DYNAMIC LUTHER

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Category: Bible Translation

It is one of my fundamental presuppositions that all Bible translators are doing their best to express God's word clearly and faithfully. Translators adopt different translation philosophies and produce different products; but I believe there is a place for different translations. I prefer to use a more dynamic translation for my devotions, but I would use a more literal one for serious study of the text (see here).

That being said, not everyone takes this sort of view of translation. Some people, generally those who prefer a more literal style, spend a good deal of time denouncing the work of other translators. As I noted in an earlier post, these denunciations are not always accurate, nor are they helpful.Â New Leaven has an excellent little piece which gives another example of innacuracy. Leonard Ryken in his bookChoosing a Bible: Understanding Bible Translation Differences suggests that dynamic translation is a modern fad which endangers our understanding of God's word. However, Luther (hardly a modern author) was a very strong advocate of dynamic translation (read more) which rather undermines Ryken's case.The debate about literal versus dynamic translation is hardly a current one.

Personally, I would prefer that translators learned to appreciate one another's work. But, if that isn't possible, it would be much to be preferred if the debate about different styles of translation could be carried out with more charity and accuracy.

By the way, if you want to know which is the best translation in English (or any other language) I give the authoratative answer here.