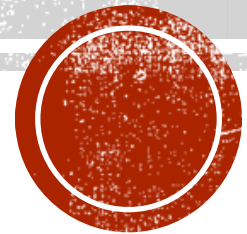
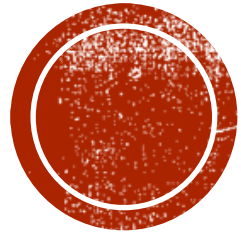


REFORMATION TRANSLATING

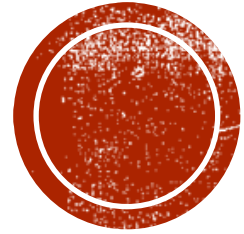
Lessons from Translation Committees in Wittenberg and Geneva





LESSONS FROM HISTORY

1. Lessons from the history of Bible translation
2. **Pioneers** in Bible translation
3. Lessons from the Reformation for models of **training indigenous translators**



Train GENERALISTS
for the **CHURCH,**
not merely **SPECIALISTS**
for a TRANSLATION

“Perhaps because we have been oriented toward the task of translating, and of training people to translate, **we have paid little attention to what follows** translation.” — Philip Noss

WHY TRANSLATION IN THE REFORMATION?

- 13 languages received their first, complete, printed Bible in the 16th c., plus many other portions, NTs and revisions
- The emphasis on *sola scriptura* had “two complementary effects:
 1. Ideally, the **Scriptures** should be **studied in the languages** in which they were written; and
 2. the **Scriptures** should be **disseminated as widely** as possible, which meant that **vernacular translations** should be prepared.”

— D.A. Carson and D. Moo, *Introduction to the NT*
- Many previous translations did not use original languages



WHY WITTENBERG AND GENEVA?

- Highly influential cities during the Protestant Reformation
- Produced a plethora of **biblical translations**, biblical helps, theological works
- Strengthened **churches** by training **pastors and theologians**
- Formed theological academies and pastors' fraternals
- Extraordinary influence on the European continent and the world
- Hubs for church reform through training theologians, pastors, translators
- **APPLICATION:** the Reformers were working in a crisis situation, yet they **prioritized** the **training** of **churchmen** (2Tim 2.2), even as they labored in producing translations and biblical helps from which to teach, read and preach (2Tim 4)



THE WITTENBERG 'FACTORY' IN 1521–1546

Luther Bible (LB) Stats

- 91 printings, incl. its portions
 - incl. 21 NT eds.
 - incl. 11 complete Bible eds.
- 430 complete or partial eds.
- 253 partial or complete eds. outside of Wittenberg
- 500,000 copies

Features and Persons

- theological prefaces for each book
- summaries of each biblical book
- explanations of key terms
- marginal notes to explain idioms, cultural concepts and ancient practices
- Luther, Spalatin, Melanchthon, Cruciger, Jonas, Bugenhagen (Luther's pastor), Aurogallus, Rörer



THE WITTENBERG 'FACTORY' LIVES ON

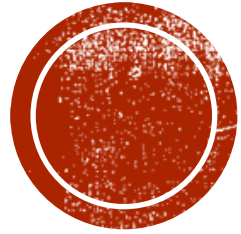
- 1543 **Spanish** NT (the 1st), by Francisco de Enzinas, from the Greek, who studied in Wittenberg under Melanchthon
 - Spanish influenced by LB and English AV
- **English**: Tyndale learned German in Wittenberg; consulted the LB
 - Geneva English
 - Beza's work influenced AV
 - Tyndale English
 - AV English
- 1540 **Icelandic** NT, largely based on LB
- 1524 **Danish** NT, published in Wittenberg; partly based on LB
- 1550 **Danish** Bible influenced by LB
- **Dutch** NT based on LB
- 1553 **Polish** NT, by a friend of Luther
- 1584 **Slovenian** Bible, published in Wittenberg by a Lutheran pastor
- 1548-1552 **Finish** NT and OT portions, by Lutheran reformer and friend of Luther



THE GENEVAN 'FACTORY' FROM 1560–1600

- French Bible: 80 editions
- French NT: ~80 editions
- Latin
- Greek
- Hebrew NT
- Italian (standard ed. up to 20th c.)
- Spanish
- English (Geneva Bible)
- Beza's *Annotations*
- Beza's Latin NT
- Beza's Greek–Latin edition
- Genevan (French) Psalter put to music
- Calvin, Beza, Olivétan, Gilby, Diodati, Whittingham





WHAT IS A TEXT WITHOUT ITS CONTEXT?

