TRANSLATING AND BEING TRANSLATED

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Category: Musing On Mission Themes

I had to write a short piece about Bible translation recently - around 200 words. I've added a word or two below, but this is essentially the same piece. Some of you may recognise it.

The role of a Bible translator is to adapt Scripture in an appropriate fashion for a given cultural and linguistic setting. The translated text does not cease to be God's word, though the form may change considerably.Â But through the process of translation, the Scriptures become more useful as a vehicle for God's grace in the new situation: they are better fitted to the purpose for which God gave them.

It strikes me, that just as we can translate the Scriptures to make them more useful; so the Scriptures translate us with the same aim in mind.Â God has taken us from one kingdom to another, but we are constantly in need of transformation so that we reflect the context of the kingdom of God.Â The Holy Spirit, through the Scriptures, translates us into the language and culture of our new situation so that we are more useful and better fitted for the purpose God has for us. As God works in our lives, we remain ourselves, but we become more and more aligned to the culture of the Kingdom, and less aligned to the culture of the world around us.

A final, additional thought: perhaps if we spent more time wondering how the Bible was translating us, and less time arguing over which translation was the best, the English speaking church might be in a stronger position.