PAUL SHADDICK: TRANSLATING GOD'S WORD

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Paul Shaddick, who used to work on a neighbouring language to Kouya in Ivory Coast, has just updated his website and started blogging (*but there is no RSS feed, Paul*). Whatever the quality of the content of the website, it is hard to forgive him for the pun in the header. Paul is now the IT officer for AIM international and has the strap line, *Consider IT pure joy* in the header.

One of Paul's first posts is a longish article which looks at the necessary criteria for a good Bible translation (accuracy, clarity and naturalness) and then seeks to apply these to preaching and Evangelism in churches. This piece is well worth reading, I've quoted the conclusion at some length.

> *On the subject of language, let me express my personal convictions. In our evangelism, teaching and worship, I am convinced that we should use plain modern everyday English:*
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> - *Technical terms can be useful as shorthand for theologians, but most people today are not theologians so if we use them we must explain them.*
> - *In New Testament times people spoke many different languages, but many people also spoke and used Greek. But this was not the technically complex and by then archaic language of Homer and Plato but a simpler modern language. This is the language used by the writers of the New Testament. They used that language because it communicated most clearly to the largest number of people, they also used a Greek translation of the Old Testament.*
> - *I know that many people love the Authorized Version and that God has and still does use it to speak to peopleâ€™s hearts. However, we must recognise that our English language has changed in the last 400 years. As a result the Authorized Version often fails to communicate the Word of God with the clarity which it did when it was first translated particularly to those who have not been brought up using it. I know that this is a controversial issue and I have no desire to create controversy among Godâ€™s people, but I would not be honest and open if I avoided saying what I think is important. I pray that saying this will not cause division and contention, but that all who love Godâ€™s word would want it to communicate as clearly as possible to whoever reads it or hears it read.*
> - *We should also consider the language we use in singing and praying. Archaic language in our hymn books may be familiar to us, but if we do not actually understand what we are singing, then we might as well not sing it. Our hymns are a tremendous heritage. They help us in praising God and fixing truth in our minds, but in our singing we need to keep the message clear.*

> *Let us translate Godâ€™s message to the world as Christ did. All our actions and our words should be accurate, clear and natural. The results ultimately depend on our sovereign God but we must be faithful in our proclamation of the gospel and use all legitimate means to teach the truth as God has revealed it to us.*

Great stuff (*but still doesn't make up for the strap line*).