two of which merged in 1864, leaving three Bible societies (ibid., 3:13).

³²Stransky and Sheerin, 160-61.

³³Ibid., 161.

³⁴Ibid., 162.

³⁵Lortsch provides two listings of distinctively Roman translations: “Eux donc disant la Messe” (they therefore saying Mass), replaced “pendant qu’ils servaient le Seigneur dans leur ministère” (while they were serving the Lord in their ministry), in Actes 13:2 in the 1643 “Bible de Corbin,” as well as in the 1646 Pere Véron and the 1686 Bordeaux version. “The fire of purgatory” is added to 1 Cor 3:15 in the 1686 Bordeaux edition. 1 Tim 4:1 reads “some will separate themselves from the Roman faith” in the 1686 Bordeaux edition (Lortsch, *Histoire de la Bible en France*, 3:24). The celebrated Catholic “de Sacy” version, NT 1667 and entire Bible 1696, contained numerous Catholicisms, including: Gen 42:6, “His brothers having therefore adored him;” Ex 20:5, “You will not render to them your supreme worship;” Psa 98[99]:5, “worship the sole of his feet;” Job 5:1, “Address yourselves to one of the saints;” Dan 4:27, “Redeem your sins through almsgiving, and your iniquities by the works of mercy toward the poor;” Matt 1:25, “and he did not know her when she gave birth to her firstborn son;” Matt 3:2; 4:17; etc., “Do penitence;” Luke 1:28, “I salute you, O full of grace;” Acts 11:30; 15:4; 1 Tim 4:14; etc., “Priest” instead of elder; 1 Cor 7:37, “He who . . . judges . . . that he should conserve his daughter a virgin, does a good work;” Eph 5:32, “this sacrament;” 2 Cor 11:10, “That which you accord by indulgence;” Col 2:18, “the

Some committees have considered the possibility of explaining different Roman Catholic and Protestant beliefs by noting that one interpretation is held by Roman Catholics and another by Protestants. Such a procedure does not seem wise, for it tends to accentuate the differences; nor is it necessary, for most diversities of interpretation can be covered more objectively by marginal notations on alternative readings, if the issue in question is important. Where the matter is not of great consequence, it is better simply to omit reference in the interest of joint undertakings.³⁶

- (I) Technical Features: (B) Exegetical: (3) Supplementary Features. This section discusses concordances, maps, and other additions to the text. “To serve the purpose of joint Roman Catholic and Protestant editions, a preface, if desirable, should be restricted to a commendation of Holy Scriptures to the reader and should omit appeals to ecclesial authority.”³⁷
- (I) Technical Features: (C) Linguistics: (1) Orthography.
- (I) Technical Features: (C) Linguistics: (2) Proper Names. Latin versus English.
- (I) Technical Features: (C) Linguistics: (3) Borrowings. “Roman Catholic and Protestants have exhibited two rather distinct tendencies in borrowing. For the most part, Roman Catholics have borrowed largely from Latin while Protestants have borrowed from Greek, Hebrew, or modern languages, with theological terms coming from Greek and Hebrew and cultural terms from European languages. For major languages borrowing should be kept at a strict minimum, for all such languages have a sufficiently large vocabulary or phrasal equivalence to make borrowing unnecessary.”³⁸
- (I) Technical Features: (C) Linguistics: (4) Style of Language. “It is wrong to assume that only one legitimate type of translation in major world languages is required. . . . Such diversity of language and corresponding differences of purpose in translation suggest that more than one style of language may not only be desirable but necessary in many situations.”³⁹
- (II) Procedures: (A) Climate for Cooperation. “Therefore, any cooperative effort will need for its success as wide an agreement as possible on the part of the constituencies concerned.”⁴⁰
- (II) Procedures: (B) Revision vs. New Translation. “It would seem far better where time and circumstances permit, to make a new translation. This makes possible the avoidance of traditional attachments, provides freedom to adopt new forms of language and more relevant

superstitious worship of angels;” 1 Tim 3:2, “It must be that the bishop has not married but one wife;” Philm 22, “By the merit of your prayers;” Heb 11:21, “He knelt deeply before the staff of commandment that his son was carrying;” 1 Peter 1:9, “the salvation of your souls, as the price of your faith;” 1 Peter 3:19, “to the spirits who are now retained in prison;” Jude 3, “The faith that was once and for all deposited by tradition to the saints” (ibid., 3:42). These glosses were in the text of the Scripture, there was much more in the necessary commentary on the text.

³⁶Stransky and Sheerin, 162. This may explain the differences in the marginal notations and apparatus between the Nestle 26th and 27th editions.

³⁷Ibid., 163. Hence perhaps the difference between the preface of the Nestle 26th and 27th edition.

³⁸Ibid., 164. Hence, justification, propitiation, depravity, grace, gospel, evangelize, and prophet betray Protestant tendencies.

³⁹Ibid., 165.

⁴⁰Ibid.

style, demonstrates a real and working ecumenicity, and provides both psychological and scholarly bases for creative decisions.”⁴¹

- (II) Procedures: (C) Organizational Structure: (1) Working Committee. “Consisting of 4 to 6 persons equally divided between Protestant and Roman Catholic constituencies and possessing four essential characteristics: (a) equal standing, (b) complementary abilities, (c) mutual respect, and (d) capacity to work together.”⁴²
- (II) Procedures: (C) Organizational Structure: (2) Review Committee. “Consisting of from 8 to 10 persons specially qualified to make scholarly study of the text, exegesis and style. On such a committee Roman Catholic and Protestant constituencies should be equally represented. The members should make their contribution largely by correspondence, though for certain key issues they may be invited to sit with the Working Committee.”⁴³
- (II) Procedures: (C) Organizational Structure: (3) Consultative Group. “Consisting of 25 to 50 persons, depending upon language and circumstances, selected not primarily for their technical competence but for their position as church leaders and their being representative of different constituencies: ecclesiastical, political, and geographical.”⁴⁴
- (II) Procedures: (D) Appointment of Personnel. “Working and Review Committees [not Consultative] should be selected very carefully after full consultation with all leaders involved, while members of the Consultative group may be named by their respective communities.”⁴⁵

In this next paragraph the translation process may be completely controlled by the Roman Catholic church, thus I will quote the entire paragraph separately:

To find the most qualified persons to constitute the Working and Review Committees, it is necessary to use informal decision-making structures. That is to say, an extensive investigation is made by some qualified individuals so as to assess the technical capacities and *the probabilities of such persons being able to work together effectively in a committee*. After determination, in consultation with church leaders, of the availability of such individuals, they may formally be nominated by their respective churches and appointed by the Bible Societies. *Without careful preliminary investigation unsuitable appointments have sometimes been made to the detriment of the whole project.*⁴⁶

⁴¹Ibid., 166. Hence, French Protestants have been weaned from a “psychological” attachment to the Louis Segond (1910) as the *Traduction Oecuménique de la Bible* (1988) and *Le Semeur* (1992, 1999) are not revisions of the Segond.

⁴²Stransky and Sheerin, 166. This point essentially eliminates conservative Protestants.

⁴³Ibid.

⁴⁴Ibid., 166-67. This point explains where the names come from in the preface of 1999 SEM.

⁴⁵Ibid., 167.