“The spread of the gospel in the early church saw the dissemination of Scripture *along with the provision of missionaries and pastors*. One wonders if at least some of the **tensions over Bible translation** springs from the commitment on the part of some to provide adequate **translations without** simultaneously providing **missionaries and pastors**.”

— D. A. Carson

COMPARING TRANSLATION MODELS

REFORMATION

- **Reader-Listener:** corporate, interpersonal gatherings (1Tim 4.13)
 - E.g. Oral-Aural aspects observed
 - Train public readers, teachers
- **Audience:** the gathered church
- **Use:** equipping teachers and pastors, who equip the saints (Eph 4)
- **Format:** marginal notes
 - e.g. 1526 Swedish NT
- **Goal:** healthy churches with indigenous Scriptures, leaders, teachers

MODERN

- **Reader-Listener:** private, individual
 - E.g. audio Bible
 - Technology bypasses training of indigenous public readers, teachers
- **Audience:** non-Christians; new Christians; non-literate; newly-literate
- **Use:** reaching everyone, evangelistic
- **Format:** biblical text only
- **Goal:** Bibles for every individual



COMPARING TRANSLATION MODELS

Ecclesial View of BT

- Promotes generalists *and* specialists
- Promotes BT for the goal of healthy local churches (Eph 1.23; 3.10, 21)
- “Do not the Scriptures themselves encourage us to multiply the number of evangelists, pastors/teachers and other workers, thereby discouraging the notion that the *entire* task depends exclusively on the quality of the Bible translation used?” — DA Carson

Individualist View of BT

- Promotes over-specialization w/o generalists who serve and equip the the whole church *with* Scripture
- Promotes BT for individuals and evangelism
- “The greatest missionary is the Bible in the mother tongue. It never needs a furlough, is never considered a foreigner and makes all other missionaries unnecessary.”

—Cameron Townsend



PRODUCING PRODUCTS OR PEOPLE?

Product-Orientation

- Aim is scripture products
- Short-term goals are faster?*
- Ignores long-term goal of healthy churches displaying the glory of God
- Can tend to ignore the long-term development of the very people who will use the product in the church
- Can tend to ignore the development of those who will revise future versions
- May not develop leaders who can serve the indigenous church

People-Oriented

- Aim is developing people, who produce (and revise) indigenous products
- Long-term goals are slower?*
- Invest in people who use the product
- Invest in people who train others to use the product (2Tim 2.2)
- Training leaders, teachers, theologians, disciplers, counselors, pastors *who help* with translating, but then go on to write, teach and serve the church



WHAT IF HEALTHY CHURCHES WERE THE GOAL?

The **fullness**, **wisdom** and **glory** of God is revealed in the **church**:

- The church “is his body, the **fullness** of the one who fills all things in every way” (Eph 1.23)
- “so that God’s multi-faceted **wisdom** may now be **made known through the church**” (3.10)
- “to him be **glory in the church** and in Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever” (3.21)
- “And he himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, **equipping the saints** for the work of ministry, **to build up** the **body of Christ**, until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of God’s Son, growing into maturity with a stature **measured by Christ’s fullness**” (4.11-13)
- From him the whole body, fitted and knit together by every supporting ligament, promotes the growth of the body for **building up itself** in love by the proper working of each individual part.” (4.16, CSB)



ECCLESIAL TRANSLATORS?

An **ecclesial** translator is a *translator* who is qualified and affirmed to serve in a local church, who **bears** some **shepherding responsibility** in a local congregation, and is thus **situated** in the **native social location** that translation is chiefly called to serve; and the **ecclesial** translator is a *theologian* who works on a committee with other linguists, pastors, theologians, consultants, translators and exegetes, **with an eye on** the needs of the **ecclesial community**.



