VERNACULAR TRANSLATION

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> *To translated into the vernacular is therefore to recognize the significance of the local idiom; the prosaic. "In the people's tongue lay the jewel of great price." Missionaries had to learn the habits of thought - the concepts - the the indigenous culture in order to render the gospel in terms the people could understand. From the standpoint of missions, the translation of the Hebrew dabar Yawhe ("the word of the Lord") by Logos in the fourth Gospel "became an indispensable tool by which to bring Christ into contact with the Greek heritage". So did the decision by certain anonymous witnesses to the Greeks in Antioch to refer to Jesus not as Messiah but at Kyrios, a term that Hellenistic Pagans gave to their cultic divinities. In each case the key factor is what these early missionary-contextualizer-theologians did with these words. While the tersm were familiar, their Christian use was not. The Logos became flesh (that's new!); Kyrios rose from the dead (indeed!). These terms, borrowed from the culture, were "sanctified" as it were, and put to use to minister Christ. Once chosen, however, "this understanding of the word received a set of controls from its new biblical frame of reference. The early missionaries had to use the cultural resources that were at hand.*

From: The Drama of Doctrine: A Canonical-linguistic Approach to Christian Theology. It is thought provoking to note that while we blithely sing "He is Lord". The notion of Jesus as Lord (rather than Jesus is Messiah) was initially a controversial one, borrowed from Pagan religious language.