⁴⁶Ibid., 167; italics mine. This point brings several issues. First, conservative Protestants are virtually eliminated from the process, as they will not be suitable for cooperative publishing. In that light, one gets the impression that suitable candidates to cooperate in ecumenical Bible translation and publishing are searched out and seasoned for the task from different language groups all across the world! Second, The question then becomes what is the goal of the project, a proper translation of Scripture or an ecumenically-neutral translation? Was this point not a complete change from the original purpose of disseminating the Scriptures for which the Bible societies were founded in the first place? Please note the two founding articles of the Société biblique de Paris in 1812, “ART 1: La Société biblique de France est fondée sur la foi en l'inspiration divine des Écritures saintes et en leur autorité infaillible en matière religieuse. Cette Société a pour but de répandre les Écritures saintes. ART 2: Les versions françaises répandues par la Société sont,

This paragraph may provide the explanation of why the SEM translation is more Catholic than the French *Jerusalem Bible* which was one of the 18 Bibles compared. Here are the percentages of members on the committees: fifty percent Roman Catholic; fifty percent suitable Protestant. The deck was clearly loaded in the favor of the Catholic church. By the way this procedure holds not only for the French SEM, but for *all* the translations made in *all* languages by the UBS since 1968. The changes have been incremental in some countries, and seem more aggressive where Protestantism is weak. By the way, in the preface of the 1999 SEM they name persons involved in the translation: Alfred Kuen (whose Preface to *Parole Vivante* is noted later) was suitable for the Committee for Translation; Henri Blocher was on the Review Committee for a particular book or books; and Jacques Blocher was on the Stylistic Committee. Neither do we know “the principles” to which they had to adhere according to the guidelines set in the next section.

- (II) Procedures: (E) Formulation of Principles. “To provide proper guidance to a program, to ensure consistency of the results, and *to make creative collective efforts, detailed principles must be worked out* covering the entire range of technical features, e.g., text to be used, exegetical bases, system of transliteration, level of style, etc. *Adequate formulations of principles provide the best guarantee of success of a translation or revision project. . . .* In the second place, formulation of such principles makes possible the avoidance of a number of psychological problems [such as historic Protestant translations], since those concerned may argue for or against the principles rather than for or against each other.⁴⁷

This author senses from this paragraph the whole text being argued in committee before one word has been translated. The principles are sufficiently detailed so as to almost tie the hands of individuals appointed for individual books. The “success of the translation” seems not to be to produce a faithful translation, but rather to produce a “creative collective effort.” Perhaps this very point is why historic French Protestant translations were always the effort of one individual, not a committee. Hence, the historic French

pour le moment, celles d'Ostervald et de Martin, sans Apocryphes. Toutefois, si la majorité des Églises demande d'autres versions fidèles, celles-ci pourront être distribuées par la Société (Lortsch, 3:12).

⁴⁷Stransky and Sheerin, 167; italics mine.

Protestant versions carry the name of an individual: Pierre Robert (Louis) Olivétan (1535),⁴⁸ David Martin (1696), Jean Frédéric Ostervald (1744), Louis Segond (1873, revised posthumously in 1910). It is possible to judge when individuals meet the spiritual criteria set out in Acts 6:3, 1 Tim 3:1-10, and Titus 1:5-9. On the other hand, persons on committees often remain in the shadows, perhaps unaccountable for their teaching, their lives, or their translation work.

- (II) Procedures: (F) Editorial Supervision. “Such supervision . . . provides a means by which the translators may have from a competent Bible Society source some guidance as to ways of solving problems which may have arisen during the course of the work. . . . The mere fact that such consultation is available, either with the Bible Society Translations Departments [of which Eugene Nida was the Executive Secretary from 1943-1980] or their field representatives, often prevents tensions and the development of strained relations.”⁴⁹
- (II) Procedures: (G) Types of Editions. “If joint translation programs are to lead to meaningful unity in the preparation of editions of Holy Scriptures [this is the unnamed goal which is alluded to above], it is important to avoid the production of two different texts (Roman Catholic and Protestant) by two different publishing houses [thus the Septuagint includes the deuterocanonical books, and there is a sharing of the financial burden of publishing].⁵⁰

Rome’s SPCU knew the leverage they had gained in the above measures, so they now pressed for a non-dissolution clause (a common ploy). *The following quote assures that (over time) Rome will maintain a majority (fifty percent and an acquiescent fifty percent) of influence on all Protestant translations put out by the UBS following 1968!*

If the result of the joint effort is merely to produce two different texts to be put out by different publishing houses, it is almost inevitable that within five to ten years the texts will be further changed and ultimately there will be two different Bibles rather than one joint production. Even when the same text is put out by two different publishers it can become the object of very considerable pressure for minor modifications which within a short time add up to major changes [hence the 1999 minor revision

⁴⁸Olivétan evangelized his cousin Jean Cauvin (John Calvin): “C’est Olivétan qui, le premier, initia son cousin Jean Calvin à l’Évangile. Il lui fit ‘goûter quelque chose de la pure religion,’ dit Théodore de Bèze. Il lui conseilla de lire l’Écriture. ‘Calvin, ayant suivi ce conseil, commença à se distraire des superstitions papales.’ ‘Quand Olivétan, a dit M. Doumergue, n’aurait fait qu’initier Calvin à la Réforme, il mériterait un souvenir et une reconnaissance impérissables’ (Doumergue, *Calvin*, 1:119)” (Daniel Lortsch, *Histoire de la Bible en France* [accessed: 4 March 2005; from: http://www.bibliquest.org/Lortsch/Lortsch-Histoire_Bible_France-2.htm; Internet], 2:4).

Olivétan died mysteriously during a trip to Rome in 1538, three years after he completed his translation: “Lors d’un voyage qu’Olivétan fit à Rome, il fut empoisonné et alla mourir à Ferrare en 1538. Il avait entre quarante et quarante-cinq ans” (*Histoire du Saint Livre en France*, 5).

⁴⁹Ibid., 168.

⁵⁰Ibid.

of the 1992 International Bible Society's *Le Semeur*]. This does not mean, of course, that there should be only one edition of the Scriptures containing precisely the same supplementary or marginal helps, for a variety of forms of one and the same text can be useful in reaching diverse parts of a constituency. Nevertheless, once an agreement has been made as to a united approach to a translation or revision, it is wise to foresee the need for implementing this unity by continued procedures for publication.⁵¹

- Procedures: (H) Imprimatur. "An edition prepared jointly by Roman Catholics and Protestants would normally bear the imprint of the Bible Society and the imprimatur of the appropriate Roman Catholic ecclesiastical authority."⁵²

And finally, the [circa 1981-1982] support of the Pope John Paul II to these measures:

I congratulate you all not only on this publishing event but, above all, on what it signifies. For it is a comforting sign of that "hunger and thirst for the word of God" of which the Prophet Amos spoke (*Amos* 8, 11) and which is always a sure guarantee of renewal and strengthening in the faith. Moreover, in this fact there is also a broad approval of the ecumenical effort which has gone into your initiative; for the Word of the Lord is one for all Churches and these can draw together ever nearer each other to the extent to which they can come together in "hearing with reverence" (*Dei Verbum*, 1) that Word itself.⁵³

These guidelines, presumably still in effect, seem to have marked French translations significantly. Remarkably, it would seem that many of these guidelines were fully followed by the International Bible Society (IBS) in their 1992 French translation, SEM. Before delving into SEM, let's add to this ecumenical debacle the contemporary Evangelical emphasis on dynamic equivalence.

