MORE ON THE NEW LIVING TRANSLATION

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Category: Bible Translation

David Couchman has just posted an interesting article on his reasons for using the NLT:

> *People get incredibly heated about which Bible translation to use. Iâ€™ve met people who honestly seem to be more concerned about this than they are about the doctrine of the atonement. Iâ€™ve come across people in church who (I think) wouldnâ€™t notice if I was preaching heresy, as long as I used the right Bible translation to do it. ....*
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> *For me, the decision to use the New Living Translation is first of all a missional decision. When I teach and preach, more than anything else, I want people to understand what the Bible says and how it is relevant to their lives. (What they then do with this is down to the work of the Holy Spirit and their own consciences.) (read more)*

This is incredibly important because the Bible is first of all a missional book: a book which both describes and is a part of God's reaching out to humanity to draw them into fellowship with himself. I explained this as follows in an earlier post:

> *The Bible tells us that the Triune God is on a mission to call a people to himself. He is calling us to join in the eternal conversation of love that is at the centre of his being and to be a part of his mission to his world. The Bible is a missionary book, about a missionary God.*

The missionary God is a communicator and if the Bible does not communicate his message then it is not acheiving his purposes for it. This is why we translate it in the first place. Literary merit and artistic value are all very well, but they are not what the Bible is all about and they should not take precedence over communication when a translation is prepared.

This doesn't mean for one second that a translator does not need to worry about accuracy - or the literary genres of the original text. A good communicative translation will take all this into account. Nor does good communication of the message presuppose a particular theory of translation - there is value in all approaches.

For my part, as I've written on a number of occaissions, I prefer the NLT and I do so for the same reason that I've spent my adult life helping the translation of the Scriptures into minority languages - I believe that this is the best way to further God's missional purposes.