Englishing the Bible:
A Confessional Approach†

By Benjamin Shaw

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

John Wycliffe, the fourteenth-century reformer, is generally credited with being the first to translate the Bible into English, though that is both an overstatement, and a generalization. There is a certain amount of truth to it, though, and the work of Wycliffe certainly influenced William Tyndale and others in the sixteenth century and ultimately the Authorized Version, commonly called King James Version, in the early seventeenth century. All of these translators were no doubt influenced in their approach to translation by the Bibles that had been produced previously, most significantly the Septuagint and the Vulgate. In that sense, the English Bible translators of the Reformation and post-Reformation periods probably did not have a "philosophy" of translation. Instead, they were following in the steps of others who walked before them.

In following that route, those early translators of the Bible into English adopted what would be called today a "formal equivalence" approach to Bible translation, also known as "word-for-word" translation. That approach to translating the Bible into English would remain the standard for more than three hundred years. When the translation committees produced the English Revised Version of 1881, and the American Standard Version of 1901, they too adopted the formal equivalence approach to translating.

However, in the early part of the twentieth century, translations began to appear that took a different approach to the task. Richard Weymouth's *The New Testament in Modern Speech* initially appeared in 1902, while the *Twentieth Century New Testament* appeared in 1904. Both of these intended to update the English New Testament in such a way as also to put the material into more idiomatic English. But both were limited to the New Testament, and might, in the history of things,

be considered feelers or first attempts at a more radical re-imagining of the whole task of Bible translation.

In the 1920's, two other works began to appear that took a much larger step in the same direction. James Moffatt, a Scottish New Testament scholar, and E. J. Goodspeed, an American New Testament scholar, both began with new translations of the New Testament. The translations sold reasonably well, and both Moffatt and Goodspeed were encouraged to do the whole Bible. Moffatt continued by himself, while Goodspeed collected colleagues at the University of Chicago who specialized in the Old Testament to help him with the task. Both finished projects appeared in the 1930's. Moffatt's is *A New Translation of the Bible Containing the Old and New Testaments*. The version produced under the auspices of Goodspeed is titled *The Complete Bible: An American Translation*. It is called the complete Bible because it included the Apocrypha, translated by Goodspeed, and bound between the Old and New Testaments, as had been done with the original printings of the King James Version.

Moffatt's translation and the American version remain now as no more than curiosities in the history of Bible translation, though Moffatt's version remains in print. However, one observation from each of these two versions makes them important to the developments that followed in the philosophy of Bible translation. The first comes from Moffatt. In the "Preface to the Revised and Final Edition" he wrote, "He [the

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† After I had originally titled the lecture from which this article comes, I discovered that Ronald A. Knox had written a little book titled *On Englishing the Bible* (London: Burns Oates, 1949). Knox shortly afterward published *The Holy Bible: A Translation from the Latin Vulgate in Light of the Hebrew and Greek Originals* (New York, Sheed & Ward, Inc., 1950).

translator] desires his transcript to be faithful to the meaning of the original." The second comes from the American Translation. "We have, therefore, sought to produce a new translation of them [the Old and New Testaments], based upon the assured results of modern study, and put in the familiar language of today." Thus we have laid before us the two principles that underlie many of the modern English versions of the Bible: faithfulness to the meaning of the original, expressed in the familiar language of today.

However, the modern philosophy of Bible translation did not arise directly from the works of Moffatt and Goodspeed. Instead it came from the field of linguistics under the influence of Eugene Nida. Nida may be considered the architect of the modern philosophy of Bible translation known as "dynamic equivalence." At least, dynamic equivalence was the term used in the 1960's. However, the preferred term today is "functional equivalence." Functional equivalence "seeks to reproduce the *meaning* of the text in good idiomatic (natural) English, regardless of the form."[1] These fundamental ideas are found in Moffatt and Goodspeed in a clear but, if you will, non-philosophical form. What the work of Nida and others has done is to produce a philosophical foundation for the approach using linguistics. The fundamental idea that comes from linguistics is a distinction between form and meaning. Thus, it is not important to carry the specific forms from one language to another as long as the meaning is communicated (Beekman and Callow, 25).

Thus a linguistic foundation formalized the ideas found in Moffat and Goodspeed. This approach bore its first fruit in *Good News for Modern Man*, a translation of the New Testament using this linguistic approach that appeared in the 1960's. The work was done under the auspices of the American Bible Society with the translation team being led by Robert Bratcher. This approach to Bible translation was adopted, and somewhat modified, by the translation team that produced the New International Version of the Bible in the mid 1970's.