TRANSLATION *SITZ IM LEBEN*

Eugene Nida, Executive Secretary of the Translations Department of the UBS from 1943-1980, was perhaps the most prominent spokesperson for a new kind of Bible translation. Thirty-seven years at the top of the editorial chain for the UBS translations, Nida was a champion of "dynamic equivalence,"⁵⁴ while simultaneously bemoaning the

⁵¹Ibid.

⁵²Ibid.

⁵³Ibid., 169.

⁵⁴Rodney Decker wrote, "The older term 'dynamic equivalence' was coined and defined by Eugene Nida" (Rodney J. Decker, "Translation Philosophy and the English Standard Version New Testament," paper delivered at the Evangelical Theological Society [Nov 2004], 2; Accessed 1 March 2005, available at http://faculty.bbc.edu/rdecker/documents/ESV_ReviewETS.pdf; Internet).

old history of Bible translation which he called “formal correspondence.” Nida explained the difference between the old and the new methods of translation:

The older focus in translating was the form of the message, and the translators took particular delight in being able to reproduce stylistic specialties, e.g. rhythms, rhymes, plays on words, chiasmata, parallelism, and unusual grammatical structures. The new focus, however, has shifted from the form of the message to the response of the receptor. Therefore, what one must determine is the response of the receptor to the translated message. This response must then be compared to the way in which the original receptors presumably reacted to the message when it was given in its original setting.⁵⁵

Nida clearly differentiated between an old and a new method of translation. For the old method, Nida used the term “formal correspondence,” which he defined as follows:

Formal correspondence: quality of a translation in which the features of the form and the source text have been mechanically reproduced in the receptor language. Typically formal correspondence distorts the grammatical and stylistic patterns of the receptor language, and hence distorts the message, so as to cause the receptor to misunderstand or to labor unduly hard; opposed to Dynamic Equivalence; see also Literalness.⁵⁶

To this negatively portrayed approach to translation, Nida counterpoised “dynamic equivalence,” which he defined as follows:

Dynamic equivalence: quality of translation in which the message of the original text has been so transported into the receptor language that the Response of the Receptor is essentially like that of the original receptors. Frequently, the form of the original text is changed; but as long as the change follows the rules of back transformation in the source language, of contextual consistency in transfer, and of transformation in the receptor language, the message is preserved and the translation is faithful. The opposite principle is Formal Correspondence.⁵⁷

Reading these definitions now, more than 35 years later, is like entering a time warp. Now my study of the 18 French translations begins to make sense. In the pre-1960s all the Protestant translations had only very slight variations. After the 1960s, the translations began to vary widely.

The problem is that Nida’s approach contained several fatal fallacies:

- He assumed that the through scientific means the translator can understand the full message behind God’s Word in order to preserve the original emphasis.⁵⁸ This undermines the spiritual

⁵⁵Eugene A. Nida and Charles R. Taber, *The Theory and Practice of Translation*, “Helps for Translators,” vol 8 (Leiden: Brill for the United Bible Societies, 1969), 1.

⁵⁶Ibid., 203.

⁵⁷Ibid., 202.

⁵⁸“Though this present book treats the problems of translating primarily in terms of scientific orientation to linguistic structures, semantic analysis, and information theory, it does not lose sight of the

nature of the message of Scripture (2 Tim 3:16; 2 Pet 1:20-21), as well as the fact that God has chosen to reveal Himself through words, each of which is important to Him (Matt 5:19).

- Nida assumed that the translator can fully understand the message of the text (and the purpose for which God chose every word) enough to gauge God's desire for an intended response, "what one must determine is the response of the receptor to the translated message." In this he was almost asking for omniscience on the part of the translator, especially the more loosely he translated the text, as he was asking him to replace the power of every word of God with rearrangement, phrases and [non-traditional] artful words.⁵⁹
- Nida artfully replaced the objectivity of four and a half centuries of Protestant translation history with the subjectivity of "the way in which the original receptors presumably reacted to the message when it was given in its original setting." He was encouraging translators to move beyond the text into the minds of the original audience, an impossible request given the temporal, linguistic, geographical, and sociological distance. Nida subtly moved from a translation methodology based on verbal inspiration, to translation based on the message received by the audience (Neo-orthodox and Existential). This left translators departing from formal correspondence to seeking the ideas behind the text.
- Nida did not seem to take into account ecclesial motives in loose translation, which the Reformers were so careful to avoid by formal correspondence.
- Nida negatively framed his definition of formal correspondence with such words as "mechanical," "distorts," "distorts," "misunderstand," and "unduly labor."
- Unfortunately, many current translations have moved past Nida's proposed method of control, "the rules of back transformation in the source language," and taken complete liberty with the text, where in some cases it bears little resemblance to the original.

Its amazing that with several swipes of the pen that Nida undermined four and a half centuries of Protestant translation! Even more amazing is that his philosophy of translation was followed and continues to be the norm. Therefore, since that time it is quite unfortunate that the many translations in many languages have been completely revised to follow this new philosophy of Nida. He wielded immense influence due to his 37-year role as Executive Secretary of the Translations Department of the UBS. Not only was his influence consultative, but it was also administrative in choosing translators, and budgetary in funding projects. In this context, French Protestant Alfred Kuen felt the

fact that translating is far more than a science. It is also a skill, and the ultimate analysis fully satisfactory translation is always an art" (ibid., vii).

⁵⁹It is the contention of this author that the more closely the words and word order of the original text are followed, the more spiritual power of the translation. The converse is also true, the farther from the words and the word order a translation moves, the less spiritual power it has, regardless of the scientific theories to the contrary propounded by Nida.

pressure of the Anglophone and Germanophone translation milieus: “Nous restons néanmoins loin derrière les pays anglo-saxons ou germanophones où paraissent, depuis plusieurs décennies, des versions en langage moderne.”⁶⁰

The literalness of the Pierre Robert Olivétan (1535), the literalness of the David Martin (1696), the literalness of the Jean Frédéric Ostervald (1744), the literalness of the Louis Segond (1910), are all accused of being mechanical distortions, even though they fed and taught four and a half centuries of French Protestant Christians, some of whom lost their lives because they owned or distributed such literal translations.⁶¹ Now all of

⁶⁰ Alfred Kuen, “Preface,” *Parole Vivante* (1976), 11. “Nevertheless we stay far behind the English-speaking or German-speaking countries where appear, since several decades, versions in modern language” (translation mine).

