JOHN STOTT ON CHRISTIAN LANGUAGE

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Category: Bible Translation

Having read this quote at Rightly Dividing the Word of Truth, I've decided that I must buy The Living Church: The Convictions of a Lifelong Pastor by John Stott.

> *Some Christian people seen to be in bondage to words and formulas, and so become prisoners of a gospel stereotype. They wrap up their message in a nice, neat package; they tape, label and price tag it as if it were destined for the supermarket. Then, unless their favorite phraseology is used (whether the kingdom of God, or the blood of Jesus, or human liberation, or being born again, or justification by faith, or the cosmic lordship of Christ), they roundly declare that the gospel has not been preached. What these people seem not to have noticed is the rich diversity of gospel formulation that is found in the New Testament itself. The options I have listed are all biblical, but because all of them contain an element of imagery, and each image is different, it is impossible to fuse them into a single, simple concept. So it is perfectly legitimate to develop one or other of them, according to what seems most appropriate to the occasion.*

The issues raised in this quote are important ones to Bible Translators. We have to wrestle with how to express Biblical concepts in situations where familiar language may not be available, or may actually communicate something other than what the Scriptures originally intended.