In today's flourishing Bible market, the only translations done according to formal equivalence principles are the *New American Standard Bible* (and its 1995 updated edition), the *New King James Version*, and the *English Standard Version*. All the other versions currently on

the market follow the functional equivalence approach. This list includes the *Good News Bible*, the *Contemporary English Version*, the *New Century Version*, *God's Word* translation, and the *New Living Translation*. The *Holman Christian Standard Bible* followed the *NIV* in adopting a modified functional equivalence approach to the translation task.

A Translation Theology

As the foregoing illustrates, the modern approach to Bible translation is driven by a commitment to a distinct philosophy founded on recent developments in the study of linguistics. While these developments should not be ignored, it does serve to raise the question as to whether translation of the Word of God should not first be driven by theological considerations, rather than linguistic concerns. It is important that the Bible be translated into the language of the people. As the *Westminster Confession of Faith* says, "But, because these original tongues are not known to all the people of God, who have right unto, and interest in the Scriptures, and are commanded, in the fear of God, to read and search them, therefore they are to be translated into the vulgar language of every nation unto which they come" (I.8). But what is the fundamental theological consideration that should drive the practice of Bible translation? The fundamental doctrine concerning the Word of God is that of verbal inspiration. That is, it is not just the thoughts of the Bible that were inspired, while the writers were left, as it were, to come up with the words to express these thoughts on their own. Rather, the very words themselves were inspired by God. This is the view of inspiration found in any historical treatment of the subject of inspiration, as well as that found in most modern evangelical expositions of the doctrine of inspiration. In short, words are important. It is not simply "meaning" or "thoughts;" it is words that carry the message of God in the Word of God. In translation, then, the selection of words is vitally important. This may be illustrated with a variety of further considerations concerning the Bible.

The Bible as a Theological Book

This idea might seem obvious, but it is a truth that functional equivalence translations seem frequently to forget. Throughout the Bible, the authors use technical theological terms to express their ideas. In this sense, the Bible was not written in "the familiar language" of the day, but often in the formal language of theological

1. Gordon Fee and Mark Strauss, *How to Choose a Translation for All Its Worth* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2007), 159. Two of the important works in modern Bible translation philosophy are John Beekman and John Callow, *Translating the Word of God* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1974); and Eugene Nida and Charles Taber *The Theory and Practice of Translation* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1969).

discourse, even though little of the Bible is in the style of the formal systematic theologies of today. So, for example, the Old Testament writers used the verb *qadash* and its related nouns and adjectives to express the idea that something had been set apart for God. While these words may have had the general sense of "to set apart" in the "street" language of ancient Israel, they are never used in a "secular" sense in the Old Testament. When the translators of the Septuagint set to work on the Old Testament, they adopted the Greek verb *hagiazo* and its related nouns and adjectives to render the Hebrew *qadash*. Thus they created a technical theological language for Greek that was later adopted by the New Testament writers.

The advantage of translating the Bible into English in the twenty-first century is that English also now has a ready-made vocabulary of technical theological terms to draw from, based on almost five centuries of translation history. However, functional equivalence translations regularly avoid these terms. The first example is Philippians 1:1.[2]

ESV   Paul and Timothy, servants of Christ Jesus, To all the saints in Christ Jesus who are at Philippi, with the overseers and deacons:

GNB   From Paul and Timothy, servants of Christ Jesus— To all God's people in Philippi who are in union with Christ Jesus, including the church leaders and helpers:

CEV   From Paul and Timothy, servants of Christ Jesus. To all of God's people who belong to Christ Jesus at Philippi and to all of your church officials and officers.

TNIV Paul and Timothy, servants of Christ Jesus, To all God's holy people in Christ Jesus at Philippi, together with the overseers and deacons:

NLT   This letter is from Paul and Timothy, slaves of Christ Jesus. I am writing to all of God's holy people in Philippi who belong to Christ Jesus, including the elders and deacons.