⁶¹ It is good to be reminded of past days: “Le colportage des Livres saints ne se faisait pas seulement sous forme indirecte. Il y eut des colporteurs bibliques, analogues aux nôtres, pour qui la grande affaire c’était l’évangélisation. Réfugiés à Genève, à Lausanne et à Neuchâtel, pour fuir la persécution qui faisait rage en France, ils étaient troublés en pensant que, de l’autre côté du Jura, les moissons blanchissantes réclamaient des ouvriers. Alors ils partaient, emportant avec eux un ballot de livres, qu’ils dissimulaient de leur mieux, souvent dans une barrique, que les passants supposaient contenir du vin ou du cidre. Ce fut de cette manière que *Denis Le Vair*, qui avait évangélisé les îles de la Manche, essaya de faire pénétrer en Normandie une charge de livres de l’Écriture. Comme il faisait marché avec un charretier pour le transport de son tonneau, deux officiers de police, flairant une marchandise suspecte, lui demandèrent si ce n’étaient point par hasard des ‘livres d’hérésie’ qu’il transportait ainsi. — ‘Non,’ répondit Le Vair, ‘ce sont des livres de la Sainte Écriture, contenant toute ‘vérité.’ ” Il ne cacha pas qu’ils lui appartenaient et l’usage qu’il voulait en faire. Traîné de prison en prison, il fut finalement condamné, par le parlement de Rouen, à être brûlé vif, et il souffrit le martyre avec une admirable constance.

“Comme beaucoup des premiers missionnaires de la Réforme française, *Philibert Hamelin* avait été prêtre. Converti à l’Évangile à Saintes, il fut jeté en prison en 1546, mais il réussit à s’enfuir à Genève. Il y établit une imprimerie, d’où sortirent plusieurs ouvrages religieux. Mais cet imprimeur avait une âme d’apôtre. . . il prit lui-même la balle sur son dos et s’en alla de lieu en lieu répandre la bonne semence. Pourchassé par les autorités qui confisquaient ses livres, il rentra à Genève pour s’y approvisionner et repartait pour la France. Bernard Palissy, qui fut son ami, nous le montre ‘s’en allant, un simple bâton à la main, tout seul, sans aucune crainte, et s’efforçant, partout où il passait, d’inciter les hommes à avoir des ministres.’ . . .

“Le colporteur devint le pasteur des petites communautés évangéliques fondées à Saintes et dans la presqu’île d’Arvert, et dont faisait partie Palissy, le potier de génie. Il y déploya un zèle admirable et fut, selon l’expression de celui-ci, ‘un prophète, un ange de Dieu, envoyé pour annoncer sa parole et le jugement de condamnation, et dont la vie était si sainte que les autres hommes étaient diables au regard de lui.’

“En rentrant en France, *Philibert Hamelin* avait fait le sacrifice de sa vie. Arrêté au milieu de ses travaux apostoliques, il fut conduit à Bordeaux, où, après avoir souffert toutes sortes de mauvais traitements, il fut condamné à mort. Avant d’aller au supplice, il mangea avec les autres prisonniers, qu’il édifia par sa joie et par ses paroles pleines de foi et d’espérance. En sa qualité d’ancien prêtre, il fut conduit à l’église de Saint-André, où on le dégradait. On le ramena ensuite devant le palais, où devait avoir lieu son supplice. Afin d’empêcher qu’il ne fût entendu de la foule, les trompettes sonnèrent sans cesse; toutefois,

the sudden, with the new thinking of Eugene Nida, our forefathers were found to be misguided after all.

By the way, there is no King James version in French. The closest thing to a King James version today is the 1910 Louis Segond. It is this version to which Kuen alludes when he reads of the archaisms of which Nida wrote. Unfortunately, while the English

on put voir, à sa contenance, qu'il priaït. Après l'avoir étranglé, le bourreau jeta son corps sur un bûcher où il fut réduit en cendres. . . .

“Au mois de juillet 1551, deux jeunes gens quittaient Genève pour se rendre dans l'Albigeois, d'où ils étaient originaires. L'un, âgé de vingt-deux ans, se nommait *Jean Joëry* et l'autre était un tout jeune garçon qui lui servait de domestique. Ils portaient un ballot de livres protestants. Arrêtés à Mende, en Languedoc, ils furent traduits devant la justice du lieu et condamnés à être brûlés. . . .” (*Matthieu Lelièvre, Messenger des Messagers*, novembre 1905).

“*Étienne de La Forge*, riche marchand en la rue Saint-Martin, l'ami de Farel et de Calvin, 'avait,' dit Crespin, 'en singulière recommandation l'avancement de l'Évangile, jusques à faire imprimer à ses dépens livres de la Sainte Écriture, lesquels il avançait et mêlait parmi les grandes aumônes qu'il faisait, pour instruire les pauvres ignorants.' Il fut pendu, puis brûlé, au cimetière Saint-Jean, à Paris, le 13 novembre 1534.

“*Macé Moreau*, arrêté à Troyes et trouvé porteur d'un ballot d'exemplaires de livres saints, fut, lui aussi, soumis à la question. Pendant les tortures qu'on lui infligeait, il dit au juge qui essayait de lui arracher la dénonciation de ses frères: 'Juge, tu me tourmentes bien, mais tu n'y gagneras guère.' Au milieu des souffrances, on l'entendit dire: 'Ah! méchante chair, que tu es rebelle! tu seras toutefois à la fin mâtée!' Il alla au bûcher en chantant des psaumes, et ses chants ne cessèrent que quand l'ardeur des flammes le suffoqua.

“La question fut également impuissante à vaincre la constance d'un autre colporteur biblique, *Nicolas Nail*, bien qu'au sortir du banc de torture il eût les membres broyés. Amené au parvis Notre-Dame, on voulut le contraindre à s'incliner devant la statue de la Vierge. Ne pouvant exprimer autrement son sentiment, à cause du bâillon qu'il avait dans la bouche, il tourna le dos à l'idole. La populace, émue de rage, voulait le mettre en pièces. Pour la satisfaire, le bourreau aggrava le supplice du bûcher en saupoudrant de soufre le corps du martyr préalablement enduit de graisse, 'tellement,' dit Crespin, 'que le feu à grand'peine avait pris au bois, que la paille flamboyante saisit la peau du pauvre corps, et ardaït au-dessus, sans que la flamme encore pénétrât en dedans.' Le feu ayant brûlé les cordes qui retenaient le bâillon, on entendit s'élever du milieu des flammes la voix du martyr invoquant le nom de Dieu. L'exécution eut lieu sur la place Maubert, en 1553. . . .

“L'un des plus vaillants parmi ces colporteurs fut certainement *Nicolas Ballon*, qui, quoique âgé, fit plusieurs voyages de Genève en France pour y introduire des livres saints. Arrêté à Poitiers, en 1556, il fut condamné à mort. . . . il réussit à fuir et à atteindre Genève. Mais son zèle était si grand qu'il en repartit peu après avec une charge de livres. . . . Son pressentiment ne le trompait pas; il fut arrêté à Châlons, ramené à Paris, et brûlé aux Halles. Son jeune serviteur, qui l'aidait dans son oeuvre, fut aussi envoyé au bûcher quelques jours après.

“Souvent on brûlait les Bibles en même temps que ceux qui les avaient distribuées. *Étienne Pouillot* fut brûlé, en place Maubert, avec une charge de livres sur les épaules. Quelques années plus tard, en 1559, deux bûchers furent allumés en face l'un de l'autre sur cette même place. Sur l'un fut brûlé vif *Marin Marie*, coupable d'avoir apporté en France une charge de Nouveaux Testaments et de Bibles, et sur l'autre bûcher furent consumés ces livres eux-mêmes. Le même fait se passait fréquemment en Flandre. La sentence de *Jacques de Loo* portait qu'il sera 'brûlé tout vif et consumé en cendres, et par avant seront tous ses livres brûlés en sa présence'" (*Lortsch, Histoire de la Bible en France*, 1:30-33).

language evolved to an extent from 1611 to 1969 (358 years), the French language did not evolve as much from 1910 to 1969 (59 years). Herein is another *non sequitor*.