MTTs WANT MORE TRAINING

- “In ‘missionary’ translations of the Bible, the education, tools, and team are orientated to better prepare the ‘missionary’ (the one who “brings the message”), while **the indigenous person is taught only the basics**, just enough to translate the text from Spanish or English into his native tongue.”
- “In Latin America it is very rare, indeed it is **difficult, to cite even one example of a translation of the Bible into an indigenous tongue that has used biblical languages (Hebrew, Aramaic, Greek) as its source**. The main characteristic of a ‘missionary’ translation is its constant use of a textual source that in most cases is a version of the Bible in an ‘official’ language of the dominant group.”
- “History has shown that a translation achieves **better results when the translator is an indigenous person and not a ‘missionary’**. This kind of translation produces **greater impact** in the **evangelization and training of people**, and leads to considerable increase in church membership, while spurring people on to an even **deeper faith**. In addition, the language takes root and almost miraculously the number of speakers increases”

— Edesio Sánchez-Cetina

Katy Barnwell’s steps for BT:

1. study the meaning of source texts
2. make the 1st draft
3. prepare supplementary helps
4. keyboard the text
5. do the team check
6. review key biblical terms
7. preliminary test
8. back-translation
9. consultant check
10. wider test and distribution to reviewers
11. final editing, consistency checking, polishing
12. final read through



WHAT KIND OF TRAINING?

- “The training that we have offered to translators has been primarily prescriptive, problem-oriented, relating almost exclusively to the translation task itself. **Understanding of theological implications has been assumed** to have been acquired in formal theological training that the translator may or may not have acquired. **Anticipation of the Church’s use of the translated Bible as the foundation for its theological reflection has generally been overlooked in translator training programs.**”
- “The role of the translator must be recognized to extend beyond the communication of the message through equivalent words and discourse forms and genres...The **translator’s role is fundamental** in the **shaping** of the **future theology** of the **local Christian church**. That role needs to be documented and **the translator must be prepared for that very long-term task.**”

— Philip Noss



“It would be good to remember that the God of the Bible ordained that there would be evangelists and teachers in his church.

Translation of the Scriptures is not the only thing needed for adequate communication of the gospel: God has equally mandated the training and deployment of evangelists and pastor/teachers. Failure to account for this aspect of our task may unwittingly encourage a 'translation' that is to some degree a perceived *replacement* of human agents.”

— D.A. Carson

What if our
“Steps for
Translating”
included the
training of
indigenous
leaders to use
the Scriptures
in the life of the
church?



TRANSLATION AND THEOLOGICAL INTERPRETATION

- “**Translators** are more than those who simply manipulate language—they are also **interpreters**.”
- “**Translation** is not an objective transposition of the original text and its meaning, since it **is a byproduct of the hermeneutical decisions** of the translator.”
- “**Every translator** ‘does theology’ and **makes theological decisions** during the translation process, all of which are affected by his or her own stances on ideology, morals, race, politics, sex, etc.”

— Edesio Sánchez-Cetina



TRANSLATION AND THEOLOGICAL INTERPRETATION

- “Although the translator may not describe the reflection and analysis that leads to translation as ‘doing theology,’ this is without doubt what it is.”

— Philip Noss

- “Most writers on translation theory agree that before embarking upon any translation the translator should analyse the text comprehensively, since this appears to be the only way of ensuring that the source text has been wholly and correctly understood.”

— Christiane Nord

- “The first step in BT is to “study the source text and discover the meaning that is expressed by the words and grammatical patterns of the Source Language.”

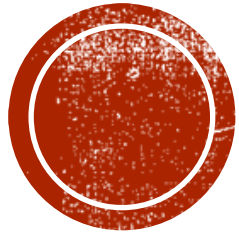
— Katherine Barnwell

- “Translating the Bible means ‘doing theology’. Interpretation of the source text...is a necessary step to rendering the text in a target language.”