In this verse there are several examples of the avoidance of technical theological terms. Notice, for example, that the ESV uses "saints" as the translation of *hagiois*, a tradition that goes at least as far back as Tyndale. However, the other versions use either "God's people" or "God's holy people." Neither of these renderings carries the connotations of saint, though "God's holy people" is better than "God's people." However, both lose any connection with the use of sanctify, and it is not clear to me that "holy" is any more easily understood by the

average reader than is "saint." Second, "in Christ Jesus" (ESV and TNIV) is expanded to "in union with Christ Jesus" and "who belong to Christ Jesus." This strikes me as an unnecessary clarification. In other words, the use of "in Christ" and similar phrases in many of Paul's letters should make the idea plain enough. Finally, "overseers" and "deacons" (*episkopois* and *diakonois*), both terms of church office in the New Testament, are rendered with generic terms such as church leaders and officers, without giving any indication that specific church offices are being mentioned. In this case, the generic translations misinform the reader.

Another example comes from Deut 6.25.

ESV   And it will be righteousness for us, if we are careful to do all this commandment before the LORD our God, as he has commanded us.

GNB   If we faithfully obey everything that God has commanded us, he will be pleased with us.

CEV   That's why the Lord our God demands that we obey his laws and worship him with fear and trembling. And if we do, he will protect us and help us be successful.

TNIV And if we are careful to obey all this law before the LORD our God, as he has commanded us, that will be our righteousness.

NLT   For we will be counted as righteous when we obey all the commands the LORD our God has given us.

Not only does this verse use technical theological language (righteousness and commandment), it is a difficult verse. The worst offender here is the CEV, which has combined vss 24 and 25 in what is obviously an attempt to explain the passage. The GNB has paraphrased the verse in an attempt at an explanatory translation. Neither is really successful, and both clearly promote a "works righteousness" reading of the text. The TNIV has rearranged the clauses of the text in order to explain, again leaving the reader with the idea of works righteousness. The NLT introduces a verbal understanding

2. The versions used throughout this paper are the following: *The English Standard Version* (ESV), since it is a modern formal equivalence translation (though the NKJV or the NASB could also be used); the *Good News Bible* (GNB), which holds pride of place as being the first widely used version to adopt the functional equivalence philosophy; *The Contemporary English Version* (CEV) which appears to be something of a follow-up translation to the GNB (both were produced by the American Bible Society); the *Today's New International Version* (TNIV), which adopts both the modified functional equivalence of the NIV and the gender-neutral approach; and the *New Living Translation* (NLT), which is a top-selling translation committed to both functional equivalence and gender-neutrality.

of the noun "righteousness" and again leaves the reader with the idea of works righteousness. The ESV has preserved the order of the original, but is probably mistaken in the rendering of *kiy* as "if," rather than "when." The verse should probably read: And it will be our righteousness: when we are careful to do all this commandment before the Lord our God, just as he commanded us. The verse probably has the idea that it is the right thing for us to do, that is, to obey the command of God. In any case, the functional equivalence translations do more to mislead the reader than a straightforward formal equivalence translation does.

A final example of the issue of technical theological terminology is found in Rom 1:17.

ESV For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith for faith, as it is written, "The righteous shall live by faith."

GNB For the gospel reveals how God puts people right with himself: It is through faith from beginning to end. As the Scripture says, "The person who is put right with God through faith shall live."

CEV The good news tells how God accepts everyone who has faith, but only those who have faith. It is just as the Scriptures say, "The people God accepts because of their faith will live."

TNIV For in the gospel the righteousness of God is revealed—a righteousness that is by faith from first to last, just as it is written: "The righteous will live by faith."

NLT This Good News tells us how God makes us right in his sight. This is accomplished from start to finish by faith. As the Scriptures say, "It is through faith that a righteous person has life."

In the functional equivalence translations, the "it" is replaced by "gospel" or "good news." It is true that "gospel" is the antecedent of "it," but it seems strange that the translators seem to think that the reader needs to be reminded of that, when the antecedent occurs in the previous verse. The GNB renders "the righteousness of God" by "how God puts people right with himself." The CEV renders it by "how God accepts everyone." Further, the phrase "from faith to faith" has been rendered as "through faith from beginning to end," "everyone who has faith, but only those who have faith," "by faith from first to last," and "accomplished from start to finish by faith." These are not translations. They are attempts to explain the text. Further, the reiteration of "gospel" or "good news" from verse 16 into verse 17 seems to imply that the translators expect that the readers will not

have read the preceding verse, or will not be able to carry the antecedent of "it" to the next verse if they do. This seems to presume an extremely low level of reading. Further, if the readers of these translations read so poorly, it is unlikely that these paraphrased explanations will really help the reader understand the text. It is not surprising with the level of theological confusion presented in these translations that the doctrine of justification by faith alone has fallen on hard times in American evangelicalism.