The tragedy of Nida's theories, however, does not come from changes in language, but in theological adaptations in translations, couched in linguistic garb. While theological change is more difficult to show in English language translations (probably due to a Protestant majority), the theme of this paper is that theological bias can be shown in the 1992 and 1999 SEM.

SAMPLE TRANSLATIONS IN 1 PETER

The combination of Nida's theory of dynamic equivalence and the work of the UBS and SPCU Joint Committee were married in the 1992 IBS's SEM. While the entirety of the whole Bible contains too many issues to discuss in a paper, our focus will be on 1 Peter:⁶² (1) the progressive approach to changing translations; (2) the elimination of "borrowings" in the 1992 *Le Semeur*, and (3) clearly theologically-biased translation.

First, there is a clear progression away from the Louis Segond history of translation beginning with the *Parole Vivante* métaphrase,⁶³ moving to the *La Colombe*, the *Traduction Oecuménique de la Bible* (TOB), and finally to SEM. While numerous verses could be cited, the progression is exemplified using 1 Peter 2:9 as an example (changes from the 1910 are highlighted):

⁶²1 Peter was on Luther's short list for Bible reading (Martin Luther, "Preface [to New Testament]," in *Martin Luther*, ed. John Dillenberger (1522; Garden City, NY: Anchor, 1961), 28.

⁶³Perhaps patterned after Kenneth Taylor's *Living Bible*, Alfred Kuen denied that his was a paraphrase. Rather he called his translation a "métaphrase" or "transcription." It was neither a paraphrase nor a literal translation. Rather it combined the readings of over 30 French versions, with an eye on other languages also. Kuen explained, "Le terme qui caractériserait le mieux cet essai serait sans doute celui de *métaphrase* qui désign 'une traduction d'un texte plus respectueuse du fond que la forme' (Robert), mais comme ce mot n'est guère employé, nous avons utilisé celui de *transcription* avec la nuance qu'il a spécialement en musique: adaptation d'une oeuvre pour des instruments autres que ceux pour lesquels elle a été écrite (Kuen, *Parole Vivante*, 13). This translation began the process of breaking down the psychological barriers described in the 1968 document.

- Louis Segond Révisée (1910): Vous, au contraire, vous êtes une race élue, un sacerdoce royal, une nation sainte, un peuple acquis, afin que vous annonciez les vertus de celui qui vous a appelés des ténèbres à son admirable lumière,
- Parole Vivante (1976): Mais vous, vous êtes une race élue, un corps de “rois sacrificateurs”, vous constituez une nation sainte, un peuple que Dieu c’est acquis et qui lui appartient. Aussi devez-vous proclamer bien haut les perfections et les oeuvres merveilleuses de Celui qui vous a appelés à passer des ténèbres à son admirable lumière.
- La Colombe (1978):⁶⁴ Vous, par contre, vous êtes une race élue, un sacerdoce royal, une nation sainte, un peuple racheté, afin d’annoncer les vertus de celui qui vous a appelés des ténèbres à son admirable lumière;
- TOB (1988): Mais vous, [] vous êtes la race élue, la communauté sacerdotale du roi, la nation sainte, le peuple que Dieu s’est acquis, pour que vous proclamiez les hauts faits de celui qui vous a appelés des ténèbres à sa merveilleuse lumière,
- Le Semeur⁶⁵ (1992): Mais vous, [] vous êtes une race élue, une communauté de rois-prêtres, une nation sainte, un peuple que Dieu s’est acquis pour que vous célébriez bien haut les oeuvres merveilleuses de celui qui vous a appelés à passer des ténèbres à son admirable lumière.
- Français Courant (1997): Mais vous, [] vous êtes la race choisie, les prêtres du Roi, la nation sainte, le peuple qui appartient à Dieu. [] Il vous a appelés à passer de l’obscurité à sa merveilleuse lumière, [afin que vous proclamiez ses oeuvres magnifiques].
- Le Semeur (1999): Mais vous, [] vous êtes une race élue, une communauté de rois-prêtres, une nation sainte, un peuple que Dieu a libéré pour que vous célébriez bien haut les oeuvres merveilleuses de celui qui vous a appelés à passer des ténèbres à son admirable lumière.
- Bible de Jérusalem: Mais vous, [] vous êtes une race élue, un sacerdoce royal, une nation sainte, un peuple acquis, pour proclamer les louanges de Celui qui vous a appelés des ténèbres à son admirable lumière,

Several comments about these translations. First, two of them are marketed as contemporary French: *Parole Vivante* (1976) and *Français Courant* (1997). Interesting, however, is the complexity of their terminology (e.g., “un corps de ‘rois sacrificateurs’”),

⁶⁴Even the title of this translation begs for explanation. Donald Sweeting wrote, “Long before anyone was talking about Evangelicals and Catholics coming together (ECT) there was talk about Pentecostals and Catholics coming together (PCT). During the course of our time period [1960-1998], there has been an amazing convergence of Pentecostals and Charismatics with Roman Catholics that began early in the 1960s and continues to this day” (Donald Sweeting, “From Conflict to Cooperation? Changing American Evangelical Attitudes toward Roman Catholics: 1960-1998” [Ph.D. diss., Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, 1998], 155). Billy Graham also recognized this trend in his *The Holy Spirit: Activating God’s Power in Your Life* (New York: Warner Books, 1978). Graham explained that Pope John XXIII said that the doctrine of the Holy Spirit needed reemphasis and Karl Barth thought that the next emphasis in theology should be the Holy Spirit. Then Graham acknowledged as a testimony, “Throughout my ministry as an evangelist I have had a growing understanding of the ministry of the Holy Spirit” (ibid., 10).

⁶⁵This title also begs for comment. It is derived from the parable of the Sower found in Matt 13, Mark 4, and Luke 8. “Semeur” means “Sower.” Thus the title is unashamedly marketed toward an Evangelical readership.

though they are marketed as easier French. In fact, some of their semantics are actually more confusing than helpful. Second, the 1992 *Le Semeur* seems to follow the precedent set up by the 1976 *Parole Vivante* (e.g., “un peuple que Dieu c’est acquis”). Third, the *Bible de Jérusalem* is included for comparative reasons. Note how it closely resembles the 1910 *Segond* in this verse. Fourth, there seems to be a clear progression from the *Louis Segond Révisée* (1910), through the *Segond Nouvelle Révision* (1962), the *La Colombe* (1978), the *TOB* (1988), and finally to the SEM (1992). Each progression progressively moves the text away from formal correspondence to the Greek text, and from the opportunity of “back transformation in the source language.”⁶⁶

Perhaps a verse that exemplifies the freedom of the 1992 SEM is 1 Peter 1:7 (identical to SEM 1999), which describes the role of trials as regards the testing of faith:

Le Semeur (1992 and 1999): “celles-ci servent à éprouver la valeur de votre foi. Le feu du creuset n’éprouve-t-il pas l’or qui pourtant disparaîtra un jour? Mais beaucoup plus précieuse que l’or périssable est la foi qui a résisté à l’épreuve. Elle vous vaudra louange, gloire et honneur aux yeux de Dieu, lorsque Jésus-Christ apparaîtra.”⁶⁷

Louis Segond Révisée (LSG) (1910): “afin que l’épreuve de votre foi, plus précieuse que l’or périssable (qui cependant est éprouvé par le feu), ait pour résultat la louange, la gloire et l’honneur, lorsque Jésus-Christ apparaîtra,”⁶⁸

The *Le Semeur* translation of this verse could in no way be translated back into the Greek to approximate the original text. There are too many interpretive additions (adding a question, changing word order, changing tenses, and adding multiple interpretive words

⁶⁶Nida and Taber, *The Theory and Practice of Translation*, 202.

