Preface

About The Translator And The Goal For This Translation

The Translator's Conviction: The New Testament of the Holy Bible is the inspired and inerrant Word of God that centers in the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. The Holy Spirit gave his penmen of the New Testament every thought and every word that they wrote.

The Goal For This Translation: The goal was to produce a faithful rendering of the original Greek text in a smooth flowing up-to-date English that is simple, clear, pleasant to read and to hear, and that brings out the vividness of the original Greek text for its English speaking readers and listeners especially in the United States.

The Nature of This Translation: It is essentially a literal translation that emphasizes a word-for-word correspondence with the original Greek text. In translating there were times, however, when there was a tension between rendering a literal word-for-word (formal equivalence) translation of the Greek text and the concern for readability and the need for a sense-for-sense translation (functional equivalence). When the wording of a verse was less than an idiomatic English that would have been difficult for the reader to understand, the verse was translated sense-for-sense in a readily understandable idiomatic English. In many cases the literal wording of the Greek text was then shown in the footnotes. The attempt was made to maintain a literal word-for-word translation to bring the reader and the student studying the New Testament as close as possible to the original Greek text, while providing a clear, simple, pleasant to read English text. In an effort to improve the clarity of a verse and an understanding of it, words at times were supplied that are printed in italics in the text.

Notes About This Vivid English Translation

The Greek Text: The Greek text used for this translation was the text of the United Bible Societies. If a different Greek text was used for a particular verse, it was noted in the footnotes.

Variant Readings: The variant readings to the Greek text were looked at and evaluated on the basis of whether they were dated early and were from a widespread area of the early Christian church. God preserved for us thousands of manuscript copies. These many copies are in agreement in over 99% of the Greek text. Of the remaining 1% none of the variant readings affect any doctrine in any way. Some variant readings were adopted and used in the text of this translation. In some cases a comment was made about the variant reading in the footnotes.

Vividness of the Greek Text:

This translation was made to bring out the vividness of the original Greek text of all the books of the New Testament, and especially of the four gospels, the Book of Acts, and the Book of Revelation. A key part of the goal for this translation was to bring out the vividness of the original Greek text, so that English readers and students of the New Testament would be able to see for themselves and appreciate the vividness of the different inspired New Testament Greek writers. Bringing out that vividness was a desirable goal. A. T. Robertson wrote: "A vivid writer like Mark, for instance, shows his lively imagination by swift changes in the tenses. The reader must change with him. It is mere commonplace to smooth the tenses into a dead level in translation and miss the writer's point of view."[1] Robertson also stated: "Where so much variety (in the Greek tenses) is possible, great freedom is to be expected. In modern English we

---

[1] Robertson, A. T., A Grammar of the Greek New Testament in the Light of Historical Research, (Broadman Press, Nashville, TN. 1934), p. 830

make a point of uniformity of tense in narrative. The Greeks almost made a point of the opposite. It is jejune, to say no more, to plane down into a dead level the Greek spontaneous variety."[2]

This translation attempted in some instances where possible to translate the emphasis of the original Greek wording. Where this was done the English word order of the emphasis may not be up to modern English literary standards. In those instances this translation chose to give a higher priority to conveying the emphasis of the original Greek text. It is not unusual in everyday conversation for a person to choose a word order that may be switched around, because it emphasizes whatever point is uppermost in the person's mind at the time. The inspired writers of the original Greek New Testament were also free in the word order they used. A. T. Robertson wrote: "The freedom of the Greek from artificial rules and its response to the play of the mind is never seen better than in the order of words in the sentence . . . The N.T. indeed enjoys the same freedom that the older Greek did with perhaps some additional independence from the vernacular koine as contrasted with the older literary language."[3] The Greek writers also commonly chose their word order according to the stress in their mind at the time. This translation at times chose to bring out that emphasis rather than render what would be considered an acceptable English word order. For example, in Hebrews 7:4 the writer put the word that modifies Abraham out of place at the very end of the sentence, in order to give it the emphasis that he wanted it to have. So this translation gave it the emphasis that the writer intended: "Now start considering how great this man *was* to whom Abraham gave a tenth from the spoils – the patriarch *no less*!" The vivid emphasis brought out by the Greek word order is perhaps no more apparent than in John 4:17, 18 in Jesus' conversation with the woman at the well in Samaria. After Jesus told the woman to go and summon her husband, she stated that she had no husband. In response to her statement Jesus said, "Rightly did you say, 'A husband I do not have!' For five husbands you have had! And now the man you have is not your husband. You have spoken this truthfully." The reversed word order of the objects of the sentences coming before the subjects and verbs brings out dramatically the emphasis of Jesus' words to the woman, which would otherwise have been lost if the English word order of subject, verb and object had been followed.