The Bible as a Literary Book

The translator of the Bible not only has to pay attention to the theology of the text that he is translating, he also has to pay attention to the literary aspects of what he translates. An example here may be found in Gen 43:29–44:5. This passage tells the story of the second visit of Joseph's brothers to Egypt, when they dine at Joseph's house and are then sent away the next day with Benjamin unknowingly carrying Joseph's cup. In 43:29–34, Joseph's brothers are consistently referred to either as "them" or as "the men." Joseph has not introduced himself to his brothers yet, so the text intends to remind the reader of that. In the GNB, the CEV, and the NLT however, they are twice referred to as his brothers. The TNIV identifies them as such once. In other words, all of these translations have missed the literary art of keeping the brothers separate from Joseph even in the manner of telling the story. In another aspect of the story, verse 33, the NLT is perhaps the worst transgressor. The verse says, "And they sat before him, the firstborn according to his "firstbornness" and the youngest according to his youth," (author's translation). The NLT says, "Joseph told each of his brothers where to sit, and to their amazement, he seated them according to age, from oldest to youngest." Apart from their amazement, none of this is made legitimate by the text. In the second part of the drama (44:1-5), it is clear from the Hebrew text that the men are sent away at first light. It is also implicit that the men were not at their best at first light, since they became drunk with Joseph (the very same words are used to describe Noah after drinking the wine of his vineyard in Genesis 9). Most of the versions follow this part fairly closely, though the GNB, the CEV, and the TNIV are looser renderings than is the ESV. The NLT, however, begins 44:1 with the statement, "When his brothers were ready to leave." First, there is no basis in any text for this line. It is not in the Hebrew, nor is it found in the Greek, nor in the Latin. The NLT translation team apparently invented it. Further, it confuses

the story. Does it refer to when the men were ready to leave the party, or when they were ready to leave the next morning? The translators proved themselves completely deaf to the literary art of the passage.

Another literary example of a different sort is found in Song of Songs 4:4.

Literal Like the tower of David is your neck, built of stones. A thousand shields hung upon it, all the bucklers of the mighty men.

ESV Your neck is like the tower of David, built in rows of stone; on it hang a thousand shields, all of them shields of warriors.

GNB Your neck is like the tower of David, round and smooth, with a necklace like a thousand shields hung around it.

CEV Your neck is more graceful than the tower of David, decorated with thousands of warrior's shields.

TNIV Your neck is like the tower of David, built with courses of stone; on it hang a thousand shields, all of them shields of warriors.

NLT Your neck is as beautiful as the tower of David, jeweled with the shields of a thousand heroes.

This is a difficult verse for two reasons. First, some of the language is uncertain. The word I have rendered as "stones" occurs only here. The suggestion is that it refers to rows or courses of stones, hence the renderings of the ESV and the TNIV.[3] The second problem is that the imagery of the verse is quite alien, and for the full effect probably needs to be explained. All of the translations get the general sense of the verse. The ESV and the TNIV have not altered it much, except for rearranging the order of the clauses. I am not convinced that really helps. The other versions, however, insist on explaining the metaphors. Thus the GNB introduces "round and smooth" as an explanation of the unusual word here. In addition, it has added "necklace," which appears nowhere in the Hebrew text, but is left to the imagination of the reader. The CEV introduces the comparison "more graceful than" in place of the Hebrew "like." Finally, the NLT introduces "as beautiful as" and "jeweled." The leading idea in the verse may well not be either beauty or grace, but rather imposing and impressive. But the reader of functional equivalence versions will never know that because the option has been eliminated for them. These versions give the impression that the translators really do not like Hebrew poetry, since they seem to think it has to be explained in the translation. This steals all the poetry from it. But the reader should be reminded as he reads the Song

that it is ancient Hebrew poetry. It is not modern, and it is not English. Thus it is going to take more work to understand, much of that work being the work of the commentator and the preacher, not the translator.

One final verse may be used to illustrate the literary artistry of the Bible, and how functional equivalence translations destroy it. This verse is 2 Cor 5:14.

ESV For the love of Christ controls us,

GNB We are ruled by the love of Christ

CEV We are ruled by Christ's love for us.