⁶⁷My translation of SEM: “these serve to prove the value of your faith. The fire of the firepit does it not approve gold which will nevertheless disappear one day? But much more precious than perishable gold is the faith that has resisted to trial. She will earn you praise, glory, and honor in the eyes of God, when Jesus Christ appears.”

⁶⁸My translation of LSG: “in order that your faith, more precious that perishable gold (which nevertheless is approved by fire), has as result the praise, the glory, and the honor, when Christ appears,”

and phrases). The following lists some of the changed emphases as compared to the “formal correspondence” of the 1979 GEN:⁶⁹

- Rather than faith being the active agent, trials are the active agent;
- Note the period after the first phrase to cut off the fact that it is the *tried* faith that is more precious than gold;
- Arbitrarily turn the second phrase into a rhetorical question, again making a separation of a living faith from the assurance and hope of seeing Christ, and again emphasizing the importance of a tried faith;
- Arbitrarily add the phrase “that will disappear one day,” perhaps in the context of a vow of poverty;
- The faith is not communicated as a heart condition of simply believing, but rather as a doctrinal body tested by trial (similar to Loyola’s meritorious approach to temptation⁷⁰);
- The tried faith does not result in assurance, but rather in the praise of the person who has it (adding possessive), and that praise is not with assurance, but only “in the eyes of God” (more explanatory words arbitrarily added to the text), who seems to be the divine dispenser of absolution and indulgence; and
- The emphasis is to remove the assurance of salvation from saving faith alone, to that faith must prove itself through long-term trials, hence a stoic salvation through faith plus works.

The theological presuppositions leading to the liberty in the text seem obvious (see Figure One). Therefore, there seems to be a clear progression away from “formal correspondence” to the original language, through several more “dynamic equivalent” translations, and to a complete theological freedom much akin to paraphrase.

Second, as far as “borrowings,” several words are eliminated in *Le Semeur* (SEM)⁷¹ from French Protestant translation history of 1 Peter, chapter 1—as compared to

⁶⁹A complete grammatical comparison would also be helpful as to tenses and forms of words changed, as well as the addition of the interrogative and changing word order. However, it’s possibility is beyond the scope of this paper.

⁷⁰Note Ignatius Loyola’s encouragement to novice Jesuits in his *Spiritual Exercises* as regards temptations: “To help the exercitant purify himself and make better confessions. . . . There are two ways of gaining merit from an evil thought which comes from without: 1. The thought comes to me to commit a mortal sin; I resist the thought immediately and it is conquered. 2. When the same evil thought comes to me and I resist it, and it returns again and again, but I continue to resist it until it is vanquished. This second way is much more meritorious than the first” (Ignatius Loyola, *The Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius*; trans by Anthony Mottola; Imprimatur, Cardinal Spellman [Garden City, NY: Image Books, Doubleday, 1964], 50). Loyola was encouraging his followers to gain merit through their temptations or trials, as in this reworking of 1 Peter 1:7.

| Roman Catholic | SEM (1992, 1999) | Evangelical |
|--|-------------------------|---|
| Faith + works (Council of Trent and <i>Catechism</i> [Rome, 1993]) | | God alone; Faith alone, .i.e. instrumentality of faith |
| Heaven granted to those who work | 1 Peter 1:4 | Heaven given as a gift to those who believe |
| God [through His Church and its sacraments] must be the active agent; must make passive verbs that God alone can do into active verbs that can be part of the sacramental system | 1 Peter 1:3, 4, 5 | Faith alone is active agent; instrumentality of faith; God alone as acting agent |
| Trials are a necessary part of salvation; emphasizing of stoic means through physical trials | 1 Peter 1:6-7 | Trials are short-lived in light of eternity, do not increase merits, nor increase salvation |

Fig 1. Comparison of Roman Catholic and Evangelical Soteriology in 1 Peter 1:3-7.

the 1979 GEN (and Protestant translation history):

- *élus* (elect), 1:1, 2; changed to *choisie* (chosen), 1:1, *choisie d'avance* (chosen in advance), 1:2.
- *prescience* (foreknowledge), 1:2; changed to *conformément à son plan* (in conformity with his will).
- *sanctification* (sanctification), 1:2; changed to *vous lui avez été consacrés* (you were consecrated unto him).
- *béni* (blessed), 1:3; changed to *loué* (praised).
- *régénérés* (regenerated), 1:3, 23; changed to *il nous a fait naître à une vie nouvelle* (he made us born to a new life), *nés à une vie nouvelle* (born to a new life).
- *corrompre* (corrupt), 1:4; changed to *se salir* (dirty itself).
- *vous croyez* (you believe), 1:8; changed to *en plaçant votre foi* (in placing your faith).
- *vous avez été rachetés* (you were redeemed), 1:18; changed to *vous avez été libérés* (you were liberated).
- *prédestinés avant la fondation du monde* (predestined before the foundation of the world), 1:20; changed to *dès avant la création du monde, Dieu l'avait choisi pour cela* (since prior to the creation of the world, God had chosen him for that).
- *reposent sur Dieu* (rests upon God), 1:21; changed to *sont tournées vers Dieu* (are turned toward God)
- *corruptible . . . incorruptible* (corruptible . . . incorruptible), 1:23; change to *mortel* (mortal . . . immortal).

⁷¹*La Bible du Semeur traduite en français d'après les textes originaux hébreu et Grec* (Colorado Springs: International Bible Society, 1992; Nogent-sur-Marne: Association Biblique Internationale, 1992).

- *l'Évangile* (Gospel), 1:25; changed to *la Bonne Nouvelle* (the Good News).

Above includes twelve possible “borrowings” that were eliminated in order to provide more natural or neutral French translations. However, a cursory inspection of these “borrowed” words betrays the theological value of these words to Protestant theology. Only one of the above list removed “borrowings” was changed in the 1999 revision.⁷² One technical word, however, was not changed perhaps as it fits into a sacramental system of conversion: *aspersion* (sprinkling), 1:2.

Other “borrowings” were also reformulated in the 1992 SEM:

- *évangélisant* (evangelize) in Acts 8:40 was changed to *annonçant la Bonne Nouvelle* (announcing the Good News).^{*73}
- *prophètes* (prophets) in Acts 11:27 became *des hommes qui avaient le don d'apporter des messages inspirés par Dieu* (men who had the gift of bringing inspired messages from God), and in Eph 4:11, “and some as prophets” was translated *d'autres comme porte-parole de Dieu* (others as spokespersons for God).
- the verb *prophétiser* (prophecy) in 1 Cor 4:3, was translated as *apporte . . . un message compréhensible inspiré de Dieu* (brings a understandable message inspired of God).
- *évêque* (bishop) in 1 Tim 3:1 was translated *dirigeant* (directing person).*
- *diacres* (deacon) in 1 Tim 3:8 was changed to *assistants* (assistant).