The Greek Verb Tenses: The Greek verb tenses when translated in accord with their respective uses add vividness to the English text. This translation made every effort to bring out the vividness that the Greek verb tenses add to the text.

The Aorist Tense: The aorist is a timeless tense denoting a completed, punctiliar action. It is therefore usually translated in English as a past tense, such as "John came home." The ingressive, or inceptive, aorist accents what was the beginning of the completed action and may be translated as "John began to come home." The Greek writers were not necessarily concerned about when the action was completed in the past in relation to another action or event, and they simply used the aorist tense. The English language, however, wants more clarification and is concerned about when the action was completed in relation to another action or event. The English requires, then, depending upon the context, that in addition to being translated as a past tense, the Greek aorist also be translated at times as a present perfect tense, such as "John has come home," or a past perfect tense, such as "John had come home." In this translation the aorist tense was translated on the basis of the context in which it appeared as a past tense, present perfect tense, or a past perfect tense.

The Imperfect Tense: The imperfect tense denotes an on-going, durative action in the past. This translation has brought out the richness of the Greek imperfect tense in its various colorings – progressive ("John was coming home."), customary ("John used to come home."), iterative ("John repeatedly came home."), tendential ("John had the tendency to come home."), inceptive ("John proceeded to come home."), and conative ("John tried to come home."). As A. T. Robertson explained,

---

[2] Ibid. p. 847

[3] Ibid. p. 417

the aorist tense lifts the curtain on the play, but it is the imperfect tense that portrays its scenes. Here are a couple of examples from the Gospel of Luke. Instead of translating Luke 3:7 that "John said to the crowds coming out to be baptized," . . . it was translated according to its imperfect tense that . . . "he customarily said to the crowds who were coming out to be baptized." And in Luke 23:9 instead of translating that Herod "questioned him (Jesus) in many words," it was translated according to its imperfect tense that Herod "questioned him again and again in many words." And instead of translating Luke 22:55, "Peter sat down with them," it was translated according its imperfect tense, "Peter began sitting with them." As these few examples show, the imperfect tense colors the account and makes it more vivid than what a simple English past tense would do.

The Imperative: The imperative expresses a command or prohibition. This translation has brought out the vividness of the aorist and present imperatives. The aorist imperative denotes a single act to be taken, such as "John, come home now." The present imperative denotes a continued action to be taken, such as "John, keep coming home after school." With a negative particle the aorist imperative denotes an action that is not to be started, such as "John, don't start coming home late." With a negative particle the present imperative denotes an action that has started but should be stopped, such as "John, stop coming home late." But in Paul's letters especially the present imperative with the negative particle may not denote an action or behavior already in progress that should be stopped; rather, it can denote an action or behavior to be continually resisted or avoided in the future, such as "John, keep from coming in the house with muddy shoes," or "John, do not begin coming in the house with muddy shoes." Romans 12:21 provides a good example of the vividness that the present imperative with and without the negative particle brings to the text. This translation rendered this verse, "Keep from being overcome by evil, but keep overcoming the evil with good!" This is much more vivid than if this translation had rendered it, "Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome the evil with good."

The Present Tense: The Greek present tense is also quite vivid. This translation has brought out the vividness of the present tense in its different uses. The iterative or customary present denotes an action that is usually or repeatedly taking place, such as "John usually comes home at noon." The inchoative present denotes an action that is beginning to happen, such as "John begins to come home at noon." The conative present denotes an action that begins but is interrupted, such as "John tries to come home at noon if he can."

This translation has also preserved the historical present in its text. The historical present is dramatic and is especially found in the Gospels of Matthew, Mark and John. It is an action that took place in the past, but the past action was so vivid in the mind of the writer narrating the account that he described it in a present tense like it was happening before his eyes. The historical present in the New Testament takes the reader back to the scene of the action and enables him to see it in his mind as though it were just happening before him. A. T. Robertson wrote, "There is no doubt of the vividness of the narrative in Mark and John which is largely due to the historical presents. Modern literary English abhors this idiom, but it ought to be preserved in translating the Gospels in order to give the same element of vividness to the narrative."