— Lynell Zogbo



Train GENERALISTS
for the **CHURCH,**
not merely **SPECIALISTS**
for a TRANSLATION



RESOURCES

- Manetsch, Scott M. *Calvin's Company of Pastors: Pastoral Care and the Emerging Reformed Church, 1536-1609*. Ed. by David C. Steinmetz. New York: Oxford University Press, 2013.
- Noss, Philip A., ed. *A History of Bible Translation*. Manchester, UK: St. Jerome, 2011.
- *The Bible Translator* 56, no. 2 (April 2005) [on methods of training translators]
- *The Bible Translator* 57, no. 2 (April 2006) [on methods of training translators]
- *The Bible Translator* 53, no. 3 (July 2002) [on translation and theology]



- These men served as ecclesial–theologian–translators (ETT's) in Wittenberg and Geneva
- They co-labored in ministry as churchmen, theologians, pastors, preachers, theological educators, trainers of pastors and Bible translators
- They established schools, which attracted young men who wanted to serve in the pastorate
- These pastors-in-training quickly saw and duplicated a model whereby ETT's labored together in the church, in training others and in producing theological works and Bible translations
- Training teams of indigenous ETT's provides the local church with generalists who can serve on translation projects, revise future translations and strengthen churches through ministering God's Word by writing biblical helps and Christian books, counseling, teaching and training the next generation of church leaders and translators.

- Luther
- Melancthon
- Spalatin
- Cruciger
- Aurogallus
- Bugenhagen
- Jonas
- Rörer
- Calvin
- Diodati
- Olivétan
- Gilby
- Beza
- Whittingham



ETTs influenced Bible translation work through many channels, including...

- Bible translations, which influenced other translations
- Theological academies to equip more ETTs
- Committees produced theological works and other translational helps; they worked through texts in the original languages
- Fraternals ("Company") produced not only better materials (translations, translational helps) but better theologians, pastors, teachers and ETTs
- The goal was healthy churches, to supply them not only with translations but ministers who could give leadership to the translated Word being read, preached, prayed and sung in the churches

- Luther
- Melancthon
- Spalatin
- Cruciger
- Aurogallus
- Bugenhagen
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- Rörer
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CONCLUSIONS

1. Bible Translation is a theological task (it is an exercise in contextualization, it is practical theology, it is the fruit of one's theological, hermeneutical and linguistic decisions)
2. Theology begins and ends in the church; it belongs in the church
3. Therefore, translation is a work from and for the church
4. The Reformation saw translations, theological works and biblical helps produced
5. The Reformation prioritized the strengthening (reform) of churches



MORE THAN TRANSLATIONS

- This is *not* an exhortation for one person (the missionary), nor one ministry (Wycliffe) to take on everything and lose the benefits of specialization. It is, rather, an encouragement to raise up generalists and build partnerships.
- It is an encouragement for each translation team to have ecclesial theologians and exegetes. It is an encouragement for organizations to build partnerships that help pursue the Great Commission task of planting and strengthening healthy churches.
- Prioritizing the mission of the church sees the task of equipping missionaries, pastors, theologians, counselors, and teachers (i.e. ecclesial servants to adequately handle and serve others with the translated scriptures; see 2Tim 2.15) for service in the church as a top priority (2Tim 2.2), where translation is means, not the end



BEARING THE WEIGHT OF MEANING

- Who or What bears the weight of meaning? The translation? Ecclesial preachers and teachers?
- “Exegesis and exposition are all about understanding the original and drawing out the meaning. Translation is often an ill-suited medium for this, even though it is one of the most commonly used. One may have a very clear understanding of something and still find it troublesome to capture all of the information in a translation. Do not worry: exposition gives you the opportunity to elaborate aspects of a passage that cannot be well-captured in translation.” — Steven Runge
- “This quandary illustrates the problem of needing to express all grammatical information in translation. There may not be an easy translation solution. This is where exegesis and exposition come in. Even if we cannot capture everything in a single English word, we can still understand the function of the Greek word. We can understand what it signals in the discourse and find other ways of capturing or communicating its function.” — Steven Runge