Of the above verses, those with an asterisk are unchanged in the 1999 SEM. The following were changed in the 1999 SEM: Acts 11:27 and Eph 4:11 renderings were returned to ‘prophet’ in the 1999 SEM; 1 Cor 4:3, the verb was returned to “prophecy;” 1 Tim 3:8, “Deacon” was also restored in the 1999 version. But elder as “responsible” was not changed in the 1999 version of 1 Peter 5:1, nor was “announcing the Good News”

⁷²Changes that were made in the 1999 version of *Le Semeur* in 1 Peter 1:1-9, 17-25 are: 1:1, “hôtes de passage” replaced “étrangers”; 1:4, “corrompre” replaced “salir”; 1:9, “car vous obtenez votre salut qui est le but de votre foi” replaced “car vous obtenez le salut de vos âmes qui est le but de votre foi”; 1:17, “que vous le révérez” replaced “le respect que vous lui portez”; and 1:22, “votre être” replaced “vos âmes.”

⁷³The translation of εὐαγγελίζω as ‘evangeliser’ (evangelize) has a long history in French Protestant translation of Acts 8:40, going back at least to the John Darby (1885), the Ostervald, révisée Frossard (1886), the Segond Révisée (1910), and found in all the *Segond* revisions (up to and including the *La Colombe* [1978]), until the 1988 *TOB*, which translated this term, “annonçant la Bonne Nouvelle” (announcing the Good News).

returned to “evangelize” in Acts 8:40. Again, as far as ecclesiology and the NT church the NT names of offices are very important to Evangelicals.

One particular verse of particular interest in light of Roman Catholic ecclesiology is 1 Peter 5:1, where Peter calls himself an elder, and he calls the other leaders “fellow elders” (NAU):

- GEN (1979): “Voici les exhortations que j'adresse aux anciens qui sont parmi vous, moi, ancien comme eux, témoin des souffrances de Christ, et participant de la gloire qui doit être manifestée.”
- SEM (1992): “Je ferai, à présent, quelques recommandations à ceux parmi vous qui sont responsables de l’Eglise. Je leur parle en tant que responsable comme eux et témoin des souffrances du Christ, moi qui ai aussi part à la gloire qui sera bientôt révélée.”
- SEM (1999): “Je ferait, à présent, quelques recommandations à ceux parmi vous qui sont responsables de l’Eglise. Je leur parle en tant que responsable comme eux et témoin des souffrances du Christ, moi qui ai aussi part à la gloire qui va être révélée.”

As the first extant papal encyclical, according to Roman Catholic theology, it is interesting that Peter describes himself as an elder, and not a pope. The term “elder” was no doubt considered a “borrowed” term, therefore it was modified to read “responsable,” responsible person (as also in Acts 11:30; 15:4; and 1 Tim 5:19). 2 John 1 and 3 John 1 both read “ancien” (elder) in both the 1992 and 1999 SEM. Thus, the dropping of “borrowed” words seems more theological, than pure translation science!

Very important to French Protestant translation is the OT proper name for God, YHWH. The Protestant history of translating of YHWH as “l’Eternel” in the French⁷⁴ goes back to the Olivétan version of 1535.⁷⁵ The *Bible de Jerusalem* translated YHWH as

⁷⁴E.g. Psalm 23:1, “L’Éternel est mon berger: je ne manquerai de rien” (*Louis Segond*, 1910).

⁷⁵“En 1535, Pierre Robert Olivétan produisit une nouvelle traduction qui suppléait aux faiblesses de la version de Lefèvre. Natif de Picardie, il fut un des leaders de la Réforme en France. A cause de l’opposition rencontrée en France la première édition de cette Bible fut imprimée à Neuchâtel (en Suisse), les autres le furent à Genève. Olivétan est aussi le premier à employer le mot ‘ÉTERNEL’ pour désigner Dieu quand le texte hébraïque indique les quatre consonnes YHWH. . . . C’était un homme humble, mais plus hardi que Lefèvre, et de grand talent. Il commença sa préface par ces mots: ‘P.Robert Olivétan, l’humble et petit translateur à l’Église de Jésus-Christ. Salut!’ Certains opposants ont essayé de dire que cette version était seulement une simple révision de Lefèvre, mais il est facile de voir qu’Olivétan apporta

| Roman Catholic | Text | Evangelical |
|-----------------------------------|-----------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Faith and works | 1 Peter 1:3-5 | God alone; Faith alone |
| Trials are meritorious | 1 Peter 1:6-7 | Trials are part of life in this world |
| Church is present kingdom | 1 Peter 2:4-8 | Church is spiritual kingdom |
| Worship is primary | 1 Peter 2:9-10 | Proclamation is primary |
| Moral-influence theory | 1 Peter 2:24-25; 3:18 | Substitutionary atonement |
| Defend the faith against heretics | 1 Peter 3:15 | Tell of hope |
| Purgatory | 1 Peter 3:19 | Metaphorical |
| Baptismal regeneration | 1 Peter 3:21 | Baptism as symbolic |
| Peter first Pope | 1 Peter 5:1 | Peter fellow-elder |

Fig 2. Comparison of Select Theological Issues in 1 Peter.

“Yahveh.”⁷⁶ The *TOB* (1988) translated YHWH as “SEIGNEUR,”⁷⁷ following the LXX’s κυριος, which is also used in many English translations (LORD), and was continued in the French *Bible en Français Courant* (1997).⁷⁸ Perhaps the French psychological adherence to the innovation of Protestant Olivétan’s translation has been or will be broken after all!

Thirdly, theological bias is particularly noted in several passages in the 1992 SEM 1 Peter (see Figure Two): (1) as has already been noted, 1 Peter 1:7 translated faith that undergoes trial as meritorious; (2) of the church and its sacraments, 1 Peter 2:5 states:

and because you are you also living stones, edify yourselves to form a spiritual temple and to constitute a group of priests consecrated to God, charged unto him to offer spiritual sacrifices which he will be able to accept as favorable through Christ Jesus.[SEM; translation mine]

(3) removing proclamation, 1 Peter 2:9 translates the verb εξαγγελλω as “celebrate,” rather than “proclaim,” focusing on worship; (4) of the Moral-Influence theory of the Atonement, 1 Peter 2:24 reads, “took our sins” rather than “bore our sins,” and the

de grandes améliorations. 60.000 changements sont comptés, dont 23.000 concernent le sens même du texte. Il utilisa les textes latins d’Érasme et de Pagnon. Même des traducteurs étrangers se servirent de la traduction d’Olivétan, comme par exemple, Coverdale qui fit une traduction presque complète de cette version en anglais” (*Histoire du Saint Livre en France*, 5).

⁷⁶Psalm 23:1, “Yahvé est mon berger, rien ne me manque” (*Bible de Jérusalem*).

⁷⁷Psalm 23:1, “Le SEIGNEUR est mon berger, je ne manque de rien” (*TOB*, 1988).