TNIV For Christ's love compels us,

NLT Either way, Christ's love controls us.

The ESV follows the form and order of the Greek. Of the other four, only the GNB retains the use of the phrase "the love of Christ," but it places it after the verb instead of before. The other three versions use the seemingly equivalent phrase "Christ's love." However, in English the use of the possessive implies what in Greek is called the subjective genitive. So "Robert's barn" is the barn that belongs to Robert. Thus "Christ's love" is the love that belongs to Christ. However, the Greek here, in using the genitive construction, leaves three options open. The phrase "the love of Christ" could mean "the love that Christ has for us." It could also mean "the love that we have for Christ" (the Greek objective genitive). Or it could be intended to include both of those. If Paul had intended to be specific on one of the three options, he could easily have written it so. The fact that he did not should indicate to the reader that the ambiguity is deliberate, and that probably the third option is the most likely. However, the functional equivalence translations have removed the second and third option from the reader. The reader of these versions will never realize that something more might be implied, because the translation team has translated those options out. This elimination of options is endemic in functional equivalence translations. When the text presents a choice, the translator never leaves the choice to the reader, but instead makes it for him.

The Gender-Neutrality Question

I have discovered that the term gender-neutral needs to be defined. I have met a number of people who have the idea that it means using feminine terms and pronouns for God. This is not the case. Rather, gender-neutral can be

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3. Michael V. Fox, *The Song of Songs and Ancient Egyptian Love Songs* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1985), 130–1.

briefly defined as the avoidance of specifically masculine terminology when referring to both sexes. In practice, this becomes the elimination of "he" and "his" when those words would ordinarily occur, and finding ways around the use of them.[4] All four of the functional equivalence translations I have used here have adopted the gender-neutral approach in translating. Even the GNB, which was published in 1976 makes some use of gender-neutral language. In fact, it is mostly the formal equivalence translations that have avoided using gender-neutral language. The functional equivalence translations, especially those produced in the last twenty-five years, have regularly adopted the gender-neutral approach to translation.

The first example of the effect this has on translation I have taken from Psalm 1:1.

ESV Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the wicked, nor stands in the way of sinners, nor sits in the seat of scoffers.

GNB Happy are those who reject the advice of evil men, who do not follow the example of sinners or join those who have no use for God.

CEV God blesses those people who refuse evil advice and won't follow sinners or join in sneering at God.

TNIV Blessed are those who do not walk in step with the wicked or stand in the way that sinners take or sit in the company of mockers,

NLT Oh, the joys of those who do not follow the advice of the wicked, or stand around with sinners, or join in with mockers

The reader should notice that in each functional equivalence translation, the translators have avoided the use of "man" by changing to the plural "those." There are two problems with this approach, however. The Hebrew word is *'ish*, which is specifically male. It is true that *'ish* can sometimes have the sense of "someone," or "a particular person," but it remains the case that the word primarily refers to man as opposed to woman. Now this does not mean that Psalm 1:1 refers only to men. This is where the second problem comes. Many interpreters believe that the reason *'ish* is used in Psalm 1 is to imply a Christological or messianic sense. In other words, Christ is the true embodiment of the blessed man, and as we walk in him we too are blessed. The ESV rendering makes it clear that this is an option

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4. There are two primary books that should be read on this issue by every pastor. The first is D. A. Carson, *The Inclusive Language Debate* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1998). The other is Vern Poythress and Wayne Grudem, *The Gender-Neutral Bible Controversy* (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2000).

in understanding the text. The other versions, by eliminating the specifically masculine term, and especially by making it a plural, eliminate this possible reading.

The second passage to consider is actually a string of three passages. The first of these is John 19:36, a passage which at first glance does not seem to be a problem.

ESV For these things took place that the Scripture might be fulfilled: Not one of his bones will be broken.

GNB This was done to make the Scripture come true: Not one of his bones will be broken.

CEV All this happened so that the Scriptures would come true, which say, No bone of his body will be broken.

TNIV These things happened so that the scripture would be fulfilled: "Not one of his bones will be broken,"

NLT These things happened in fulfillment of the Scriptures that say, "Not one of his bones will be broken,"

However, there are two Old Testament passages in view as far as the reference goes. The first is Ex 12:46.

ESV It shall be eaten in one house; you shall not take any of the flesh outside the house, and you shall not break any of its bones.

