THE TRINITY AND BIBLE TRANSLATION

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This post is by way of thinking out loud. I'd value any comments you might have on what I say.

The Bible describes God as a three persons in one - the Trinity. It is unreasonable for creations, such as ourselves, to expect that we will fully understand the creator God and certainly the Trinity is a great mystery. However, there are certain things that we can understand.

- God is a communicator. Within the Trinity there is an eternal creative conversation of love and care.
- At the heart of the Trinity lies the principle of unity in diversity. God is one, but yet there are three distinct persons in the Trinity.
- God is involved with humanity. We don't just have a creator God who winds creation up and then sits back to watch it happen - the Son and Spirit are intimately involved with the creation (albeit, in very different ways). This is not to say that the Father isn't involved, by the way.

So, what does this have to do with Bible translation?

Firstly, we have the Bible! This sounds obvious, but God's communication with humanity flows out of the eternal conversation that is carried on between Father, Son and Spirit. God has given us the Bible because at the very heart of His being He is a communicator.

Secondly, let's think about the nature of the Bible. For the most part, the Bible is told as narrative - stories if you like. God doesn't give us a series of orders and laws, He gives us stories. This is because God Himself is part of the story. God is intimately involved with his creation, and the Bible is his record of that involvement; that's why we get stories rather than a law book. Okay, there are laws in the Bible, but even when we get pages and pages of rules and regulations, they are set out as part of the continuing story of God dealing with Israel. Note, too, that the story is about God dealing with Israel not the other way round. I wonder whether we sometimes approach Biblical narrative backwards; we see it as being full of stories about Abraham, Isaac, Moses etc. When in reality there is just one story - one chracter study - all about God.

At the heart of the Trinity there is unity and diversity and it is the diversity which brings us to Bible translation. It goes against the nature of God to assume that one language, one way of speaking, could ever fully express the diversity of at the heart of His being. The Trinity doesn't just make Bible translation possible, it actually demands that we translate the message. One message, expressed in many tongues - unity in diversity! The process of the diffusion of the Bible reflecting the eternal nature of the one who inspired it. There is a symmetry here that I find very appealing.