⁷⁸Psalm 23:1, “Le Seigneur est mon berger, je ne manquerai de rien” (*Bible en Français Courant*, 1997).

emphatic “He Himself” was removed; (5) of defending the Church against heretics, 1 Peter 3:15 reads, “if someone asks you to justify your hope, be always ready to defend it;” (6) in the context of purgatory, 1 Peter 3:19 reads, “By this Spirit, he had already preached to men now prisoners in the place of the dead who other times showed themselves rebellious;” (7) of baptismal regeneration, 1 Peter 3:21 reads, “This is now how you are now saved.” All these translations in SEM favor Roman Catholic theology, and some of these even take Catholic theology farther than the *Bible de Jérusalem*!⁷⁹

Other adaptations in 1992 SEM to Roman Catholic theology are (as compared to the GEN):

- *tu ne te prosterneras point devant elles, et tu ne les serviras point* (you shall not prostrate yourselves before them, and you shall not serve them) in Ex 20:5 was changed to *tu ne te prosterneras pas devant de telles idoles, et tu ne leur rendras de culte* (you will not prostrate yourself before such idols, and you will not give them worship).*
- *repentez-vous* (repent) in Mark 1:15 was changed to *changez de vie* (change [your] life).
- *Car, quiconque fait la volonté de Dieu, celui-là est mon frère, ma soeur, et ma mère* (for, whoever does the will of God, that one is my brother, my sister, my mother) in Mark 3:35 changed to *car celui qui fait la volonté de Dieu, celui-là est pour moi un frère, une soeur, ou une mère* (for he who does the will of God, that one is for me a brother, a sister, or a mother); *simul* with the addition of “et tes soeurs” in Mark 3:32.*
- *toi à qui une grâce a été faite* (you unto whom grace was given) in Luke 1:28 was changed to *toi à qui Dieu a accordé sa faveur* (you unto whom God has bestowed His favor).*
- *une seule chose est nécessaire. Marie a choisi la bonne part, qui ne lui sera point ôtée* (only one thing is necessary. Mary chose the good part, which will not be taken from her) in Luke 10:42 was changed to *il n’y en a qu’une seule qui soit vraiment nécessaire. Marie a choisi la meilleure part, et personne ne la lui enlèvera* (there is not but one things which is truly necessary. Mary has chosen the best part, and no one will remove it from her).*
- *servaient le Seigneur dans leur ministère* (were serving the Lord in their ministry) in Acts 13:2 was changed to *adoraient ensemble le Seigneur* (worshipped the Lord together).⁸⁰

⁷⁹For example 1 Peter 2:5 in the *Bible de Jérusalem* reads, “Vous-mêmes, comme pierres vivantes, prêtez-vous à l’édification d’un édifice spirituel, pour un sacerdoce saint, en vue d’offrir des sacrifices spirituels, agréables à Dieu par Jésus Christ.” 1 Peter 5:1 reads, “Les anciens qui sont parmi nous, je les exhorte, moi, ancien comme eux, témoin des souffrances du Christ, et qui dois participer à la gloire qui va être révélée.”

⁸⁰The 1988 TOB, the 1997 *Bible Français Courant*, and the *Bible de Jérusalem* all have “célébraient le culte” in Acts 13:2.

- *fille vierge* (virgin daughter) in 1 Cor 7:36-37 was translated *fiancée* (fiancé), and *fiancé* for the masculine pronoun.*⁸¹
- *mari d'une seule femme* (husband of one wife) in 1 Tim 3:2 changed to *mari fidèle* (faithful husband).
- *et qu'il adora* (and he worshipped) in Heb 11:21 changed to *et s'est prosterné pour adorer Dieu* (and prostrated himself to worship God), with a footnote to an ancient Greek version of Gen 47:31.*
- *saints* (saints) in Jude 3 changed to *ceux qui appartiennent à Dieu* (those who belong to God).*

Quotes with an asterisk were identical in the 1999 SEM. Of the above instances, only two were change in the 1999 SEM: Mark 1:15 reads “changez” (dropped “de vie”); and 1 Tim 3:2 “à sa femme” was added to faithful husband.

This section portrays the theological bias of the SEM translation, very little of which has been changed in the 1999 revision. It shows that Eugene Nida’s dynamic equivalence, combined with the reorganization of the translation teams of the UBS, did not produce a theologically-neutral text of the Bible, but rather neutered Protestant formal correspondence out of the text, producing a bland text that cannot be back-translated into the original. These extremely pointed findings necessitate some conclusions.

CONCLUSIONS

Perhaps Nida’s theories of translation embody the greatest test of the worldwide Evangelical church in the last half of the 20th Century—after all the Bible is Evangelicalism’s absolute authority. Therefore, the following conclusions are proposed:

Ecclesial sitz im leben:

- The book of 1 Peter is the first extant papal encyclical for Roman Catholics, thus its translation in an ecumenical setting proves especially important.

⁸¹The use of *fiancé* and *fiancée* in 1 Cor 7:36-37 also follows the 1988 TOB, the 1997 *Bible Français Courant*, and the *Bible de Jérusalem*.

- It is naïve to think that it is possible to produce a dynamic translation of the text with translators from divergent churches that will be theologically-neutral.
- Evangelical theology prefers formal correspondence, whereas Roman Catholic theology leans toward theological embellishment of certain texts.
- There is a need for the clear examination of translation principles, procedures, and personnel in light of the UBS/SPCU joint publication, as the UBS not only gave Roman Catholics a seat at the table, they gave them the table.
- There is a need for vigilance in the utilization of every text translated by the United Bible Society since 1968; by the way, please notice how many languages of the world have new translation since that time, almost as if there has been a methodical cleansing of translations language-by-language.

Translation *sitz im leben*:

- It is fallacious to think that theologically-neutral translations of the text can be made when using “dynamic equivalence” as a criteria, rather than the “formal correspondence” of the French Protestant past.
- It is fallacious to think that it is possible for translators to provide a good translation of Scripture on scientific means alone, without use of the 1 Tim 3 and Titus 1 spiritual qualifications as a measurement of their lives.
- The best translations of Scriptures have always been and will always be those which follow formal correspondence, as the Bible argues (Deut 32:46-47; Prov 30:5; Matt 5:19; 2 Tim 3:16; Heb 4:12) and as history has shown, especially within French Protestantism, from Olivétan, to Martin, Ostervald, and Segond.
- Because it has been neutered from essential theological terms, the SEM translation may not be a spiritual benefit to French Evangelicalism, rather it may prove a hindrance to NT theology and a NT church.⁸²

“For this reason we also constantly thank God that when you received the word of God which you heard from us, you accepted *it* not *as* the word of men, but *for* what it really is, the word of God, which also performs its work in you who believe” (1 Thess 2:13, NAU).⁸³

⁸²Fortunately, one Protestant denomination in France has noted the need for an affordable “formal coorespondence” French Bible and purchased the right to print the 1979 GEN (*Segond Révisée Genève*). The Assembly of God publishing house “Association Viens et Vois” has printed a total of 377,500 copies in 18 prints of the GEN (sold for 3 Euros) from September 1997 to January 2004.

⁸³Interestingly enough, the 1899 Catholic Douay-Rheims edition did not include 1 Thess 2:13.