GNB The whole meal must be eaten in the house in which it was prepared; it must not be taken outside. And do not break any of the animal's bones.

CEV The entire meal must be eaten inside, and no one may leave the house during the celebration. No bones of the Passover lamb may be broken

TNIV It must be eaten inside one house; take none of the meat outside the house. Do not break any of the bones.

NLT Each Passover lamb must be eaten in one house. Do not carry any of its meat outside, and do not break any of its bones.

Again, there does not seem to be a problem. But this verse is, as it were, a background verse. It provides the larger theological context both for John—Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world, John 1:29—and for the key reference that John is quoting, Psalm 34:20.

ESV He keeps all his bones; not one of them is broken.

GNB The Lord preserves him completely; not one of his bones is broken.

CEV Not one of their bones will ever be broken.

TNIV he protects all their bones, not one of them will be broken.

NLT For the LORD protects the bones of the righteous; not one of them is broken!

Surprisingly, the GNB retains the masculine pronouns here, preserving the connection with John 19. The other functional equivalence versions make the passage a general reference to righteous people, thus eliminating, or at least muddying, the connection that John is making.

My opposition to the use of gender-neutral language is two-fold. First, it misrepresents the text of Scripture. It eliminates specifically masculine references. It gives the reader the impression that the ancient Israelites and the first-century Christians had the same sensibilities regarding language and gender that we do today. That is obviously not true.

My second fundamental opposition is that the gender-neutral movement is a political imposition. While the functional equivalence versions claim to want to present the text in good idiomatic English; on this issue they seek to impose an idiom on the Bible-reading public that is utterly contrary to the practice of most. Most newspapers and magazines do not write in gender-neutral English. Most books are not written in gender-neutral English. Even most conversation at the local Starbucks is not in gender-neutral English. Why, then, will translators impose it? In short, in my view, it is a political act. And when language becomes a political issue, we need to be very careful. I conclude this section with two quotes from George Orwell's essay, "Politics and the English Language."[5] "All issues are political issues, and politics itself is a mass of lies, evasions, folly, hatred, and schizophrenia" (167). "Political language … is designed to make lies sound truthful and murder respectable and to give an appearance of solidity to pure wind" (171).

Conclusion

A fundamental concern of the functional equivalence approach to Bible translation is that the reader be able to read it and understand it *by himself*. As the "Foreword" to the GNB says, "The aim of this Bible is to give today's readers maximum understanding of the content of the original texts." Or, as the children of old friends of mine have put it, "We like the NLT because we understand it." Unfortunately, these young people, and apparently the translation teams of these functional equivalence translations, have forgotten what our confessional forebears so well knew; that the understanding of the Bible is not an individual pursuit, but rather a grand conversation. Thus, WCF I.7 says, "not only the learned, but the unlearned, in a due use of the ordinary means, may attain unto a sufficient understanding

of them [the Scriptures]." We learn to understand the Scriptures not simply by reading and meditating on them in private, but also by consulting commentaries and other resources, and most especially by listening to the word preached, an ordinary means that God has promised to bless for the growth of his people.

Often people ask me what English version I use, with the intent of finding out which I recommend. For the most part, I do not recommend the KJV. Unless someone is an advanced reader, and has long and intimate acquaintance with the Bible, the archaic language and syntax of much of the KJV will be too much for them. On the other hand, I do recommend the NKJV, the NASB (along with its 1995 update), and the ESV. All three of these have their strengths and their weaknesses. Not one of them is perfect. But each is a good strong formal equivalence translation that has paid careful attention to the vocabulary, grammar, and syntax of Hebrew and Greek. They will not lead the reader astray. As for functional equivalence translations, I close with a quote from Joseph Fitzmyer, one of the foremost Aramaic scholars of the twentieth century. The statement is specifically about the GNB, but applies equally well to all the other functional equivalence versions on the market.

> Its paraphrastic text has caught on in the U.S.A. because of the prevalent low level of comprehension of the English language. It will be used by the serious student of the Bible or theology only with caution. It reflects what happens when linguists with little historical or theological sense work on a text as complicated as the Greek New Testament.[6] ∎

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5. George, Orwell, *A Collection of Essays* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich Publishers, 1981), 156–71. The essay originally appeared in 1946. It should be read.

6. Joseph A. Fitzmyer, S.J. *An Introductory Bibliography for the Study of Scripture*, Subsidia Biblica, 3. 3rd ed. (Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1990), 62.