The Greek Attributive Participle: An attributive participle describes usually a person by an action he performs, such as, "*The one who comes home* late will have a cold supper." This translation has made a distinction in how the Greek attributive participles were translated. On the one hand it has translated the attributive participles that refer to the Lord performing some kind of an act with the words, "He, or him, who . . ." On the other hand it has translated the attributive participles that refer to humans performing some kind of an act with the words, "The one who . . ." Not only does this distinguish between the things done by one of the persons of the Godhead and the things done by a human believer or unbeliever, but the words "the one who" are also gender friendly and can be understood by the women as including themselves as well as by the men. There are some instances where the participle had a masculine or feminine gender in

the Greek text, and instead of it having been translated "the one who . . .", it was translated "the man" or "the woman", or "he" or "she" to express the gender indicated.

The Article: Throughout this translation the attempt was made to bring out the vividness that the Greek article "the" gives to the text. The Greek article serves as a pointer, like a finger, that shows the substantive is definite. Its absence or presence in the translated English text makes a difference. For example, n Jesus' Parable of the Pharisee and the Tax Collector, Luke 18:9-14, the article "the" is present in the Greek text where the tax collector confessed that he is a sinner. Literally what the tax collector confessed was this: "O God, be merciful to me, *the* sinner!" The presence of the article "*the* " makes the tax collector's confession very vivid. He was not just "*a* sinner" but "*the terrible* sinner." A translation such as, "God be merciful to me *a* sinner," misses this emphasis and vividness that the Greek article brings to the text and to Jesus' parable. In Mark 4:15 Jesus taught his disciples about the placement of a lamp. He literally asked them, "Surely a lamp is not brought to be put under the bushel basket or under the bed, is it?" Mark's use of the article "*the* bushel basket" and "*the* bed" indicates the bushel basket and the bed were right there in the room with Jesus and his disciples at the time and were plainly evident to his disciples. In this verse the article "the" has the force of a demonstrative "that" and was translated "that bushel basket or that bed." In this verse the translation of the article brings out the vividness and emphasis of Jesus' point to his disciples, which a translation of "a bushel basket or a bed" misses.

First and Second Person Nominative Pronouns: The first and second person nominative pronouns (I, we, you) when used in addition to the first and second person suffixes of the Greek verb form are always emphatic. The amount of emphasis varies greatly from one instance to another and can even diminish altogether. To the extent possible, giving consideration to the flow of the English translated text, this translation has brought out in various wordings the vividness of the emphatic first and second person nominative pronouns.

Gender: In many verses where possible the Greek word for "men" was translated with the gender friendly word "people" to include the women as well as the men. Accordingly, 1 Timothy 2:4 was translated for example, "(God) wants all *people* to be saved and to come to a correct knowledge of the truth." The Greek word "brothers" was translated as such to avoid complicating problems in translation.

Notes On The Format

Alignment of the Verses: The beginning of every verse has been formatted out at the left margin to make it easier for the reader to find whatever verse he may be looking for. Generally speaking, verses aligned at the left margin are easier for the reader to look up and to find than verses tucked inside of a paragraph format.

Paragraphs: The beginning of each new paragraph was indicted by this paragraph mark: "¶."

Headings throughout Each New Testament Book of This Translation: The headings in each of the books are not merely section headings such as customarily appear in English translations. In this translation the headings make up an outline of its respective book. There are main headings and subheadings and sub-subheadings with different sized fonts and line spacings that make up the outline. This method of formatting was used because a normal outline format was not possible, since the aim was to include the outline headings and subheadings in the body of the text that the reader can see as he reads through the book without having the distraction of paging over to a separate outline and then back again to the main text of the book he is reading.

Overviews: In this translation an overview precedes the translated text of each book of the New Testament. Each overview provides the reader and student who is studying the New Testament with interesting and important information about its respective book. Provided in the overviews are information about the history and nature of the cities in which the congregations to whom Paul wrote were located,

information about the writer of the book, the recipients for whom the book was written, the occasion prompting the writing of the book, the date and place where the book was written, characteristics of the book, the purpose of the book, and the theme of the book.

A Personal Note Of Gratitude

I thank my beloved wife and dearest lifelong friend, Sandy, for her support and encouragement and interest in this Vivid English Translation from the beginning. I thank my children also for their support in my making this translation. Above all I thank my gracious Lord and God – Father, Son, and Holy Spirit – who supplied me with every gift and blessing that could be recounted that made this translation possible. I pray he may be pleased to use it for the glorification of his name and for the building up of his kingdom.

Rev. John C. Schneidervin

August 2015