THE SIMPLE GOSPEL ISN'T SO SIMPLE!

Posted on July 29, 2010 by Eddie

Category: Gospels

John3:16 is considered by many people to sum up the whole Christian message in a clear and concise form. It certainly is a very rich verse, but it is far from simple. In an absolutely excellent series of 14 short articles, Hart Wiens of the Canadian Bible Society draws out some of the complexities which are hidden in these familiar words. Here is a quote from the first article.

> ***â€œFor God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life.â€***
>
> *The first word in our English version is "for." In the Greek this is actually the second word. It is a small word, but it brings with it a number of issues that the translator must consider. This little word is used to signal that John 3.16 was not written in isolation. It is part of a larger text. In fact the chapter and verse numbers found in our Bibles were not in the original text. This is an important point, not only for the translator, but also for the reader or student of the text. Every verse of the Bible should be read and studied in its entire context rather than as a verse in isolation from the larger text. To read, study or translate a verse of scripture in isolation violates the integrity of the text. Yet how often have you been to a Bible study where participants are each assigned to read one verse? Such a process results in a serious loss of continuity, especially when different versions are being used. Reading Bible verses in isolation should therefore be avoided, both when studying and when translating the Bible.*

From my point of view, anyone who is interested in Bible Translation should read these articles. They are simple and straightforward and do a great job of explaining a complex and professional task in a way that the interested layman can understand. By concentrating on one, familiar verse; there is a logic and flow to the articles. Surprisingly, they also manage to cover a whole gamut of theological hot potatoes as they go. All in all, a very worthwhile series.

- Part 1: Translation in Context
- Part 2: Translation or Transliteration
- Part 3: Translation and Interpretation
- Part 4: Translation Across Cultures
- Part 5: Primary and Secondary Senses
- Part 6: Collocation Clashes
- Part 7: Metaphorical Language
- Part 8: Logical Connections
- Part 9: Lexical Equivalence
- Part 10: Key Terms
- Part 11: Grammatical Issues
- Part 12: Pronominal Reference
- Part 13: Rhetorical Figures

- Part 14: Limitations to Translation